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THE PECULIAR JUDGMENT ON GOD'S PEOPLE
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
THE BOOK OF JUDGES

by

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THE PECULIAR JUDGMENT ON GOD'S PEOPLE
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VOLUME 1

University of Durban-Westville

DECLARATION

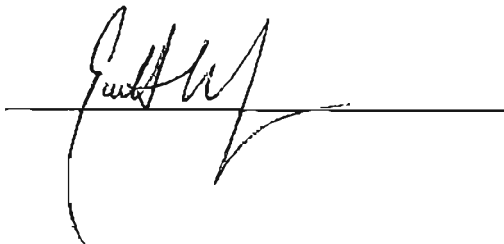
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Hereby declare that the thesis entitled:

THE PECULIAR JUDGMENT ON GOD'S PEOPLE
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
THE BOOK OF JUDGES

Is the result of my own investigation and research and it has not been submitted
in part or in full for any other degree or to any other University.



December 1, 2003

THE PECULIAR JUDGMENT ON GOD'S PEOPLE
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Abstract

The motif of judgment pervades the Hebrew bible and it is generally accepted that one of the functions of deity is judgment. Within the Book of Judges, this motif logically surfaces through the various pericopes describing premonarchic Israel. The prologue to the book includes paradigmatic formulae for the pattern of this judgment and the institution of a deliverer. Commonly, it has been accepted that a cyclical pattern exists in the book in which the Israelites begin in a proper relationship with YHWH. This disintegrates into their apostasy resulting in YHWH empowering an oppressive force to subdue them as an element of His judgment. At some point in the subjection, Israel cries out to YHWH and He raises up a deliverer. The deliverer acts as the divine representative to remove the oppressor and he restores peace and stability as long as he lives. The pattern returns again after the death of the deliverer.

The study begins with an examination of the identity of the Israelite deity and the object and subject of His judgment. The next chapter explores the themes of judgment from a diachronic perspective to determine how the critical methodologies of canonical, textual, source, form, redaction, social-scientific, and historiographical criticism either support or refute the idea that YHWH operates based on the anthropocentric paradigm of judgment from the Judges prologue. The following chapter continues that examination from a synchronic perspective employing a close reading of the text through rhetorical and narrative criticism.

The fifth chapter examines the idea of the anthropocentric cycle of judgment and its constituent elements. The study concludes that while the elements of this cycle are present throughout the book; nevertheless, they are not present consistently throughout the entirety of each circumstance of judgment. As the hypothesis of this paradigm is rejected, the study examines whether the cyclical elements should be considered from a theocentric perspective. This hypothesis is also rejected. The study considers whether

there is a complementary approach that embodies the two other paradigmatic structures. Ultimately, that hypothesis is rejected also.

The study concludes that both diachronic and synchronic methodologies are helpful in making this evaluation; however, only those that focus on a close reading of the text are the most beneficial for validating the hypothesis. Since the hypothesis that YHWH is bound by the anthropocentric cycle must be rejected another conclusion is required. Through the Judges narrative, it becomes apparent that although peculiar and distinct methods of divine judgment on behalf of and against Israel have a general form; YHWH is by no means bound to function according to a prescribed ritual. Even though judgment is often initiated because of Israelite apostasy, it is not Israelite repentance that brings judgment through deliverance; but, rather it is the mercy, compassion, and love of YHWH that controls and initiates His peculiar judgment. The judgment on YHWH's people is indeed peculiar because it occurs within the context of divine justice.

Abbreviated Title: Judgment on God's People in Judges

Key Terms: Judges, judgment, apostasy, oppression, repentance, and deliverance.

DEDICATION

With profound respect to Mac and Kay Snyder

FOREWARD

Because of the sheer size of this research, it has been necessary to divide the thesis into two volumes for ease of printing and handling. Accordingly, there are references throughout the thesis which by necessity are a part of Volume 2. The pagination of the thesis reflects its continuation. Volume 1 is composed of the preface, and chapters 1-3. Volume 2 includes chapters 4-6, Appendices, and the Bibliography.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Biblical Abbreviations

Gen	Genesis	Isa	Isaiah	Rom	Romans
Ex	Exodus	Jer	Jeremiah	1 Cor	1 Corinthians
Lev	Leviticus	Lam	Lamentations	2 Cor	2 Corinthians
Num	Numbers	Ezek	Ezekiel	Gal	Galatians
Dt	Deuteronomy	Dan	Daniel	Eph	Ephesians
Josh	Joshua	Hos	Hosea	Phil	Philippians
Jg	Judges	Joel	Joel	Col	Colossians
Ruth	Ruth	Amos	Amos	1 Th	1 Thessalonians
1 Sam	1 Samuel	Oba	Obadiah	2 Th	2 Thessalonians
2 Sam	2 Samuel	Jon	Jonah	1 Tim	1 Timothy
1 Kg	1 Kings	Mic	Micah	2 Tim	2 Timothy
2 Kg	2 Kings	Nah	Nahum	Tit	Titus
1 Chr	1 Chronicles	Hab	Habakkuk	Phm	Philemon
2 Chr	2 Chronicles	Zep	Zephaniah	Heb	Hebrews
Ezra	Ezra	Hag	Haggai	Jas	James
Neh	Nehemiah	Zech	Zechariah	1 Pet	1 Peter
Est	Esther	Mal	Malachi	2 Pet	2 Peter
Job	Job	Mt	Matthew	1 Jn	1 John
Ps	Psalms	Mk	Mark	2 Jn	2 John
Prov	Proverbs	Lk	Luke	3 Jn	3 John
Ecc	Ecclesiastes	Jn	John	Rev	Revelation
Song	Song of Solomon	Acts	Acts		

Apocrypha Abbreviations

Add Esth	The Additions to the Book of Esther	2 Mac	2 Maccabees
Bar	Baruch	3 Mac	3 Maccabees
Bel	Bel and the Dragon	4 Mac	4 Maccabees
1 Esdr	1 Esdras	Pr Azar	Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Jews
2 Esdr	2 Esdras	Pr Man	Prayer of Manasseh
4 Ezr	4 Ezra	Sir	Sirach, Ecclesiasticus
Jdt	Judith	Sus	Susanna
Ep Jer	Epistle of Jeremiah	Tob	Tobit
1 Mac	1 Maccabees	Wis	The Wisdom of Solomon
Ecclus	Ecclesiasticus		

Talmud and Other Jewish Document Abbreviations

<i>Ab.Zar</i>	<i>'Abodah Zarah</i>	<i>Midr.Ps.</i>	<i>Midrash Psalms</i>
<i>Avot</i>	<i>Pirqê-'abôt</i>	<i>Pes.K.</i>	<i>Pesikta Kahana</i>
<i>Bab.B</i>	<i>Baba Batra</i>	<i>San.</i>	<i>Sanhedrin</i>
<i>Ber.</i>	<i>Berakot</i>	<i>Sifre Dt.</i>	<i>Sifre Deuteronomy</i>
<i>Cant.R.</i>	<i>Canticles Rabbah</i>	<i>Tanh.</i>	<i>Tanhuma</i>
<i>Ex.R.</i>	<i>Exodus Rabbah</i>	<i>Yad.</i>	<i>Yadaim</i>
<i>Gen.R.</i>	<i>Genesis Rabbah</i>	<i>Yoma</i>	<i>mas. Yoma</i>
<i>Mek.</i>	<i>Mekilta</i>		

Latin Abbreviations

<i>et.al.</i>	
<i>ibid.</i>	<i>ibidem</i>
<i>s.v.</i>	<i>sub verbo</i>

Other Abbreviations

<i>aug.</i>	<i>augmented.</i>	<i>exp.</i>	<i>expanded</i>
<i>BCE</i>	<i>Before Common Era</i>	<i>gen.</i>	<i>general</i>
<i>CE</i>	<i>Common Era</i>	<i>LB</i>	<i>Late Bronze Age</i>
<i>ed.</i>	<i>edition or edited by</i>	<i>MB</i>	<i>Middle Bronze Age</i>
<i>eds.</i>	<i>editors</i>	<i>rev.</i>	<i>revised</i>
<i>enl.</i>	<i>enlarged</i>	<i>trans.</i>	<i>Translated by</i>

Commonly Used Sources

PUBLICATIONS

<i>AB</i>	<i>Anchor Bible</i>
<i>ABD</i>	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary, (ed.) David Noel Freedman</i>
<i>ABR</i>	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
<i>ACR</i>	<i>Australasian Catholic Record</i>
<i>ACBA</i>	<i>Lester T. Whitelocke, An Analytical Concordance of the Books of the Apocrypha</i>
<i>AER</i>	<i>American Ecclesiastical Review</i>
<i>AGAJU</i>	<i>Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Antiken Judentums und des urchristentums</i>
<i>ALUOS</i>	<i>Annual of the Leeds University Oriental Society</i>
<i>ANET</i>	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts: Relating to the Old Testament</i>
<i>ANETS</i>	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies</i>
<i>ANEP</i>	<i>The Ancient Near East in Pictures: Relating to the Old Testament</i>
<i>AOS</i>	<i>American Oriental Series</i>
<i>ARM</i>	<i>Archives Royal de Mari</i>
<i>ARW</i>	<i>Archiv für Religionswissenschaft</i>
<i>AS</i>	<i>Assyriological Studies</i>
<i>ASOR</i>	<i>The Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
<i>ASORDS</i>	<i>American Schools of Oriental Research Dissertation Series</i>
<i>ATANT</i>	<i>Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments</i>

BA	<i>The Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BAGD	W. Bauer, W.F. Arndt, F.W. Gingrich, and F.W. Danker, (Eds.), <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament</i>
BAIAS	<i>Bulletin of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society</i>
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BDB	F. Brown, S.R. Driver, and C.A. Briggs, (Eds.), <i>Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>
BETL	<i>Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium</i>
BibExp	<i>Biblical Expositor</i>
BibIntS	<i>Biblical Interpretation Series</i>
BibRev	<i>Bible Review</i>
BibTran	<i>The Bible Translator</i>
BJRL	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
BN	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BSac	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BW	<i>The Biblical World</i>
BZAW	<i>Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CDWGNT	James Strong, <i>A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek New Testament; with their renderings in the Authorized English Version</i>
CGPDT	Albert-Marie Denis and Yvonne Janssens, <i>Concordance Grecque Des Pseudépigraphes D'Ancien Testament</i>
CGEC	Charles F. Hudson, (Ed.) <i>A Critical Greek and English Concordance of the New Testament</i>
ConBibOT	<i>Coniectanea Biblica, Old Testament Series</i>
CTM	<i>Concordia Theological Monthly</i>
DCH	David J.A. Clines, (ed.), <i>The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew</i>
DD	<i>Dor le Dor</i> (now JBQ)
EAEHL	Michael Avi-Yonah, <i>Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land</i>
EHCCOT	George V. Wigram, (Ed.) <i>The Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance of the Old Testament</i>
EHED	<i>English-Hebrew, Hebrew-English Dictionary</i>
Encarta	<i>Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 99 [CD-ROM]</i>
EvQ	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
ExpT	<i>Expository Times</i>
FCI	<i>Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation</i>
FRLANT	<i>Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments</i>
GBS	<i>Guides to Biblical Scholarship</i>
GBS, OTS	<i>Guides to Biblical Scholarship, Old Testament Series</i>
GHCL	Samuel Bagster, ed., <i>Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon</i>
HALOT	Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann Jakob Stamm, (eds.), <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>
HBD	Trent C. Butler, (gen. ed.), <i>Holman Bible Dictionary</i>
Hen	<i>Henoch</i>
HN	Bob R. Ellis and Harry B. Hunt, Jr., <i>Hebrew Notes</i>
HR	<i>The Homiletic Review</i>

HSMS	<i>Harvard Semitic Monograph Series</i>
HSS	<i>Harvard Semitic Studies</i>
HTS	<i>Hervormde Theologiese Studies</i>
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
IBD	<i>Illustrated Bible Dictionary</i> , (ed.) James Dixon Douglas
IEJ	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
ILBS	<i>Indiana Literary Biblical Series</i> , (gen. ed.) Robert M. Polzin
Int	<i>Interpretation</i>
ITC	<i>International Theological Commentary</i>
JAAR	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JBQ	<i>Jewish Bible Quarterly</i>
JBR	<i>Journal of Bible and Religion</i>
JCS	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i>
JEOL	<i>Jaarbericht Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap Ex Oriente Lux</i>
JETS	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JJS	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JNSL	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
JNST	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JNST Supp	<i>JNST – Supplement Series</i>
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of Old Testament</i>
JSOT Supp	<i>JSOT – Supplement Series</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
JTSNS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies, New Series</i>
KTU	Dietrich, Manfred, <i>et. al.</i> , (eds.), <i>Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit</i>
LTJ	<i>Lutheran Theological Journal</i>
NAC	R. Clendenen, (gen. ed.), <i>New American Commentary</i>
NASHAGD	Robert L. Thomas, (gen. ed.), <i>New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries</i>
NEA	<i>Near Eastern Archaeology</i>
NEASB	<i>Near East Archaeological Society Bulletin</i>
NIDOTTE	Willem A. VanGemeren, (gen. ed.), <i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis</i>
NUHED	Haim Schachter, (ed.), <i>The New Universal Hebrew-English Dictionary</i>
NWOTWS	William Wilson, <i>New Wilson's Old Testament Word Studies</i>
NLH	<i>New Literary History</i>
OBO	<i>Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis</i>
OS	<i>Oudtestamentische Studiën</i>
OTE	<i>Old Testament Essays</i>
PEFQS	<i>Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement</i>
PEQ	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
PGCH	J. Weingreen, <i>A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew</i>
PSB	<i>The Princeton Seminary Bulletin</i>
PTMS	<i>Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series</i>
PWCJS	<i>Proceedings of the World Congress of Jewish Studies</i>
QR	<i>Quarterly Review</i>
RA	<i>Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale</i>
RB	<i>Revue Biblique</i>

<i>RGG</i>	<i>Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart</i>
<i>RQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
<i>RTR</i>	<i>Reformed Theological Review</i>
<i>SBLMS</i>	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series</i>
<i>SBTSS</i>	<i>Studies in Biblical Theology, Second Series</i>
<i>SBET</i>	<i>Studia Biblica et Theologica</i>
<i>ScrHie</i>	<i>Scripta Hierosolymitana</i>
<i>SECB</i>	James Strong, (ed.), <i>Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible</i>
<i>SECB, HCL</i>	James Strong, (ed.), <i>Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon</i>
<i>SJOT</i>	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
<i>SOTI</i>	Gleason L. Archer, Jr., <i>A Survey of Old Testament Introduction</i>
<i>SR</i>	<i>Studies in Religion / Sciences Religieuses</i>
<i>SSN</i>	<i>Studia Semitica Neerlandica</i>
<i>TAR</i>	<i>Theology and Religion</i>
<i>TBT</i>	<i>The Bible Today</i>
<i>TLOT</i>	Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, (Eds.), <i>Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>
<i>TOTC</i>	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
<i>TUTH</i>	S.R. Driver, <i>A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew and Some Other Syntactical Questions</i>
<i>TWOT</i>	R. Laird Harris, (ed.), <i>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament</i>
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>UF</i>	<i>Ugarit – Forschungen: Internationales Jahrbuch für die Altertum-skunde Syrien-Palästinas</i>
<i>VOT</i>	Francis I. Andersen and A. Dean Forbes, <i>The Vocabulary of the Old Testament</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>The Westminster Theological Journal</i>
<i>WZMLU</i>	<i>Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther Universität</i>
<i>YOS</i>	<i>Yale Oriental Series</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die altestamentliche Wiessenschaft</i>
<i>ZDPV</i>	<i>Zeitschrift der deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>
<i>ZEE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für evangelische Ethik</i>

Versions

<i>AB</i>	<i>Anchor Bible</i>
<i>BHS</i>	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i>
℣	Latin Vulgate
<i>LXX</i>	Septuagint
<i>LXX^A</i>	Codex Alexandrinus
<i>LXX^B</i>	Codex Vaticanus
<i>LXX^N</i>	Codex Basilano
<i>MB</i>	<i>Moffatt's Translation Bible</i>
Ⲁ	Massoretic Text
<i>NASB</i>	<i>New American Standard Bible</i>
<i>NIV</i>	<i>New International Version Bible</i>

§	Syriac version, the Peshitta
ⲧ	Targum
ⲧ ^{Jon.}	Targum: Jonathan of the Former Prophets
ⲧ ^m	Targum: Codex Brit. Mus. Orient
ⲧ ^{Ngl.}	Targum: Neofiti glosses
ⲧ ^{reuch.}	Targum: Codex Reuchlinianus at Carlsruhe
ⲧ ^{ven.1}	Targum: Edition by Felix Pratensis
ⲧ ^{ven.2}	Targum: Edition by Jacob ben Chayim
TLB	<i>The Living Bible Paraphrase</i>
1QJudg	Unpublished manuscript from Qumran Cave 1.
4QJudg ^a	Unpublished manuscript from Qumran Cave 4, Fragment 49
4QJudg ^b	Unpublished manuscripts from Qumran Cave 4, Fragment 50

Sources

C	The later recension of the story in Judges 19-21
D	The Deuteronomist Document
E	The Elohist Document
E ₂	The second edition of the Elohist Document
J	The J Document
J ₁	The first edition of the J Document
J ₂	The second edition of the J Document
JE	The redacted conflate version of the J and E Documents
L	The Laienquelle Document as called by Eissfeldt referring to J ₁
P	The Priestly Document
PJE	The redacted conflate version of the P, J, and E Documents

Grammar Markings

Ⲑ	Emendation
3MS	Third Person, Masculine, Singular
3FS	Third Person, Feminine, Singular
1CP	First Person, Common, Plural
[]	Corrupt Insertion in Text
< >	Corrupt Deletion in Text

Language Markings

A	Arabic
Aram.	Aramaic
Ⲓ	Greek
ⲕ	Hebrew

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PREFACE

The motivation for this research had its genesis while living in the Middle East and specifically within the city of Jerusalem.¹ My understanding of the bible, its land, and its people evolved as I integrated with the people in various Israeli subcultures.² It ranged from the ultra religious *Torah*³ observant people to the secular non-religious Jews at the other end of the spectrum, as well as the Arab populous. It was within this framework I desired to pursue doctoral studies and thus this investigation emerged.

This study is an examination of the peculiar judgment on God's people with special reference to the Book of Judges. The fundamental task of this work is to examine the cyclical pattern within its historical context, evaluate it against other time eras, and determine if any modern application exists. Further, it is based on evolving personal theological convictions and viewed through a messianic hermeneutic.

Certain choices have been made in the presentation of the material and its format. This dissertation was prepared based on the guidelines in sixth edition of Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*.⁴ Where necessary the writer has also consulted the fourteenth edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style: For Authors, Editors, and Copywriters*.⁵ The spelling and grammar is consistent with that of standard American English practices.⁶ In those areas where the terminology is

¹ The writer acknowledges ירושלים (*y'rūšālayim*) as the official name used by the Hebrew speaking people in the capital of ישראל (*yisrā'el*).

² References to modern Israelis include all individuals whom the State of Israel recognizes as their citizens. This would include Jews and Arabs who possess a זכרון זהות (*t'zēdāt zehūt*), that is an identity card from משרד הפנים (*mišrād hap'nīm*), that is the Ministry of the Interior.

³ This refers to those whose lifestyle and study is based on תורה (*tōrāh*) the first five books of Moses. This includes the many דתי (*dāti*) and חרדי (*H^arēdi*) sects, whose Torahic lifestyle is even further directed by the תלמוד (*Talmūd*).

⁴ K.L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th ed. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996). This has been the academic and professional reference of choice in the United States of America for over six decades and one which the author has used throughout his academic career.

⁵ C. Seybold and B. Young, eds., *The Chicago Manual of Style: For Authors, Editors, and Copywriters*, 14th ed., rev. and expanded (Chicago, IL: University Press, 1993).

⁶ *Webster's New Dictionary of the English Language* (1984).

not a part of the American vocabulary, the spelling will revert to British English.⁷ However, there are some areas of stylistic departure from Turabian's work and American academic practices where that presentation form is in conflict with University of Durban-Westville guidelines.⁸

Because the scope of this research involves several languages, the inclusion of these languages appears in their extant form. Foreign words that utilize the Latin alphabet are italicized. The remaining foreign words are presented in the research in that language, except where a direct quotation would prohibit such an entry. First references to individuals, places, or other biblical words that have an English counterpart will include the English word along with the phonetic transliteration. Additional references to the word will not include the transliteration unless it is necessary to establish the reference. Where foreign alphabetic characters are used, a transliteration is provided in the text for ease of reading, with the foreign word secondarily in the notation.

The writer conveys his gratitude to those whose help have made this work possible.

⁷ *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1989).

⁸ *Registration and Examination Brochure for Masters and Doctoral Research Degrees 1998/1999* (Durban, South Africa: University of Durban-Westville, 1998), 6. One such instance of this departure is the stylistic approach of one and one-half line spacing in the text rather than double spacing. The other is the page size being altered from the English 8 ½" x 11" standard to the universal A4 metric size.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

General Nature of the Problem

Reading the bible is a formidable task. Yet, understanding it and making application to life is a most important undertaking which is successively more difficult with modern time constraints and a pseudo Western-Hellenistic mindset to comprehend an Oriental text. The whole reading exercise remains problematic based on the wealth of material information and interpretative insight from a diversity of theological and philosophical perspectives.

As a text, the bible does not remain static. Theological scholarship continues to expand in varied hermeneutical approaches and styles to give modern critical comprehension to documents of antiquity that have timeless appeal. Philosophic thought critically evaluates and brings into sharp focus many of the important problems of religion and philosophy.¹

The most cursory reading of church history identifies a divergence of perspective among theologians regarding the importance of the Bible and specifically the Hebrew bible. A dualistic Marcionite approach reduces the importance of the Hebrew bible for the New Testament Church and its believers.² Almost two centuries later, the Roman Emperor Constantine intervened in the Arian controversy by establishing the ecumenical Council of Nicea. The outcome of this ecclesiastical meeting had far reaching implications. First, it included the condemning of Arius and the Arian heresy. Second, following the biblical record of the Council of Jerusalem, it instituted a theological

¹ In this introduction, J.A. Hutchinson, describes his own methodology for a philosophy of religion and introduces many of these problematic areas within mutual theological and philosophical disciplines, one of which is theodicy. See *Faith, Reason, and Existence: An Introduction to Contemporary Philosophy of Religion*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), 4.

² Marcion, originally from Pontus, gathered a following in Rome around 144 CE. It was during the second century that his rival heretical church propagated anti-Semitic rhetoric and doctrines that distinguish Jehovah of the Hebrew bible and the Supreme Father of the New Testament. The ultimate result is the setting aside of the Hebrew scriptures. See J.L. González, *The Story of Christianity: Vol. 1: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation*, (San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1984), 61-62.

supreme hierarchy that formulated the Nicean Creed and its trinitarian formula, regarding the essence between the Father and Son, and ultimately the question of (*Yeshua*) Jesus' divinity.³ However, as a by product of this council, another implication exists from the letter drafted by the Emperor to those who were not in attendance at the council, which expressed concisely his anti-Semitic bias:

"We ought not therefore to have anything in common with the Jew, for the Savior has shown us another way; our worship following a more legitimate and more convenient course: And consequently in unanimously adopting this mode, we desire, dearest brethren to separate ourselves from the detestable company of the Jew."⁴

The Scholasticism of the Medieval Age developed the rigors of theological enterprise examining ontological and epistemological issues. An inspection of faculties of large European medieval universities would have revealed scholars without reservations about the inspiration or reliability of the bible.⁵ This atmosphere was challenged in the Renaissance and further fomented the seeds of anti-Semitism through the European colonization efforts. This saw its fruit in the Spanish Inquisition when the entire Iberian-Jewish community was expelled from Spain in 1492.⁶

Contemporary theologies like Replacement Theology and a global rise in anti-Semitism supports this Patristic methodology in biblical research with an inherited Hebrew bible antagonism.⁷ Any reading of scripture and especially the Hebrew bible must take into consideration cultural filters and biases that may hinder the intended

³ ܝܫܘܥ (*Yēšūa'*) יֵשׁוּעַ; and Ἰησοῦς (*Iēsous*) Ἰησοῦς. This examination prefers the Hebraic name of the Savior rather than the Anglicized form of the Greek. P.T. Williamson, *Standing Firm: Reclaiming Christian Faith in Times of Controversy*, (Lenoir, NC: PLC Publications, 1996), 109-117. Cf. A.E. Burn, *The Council of Nicaea: A Memorial for its Sixteenth Centenary* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1925), 20-52, and 82-119.

⁴ Eusebius of Caesarea, *Vita Constantine*, (Life of Constantine), 3:19, quoted in P. Schaff and H. Wace (Eds.), *The Nicean and Post-Nicean Fathers: 2nd Series, Vol. 14: The Seven Ecumenical Councils* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 54-55.

⁵ B. Ramm, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1954), 17.

⁶ Solomon Ibn Verga, one of the exiles, identified reasons for their deportation as punishment for killing Jesus. See "The Causes of Persecution," 1507, in *The Literature of Destruction: Jewish Responses to Catastrophe*, (Ed.) D.G. Roskies, (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society, 1988), 90, 103-104. This is given as one example, which could also include pogroms and the Holocaust.

⁷ The term "anti-Semitism" in its broadest application would be an antagonism or hatred to descendants of Shem, which would include both Hebrew and Arabic people. Yet, through modern usage the term has evolved to include only Jews. See C.L. Feinberg, *The Curse of Anti-Semitism*, (Altadena, CA: Emeth Publications, n.d.), 1. Perhaps, a better nomenclature would be "anti-Zionist." A brief treatment is included in A.G. Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology* (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 1989), 836-841. Surprisingly, in his exhaustive work at systematizing Israel in the context of Covenant Postmillennialism, Covenant Amillennialism, Covenant Premillennialism, and Dispensationalism, he does not use the term Replacement Theology. Rather he examines at length, the doctrinal position of how they view the Church having replaced Israel.

interpretation. The current state of scholarship acknowledges that a historical-critical hermeneutic may not be enough to understand the text.⁸ Therefore, in an effort not to Christianize the Hebrew bible by identifying it with the New Testament witness, the problem of Hebrew bible interpretation and its own theological interpretation of YHWH is the starting point for examination.⁹

The idea of the biblical God and the *Memra* are unduly encased in a Christian theology, which frames the basic epistemological meanings.¹⁰ Does this have a different design in the Hebrew bible? This forms the basis for an investigation into how God peculiarly judges His people from a Hebrew bible perspective. More specifically, it is in regard to the book of Judges to examine whether the judgment in this ancient Near East context is both biblical and Christian.

The Specific Problem

Scrutiny of the book of Judges as a complete and unified corpus within the larger context of the Hebrew bible and the whole of the bible is problematic looking through Christian experience and perspective while trying not to adopt a Marcionitic approach. Yet, certain elements appear throughout the pericopes of Judges that are located in other biblical books. These elements which are magnified in Judges become themes of apostasy, oppression, repentance, and deliverance. Past scholarship has revealed a cyclical pattern exists with these themes as they relate to God and to His people.

In light of this proposed cycle, analysis of the book of Judges determines the peculiar judgment on God's people. This reflection involves each of these integral parts of the cycle. Although not all of the elements are present in each narrative, the cycle is explored to determine if God is obligated to intervene into the life of His people with judgment. Further, an examination is made to ascertain whether God's people were under His judgment within the operation of this cycle and whether it formed a pattern to determine this judgment.

⁸ Some of the new hermeneutical critical approaches include rhetorical, narrative, structural, ideological, deconstructive, social-scientific, and feminist criticism. These areas are examined as they apply to the thesis.

⁹ B.S. Childs, *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1985), 9.

¹⁰ *Aram.* (*Mymr*); מִימְרָא. This Aramaic term used in the Targums, describe God in reference to Him speaking or doing. See W.R. Stegner, *Narrative Theology in Early Jewish Christianity* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989), 22.

The Organization of the Study

The size of the Book of Judges prohibits a thorough exegesis of each passage involving the judgment motif, as well as the identification of both God and His people. Nevertheless, representative passages have been selected for a more extensive treatment. The other passages are summarized.

Chapter 2 surveys the theological interpretations of the identity of God, the peculiar judgment of God toward His people, and the identity of these people who are the object of this judgment. These three elements are scrutinized against biblical and extrabiblical materials.

Who is God? This age old question of the identity of God is the starting point for this investigation. Hebrew bible studies in theology reveal multitudinous character descriptions of God.¹¹ These divine attestations are revelations that identify and distinguish His intrinsic properties.¹² Some of these are found in His compound Hebraic names.¹³ The identity and name of God present a complex problem as to whether a translation of His name should be used or His revealed Hebrew names. A focus of attention must be made as to which of these names are viable and appropriate for this usage based on the context of the investigation.¹⁴ This initial examination of God through

¹¹ J.W. Eddins, Jr. and J.T. Young, "God" in *HBD* present an introductory view describing God with eighteen of His attributes. The unique nature of God is reflected not as one god among many but the only true God who is living (Dt. 5:26; and Jer. 10:10). His nature is reflected as one who is holy (Isa. 5:16; and 6:3), eternal (Dt. 33:27; and Ps. 90:2), and jealous (Ex. 34:14; and Nah. 1:2). A dichotomy of the incommunicable and communicable attributes is explored by L. Berkhof in *Systematic Theology*, (Edinburgh, Scotland: Banner of Truth, 1976), 58-81.

¹² A more clear presentation is made by L.S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, abridged ed., (Ed.) J.F. Walvoord (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1984), 139-153. In this thirteenth chapter, Chafer classifies these attributes in polar representations of incommunicable-communicable, natural-moral, immanent-emanative, passive-active, absolute-relative, and negative-positive. The idea of justice is classified as communicable, whereas sovereignty is considered a constitutional attribute.

¹³ The Hebraic divine name focuses on the disclosure of God's character. Most of these references are indicated through compound words with either (ʿl) אֱלֹהִים or (YHWH) יהוה in the construct state. For an understanding of the construct state see J. Weingreen, *A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 43-47. Emphasis on using the Hebraic forms of the divine name is discussed in a lengthy list of names, titles, and descriptions of God in H.T. Blackaby and C.V. King, *Experiencing God: How to Live the Full Adventure of Knowing and Doing the Will of God* (Nashville, TN: Lifeway Press, 1990), 175-183.

¹⁴ The use of Hebraic names for God addresses whether translations or transliterations are used. Concerning the Tetragrammaton, T.G. Seedman makes a case for the usage of the Hebrew forms in *Holy to Yahveh* (DeBary, FL: Longwood Communications, 1996), 24-36. I question her hermeneutics at three points. Regarding the pronunciation of the Hebrew letter י, she applies modern Hebrew pronunciation to transliterations that follow a classical approach throughout the remainder of the book. Additionally, she carries her proofs past legitimate boundaries regarding *Yeshua* and Jerusalem by forcing a pronunciation that would have a segment of the divine name with the usage of (yh) יה where it does not have etymological proof for such an existence as she purports.

His name provides the backdrop of one such identification in a recurrent biblical theme where God is judge.¹⁵ Especially in the Hebrew bible, His adjudication is in the life of a people who He calls His own.¹⁶ Thus, a three-fold problem emerges in relation to the identity of God, His judgment, and His judged people.

The first of these examinations is God as judge. Yet, before our approach examines the divine purpose connected with judgment, the identity of deity must be established. Without faith, humanity in its primeval history through the present era before the Second Advent of Messiah is faced with a scientific method that can neither prove nor disprove the existence of God.¹⁷ Consequently, rather than to reformulate the issues relevant to whether faith or reason are primary, which scholars have debated at length, the existence of God is accepted as normative within the text through an ideological reading that deity has chosen to reveal Himself through the biblical narrative. As such the ontological, cosmological, and teleological inquiries are not addressed in order to defer to the narrative and its depiction of deity.

As this principal object of faith and worship is unveiled, the study moves from the examination of who God is to what God does. More specifically, what is His peculiar judgment and how does He judge? Because the nature of this type of research would be voluminous, the primary investigation is with special reference to the book of Judges.¹⁸

¹⁵ References with the root (*špt*) שפט are listed 494 times in *SECB*. Other nominal and verbal forms of “judge” are represented in 58 additional passages with the roots (*dn*) דן, (*pll*) פלל, (*lh*) אלה, (*’drgzr*) אדרגזר, (*pqd*) פקד, (*i’m*) טעם, (*md*) מדר, (*ykh*) יכח, and (*npl*) נפל. New Testament references involve fifteen different words involving forms of “judge” in 201 passages in twenty of the New Testament books. The primary root (*krinō*) κρίνω is used 134 times with (*krisis*) κρίσις used 47 times. The remaining passages use forms of (*dikē*) δίκη, (*praitōriōn*) πραιτώριον, (*gnōmē*) γνώμη, (*hēgēdōmai*) ἡγέομαι, (*hēmēra*) ἡμέρα, and (*aisthēsis*) αἴσθησις.

¹⁶ The first verbal reference to God as Judge with the root שפט is in Gen. 16:5. The first nominal reference with the same root is in Gen. 18:25. In Jg. 11:27, it is in a compound structure with the divine name. Chapter 5 presents an examination of these Hebrew roots.

¹⁷ This is further complicated with the introduction of J. Wellhausen’s documentary hypothesis Pentateuchal criticism that the Mosaic authorship should be replaced from its unified corpus to JEPD sources that introduce a J (Yahwistic) and E (Elohim) source of which neither source were God. J. Wellhausen acknowledges that during a visit to Göttingen to see Prof. Ritschl he learned of Karl Heinrich Graf’s theory and dating of the Law after the Prophets. See *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, (Trans.) J.S. Black and A. Menzies (Edinburgh, Scotland: Adam & Charles Black, 1885), 3-4. The only acceptable personal observations of God are in His theophanies found in the biblical material. This limits our observations to those in which we can determine His activity and/or effects in creation and with mankind, relegating us to an issue of faith.

¹⁸ Although the title of the book presupposes a judiciary involvement, the nature and design of the book provides a variety of literary genres. The redactor gives us materials of conquest annals, paraenetic narrative, theological exposition, “hero” narratives, historical notes, hymnic poetry, short story, etiology, fable, battle narrative, annalistic ruler lists, political speech, riddle, and poetic fragments. See, D.I. Block, *NAC: Judges, Ruth*, (Vol. 6), (Gen. Ed.) E.R. Clendenen (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 50-54.

The judgment exacted upon His people is examined to see any cause and effect relationships, as well as any cyclical formula that emerges from the text.¹⁹ What essential actions evoke divine intervention with His people, either on their behalf or against them?

What are the responses to the divine election of these people? Do the expressions of justice meted out bring different responses based on the chronology or geography of the people of God? Does this response differ based on the judge or deliverer in the narrative or even that of the tribal people? Does the judgment found in the book of Judges find its antecedent in the *Torah*? Are there any comparisons between judgments on the people of God in Judges and the later biblical and extrabiblical sources? Does iconography illuminate the question of divine judgment? Does the pattern of judgment found in Judges have any current expression with those who call themselves Israel in our present era? Many of these questions which have their beginning point in chapter two are reserved for later in the study.

The identification of the people of God who are the object of this peculiar judgment leads the research in chapter three into the various schools of criticism of the book of Judges. Through a combined hermeneutic of both lower and higher criticism, a critical look is made at the canonical, textual, literary, grammatical and historical concerns that are relevant to the research. Recognition of the chronological problems, the sources, and date are examined regarding the composition of the material. The approach of contemporary critical scholarship is examined. In some instances, the traditional as well as modern approaches have a tendency to segment the text to the exclusion of seeing the text as a complete unit.²⁰ This diachronic review of the critical scholarship examines the book not only from the traditional historical-critical paradigm but also from within the confines of social scientific criticism. Anthropological and sociological approaches allow an interdisciplinary examination of the societal influences upon this pattern of judgment. Through the artifactual records of archaeological excavations, the trails of iconography

¹⁹ Commentators have discovered a four-fold pattern of the experience of Israel during its premonarchic period. This pattern involves apostasy, oppression, groaning, and deliverance. Others suggest replacing the third element with repentance. However, a corollary parallels this pattern with the reaction of YHWH during the premonarchic period. This pattern involves anger, punishment, change of mind, and deliverance. Ibid., 134-135.

²⁰ J. Barton addresses how modern critical approaches to understand scripture provide the rubric for the practicality of how to approach the text. Yet, he contends that there is no single correct methodology but that the traditional historical-critical methods provide a foundation for using the contemporary approaches and understanding the purpose behind them. See *Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study*, rev. and enlarged, 2nd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 4-7.

and epigraphy are explored. The historiography of the period is examined to determine whether legend and myth have any bearing on the biblical text and divine judgment.

Modern literary theory of the second half of the twentieth century has provided an approach that introduces a synchronic approach.²¹ Therefore, in the fourth chapter the more holistic approaches of rhetorical and narrative criticism are reviewed with a more traditional view of the text.²² The newer critical approaches also elevate the status of the reader and often give a response that tends to have elements of eisegesis.²³ Examinations of the synchronic method usually are divided chronologically as to a reading that is structural or post-structural. However, a tripartite distinction of methods based on the critique of either the text, the reader, or whether it has no meaning (i.e. deconstruction) is more appropriate. Some of these critical approaches include reader-response and various forms of ideological criticism.²⁴ The most recent hermeneutical methodology is a post structural deconstructive criticism that often betrays the text with its own narrative clues.²⁵ The sheer volume of an individual analysis of Judges and the divine judgment theme prohibits an examination by each of these new critical methods. Therefore, because the method of reader-response criticism with its various ideological perspectives naturally prejudices an interpretation of the text, these are avoided. Similarly, a deconstructive analysis is excluded because of its basic premise that the text has no meaning.²⁶

²¹ A.C. Thiselton has produced a rather exhaustive excursus that shifts the paradigm of hermeneutics from its historical framework and examines how theologians can approach a biblical text either in semiotics or deconstruction and how they are interconnected. See *New Horizons in Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992).

²² D.J.A. Clines and J.C. Exum, "The New Literary Criticism," *The New Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible*, (Eds.) *idem* (JSOT Supp 143: Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1993), 11-25. This article is already dated, however it provides a summary description of the direction of critical methodology and provides a good bibliography to pursue in each category.

²³ J.P. Tompkins, "An Introduction to Reader-Response Criticism" in *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, (Ed.) *idem* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), ix-xxvi. This anthology brings secular literary theory into the realm of use within the theological critical realm.

²⁴ Some of the ideological filters which may be used to examine Judges include feminist, sexual, political, and psychoanalytical criticism.

²⁵ J. Culler, introduces that structuralism "threatens the *raison d'être* of literary studies" due to using other disciplines to dominate the text, i.e. Marxism, anthropology, philosophy, etc. See *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982), 18. He differentiates between structuralism and post-structuralism and then applies deconstruction as a critical method.

²⁶ For a concise discussion of post-structural hermeneutics see A.K.M. Adam, *What is Postmodern Biblical Criticism?* (GBS, NTS: Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995); and W.A. Beardslee, "Post Structuralist Criticism," *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and their Application*, (Eds.) S.L. McKenzie and S.R. Haynes (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 253-267.

These critical schools provide the foundation for discerning the cyclical pattern and the analysis of its constituent parts in chapter five. This examination of the cycle shows how each component, represented by the key words studied has an effect. How does the cycle and its parts affect the people of God? How does the cycle involve God's judgment? Does the presence of this cycle obligate God to intervene with judgment? Key words that augment the pattern are interpreted through word studies. This helps us to comprehend the factors that cause God's people to stagnate into apostasy. It will lead us to evaluate what constitutes raising either an oppressor or a deliverer. These key words direct the study in order to demarcate the relevant passages.

There is an examination of the germane passages which supplements the word studies, and this approach is exegetical. The passages from Judges demonstrate the nature of this cycle among the people of God and the elements of judgment in the cycle. Other complementary passages are introduced that reflect elements of justice other than those found in Judges. These are contrasted and compared with the primary texts.

The critical interpretation and exegesis provide the evidence for applying the results in chapter six. The possibility of making this application is discussed and then the results balanced against a biblical hermeneutic. This final chapter asserts questions regarding the validity of the application of these results.

The Approach of this Study

Traditionally, an exhaustive study is performed through a specific and well defined hermeneutical rubric. This results in a precise specialization of the narrative. Nonetheless, certain avenues of exploration are by design unapproachable because of the methodology chosen. Consequently, a multi-disciplinary approach has been adopted on both diachronic and synchronic levels. Even a holistic hermeneutical alternative is problematic, because it tends to be repetitive where one system overlaps another. An effort has been made to reduce this repetition by noting that areas have been previously addressed. Generally, each hermeneutical model may stand as a distinct and self-sufficient model. At times, the particular discussion may remain more faithful to the paradigmatic method and seem extraneous to the thesis at hand. Yet, it is necessary to view these elements to see what effect they have upon the thesis. Ultimately, the atomistic elements of the various disciplines become foundational building blocks for a holistic interpretation of Hebraic biblical theology.

Hermeneutical Principles Followed

Historically, theologians have accepted that a cyclical pattern is present in most of the pericopes of Judges. In order to view this paradigm, each element that constitutes the sequence of events is accepted as an individual entity. This observation is from both the human and the divine perspective. Linguistic tools of word studies, grammars, and cross-reference work assist to comprehend the concept.

Exegetical work in Judges develops the basis for our understanding of this peculiar judgment of God on His chosen people. Where there are omissions in a systematization of judgment other biblical materials fill in these gaps. The research not only involves material from the extant originary biblical and extrabiblical texts but also commentaries, periodicals, books, journals, electronic media, and unpublished materials.

The methodology used can not be divorced from Hebrew bible theology and its main problems. Specifically, what is the relationship of Hebrew bible theology to an Israelite history of religion?²⁷ Thus, this study is neither a theology nor a history; but a descriptive presentation of the elements that involve judgment as historically presented in Judges with a contemporary evaluation.

The purpose of this study is to offer a reading of the text of Judges that explores certain aspects of the historical elements of this judgment on God's people, showing the validity of both a diachronic and synchronic hermeneutic. These methods provide the crucible to test the thesis whether this peculiar type of divine judgment was only a historical biblical event or whether it has a modern context to which the same cyclical pattern may be applied. Thus, we set out to prove or disprove whether the accepted cyclical pattern in Judges is a theological paradigm of divine judgment.

²⁷ Preuss, 7-15.

CHAPTER 2

SURVEY OF THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATIONS

The Identity of God

A thorough scrutiny of the nature, character, and identity of God would prove to be an exercise in futility rather like examining infinity with a microscope. Almost fifteen centuries ago, Lydus, a Greek philosopher indelibly and timelessly stated “There has been and is much disagreement among theologians about the god honored among the Hebrews.”¹

The historiographical evidences of monolatrous Israel have representation in the monarchal eras; however, other theological historians suggest the time of pre-monarchal tribal confederacy, as is discussed later in chapter three. An even smaller group asserts the Sinaitic entity period. Although each of these has validity and is examined, the identification and introduction of God to Israel at (*Har Sînāy*) Mount Sinai does not necessitate His origin at the geographic point of His cosmic theophany.² As a result, the proto-history of humanity reveals the transcendence of deity and His existence is accepted rather than being proved through a theological examination.

The Nature of God

By necessity, it is important to define the concept of the divine nature and to examine the major arguments regarding His revelation. From the outset, this is not a systematic theology; rather it is to serve as a foundation for an examination of God with specific reference to Judges. Because Judges does not exist in a vacuum but within a greater canon of scripture, other passages help to elucidate the concept.

¹ Lydus, *De mensibus* 4.53; for text and translation, see H.W. Attridge and R.A. Oden, Jr., *The Phoenician History: Philo of Byblos (CBQMS 9)*: Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1979), 70-71.

² הַר סִינַי אֵל.

Definition of God

The term “God” is present throughout the thesis; however, the preference is to use the Hebraic equivalents whenever possible. However, before we embark upon a discussion of these appellative terms, it is necessary to define the generic concept. Creeds and confessions of faith are not satisfactory because they mention the idea and belief in God without any meaning expressed.

An oblique definition is “that which man is ultimately concerned.”³ This is inadequate because it implies universality of which atheists and agnostics would vigorously oppose. The ideal is that which man should be concerned although the reality is apparent. Alternatively, God is that “Other” Who through self-disclosure makes Himself known through the nexus of religious experience.⁴ Rather than define the concept, Kambartel proposes that this is a *synkategorematische* expression.⁵ This suggests that our definition is conditioned based upon our understanding of divine expressions observed or recounted in a religious context. Therefore, who He is and what He does is the means by which humanity through anthropomorphic and anthropopathic self-disclosure comprehends deity. In this way, God is the totality of reality.⁶

Within theological language, the term “God” functions as a proper name for deity. However, this function may be an improper generic usage rather than to appropriate the Hebraic cultural names. The name “God” is a transferable substantive that means one thing to a Jew and another to a Muslim, which is discerned quickly when specific naming occurs within the religious context.⁷ As such, the monotheistic appellation refers to two different deities each having different character traits. Equally, a Muslim might ask a Christian the question “Do you believe in God?” Although the answer might be positive, the idea of God would be different and diametrically opposed between the two.

³ H.B. Kuhn, “God: His Names and Nature,” *Fundamentals of the Faith*, (Ed.) C.F.H. Henry (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1969), 38.

⁴ Pannenberg, 67.

⁵ F. Kambartel, “Theo-logisches: Definitische Vorschläge zu einigen Grundtermini im Zusammenhang christlicher Rede von Gott” (Theological: Definite suggestions for an appointment in connection with the Christian speaking of God), *ZEE* 15 (1971), 32-35.

⁶ K. Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, (Trans.) W.V. Dych (New York: Seabury Press, 1978), 44-51.

⁷ The Jewish definition of God is succinctly stated by (Moses ben Maimon) Maimonides in what is known as the “Thirteen Principles of Faith.”

Ultimately, the best definition of God is His own self-designation – (*'ehyeh 'asher 'ehyeh*) “I AM THAT I AM.”⁸ This disclosure to (*Mōšeh*) Moses is not a name used of divinity, but a revelatory declaration of self-existence that requires no revelation.⁹ Ironically, Jesus would use an abbreviated emphatic Greek form (*egō eimi*) “I AM.”¹⁰

Idea of God

Ethnographical studies within Anthropology often cite some cosmic entity that ethnic groups regard as deity. The idea of God is not unique to the Hebrews. A cursory reading of the bible reveals that most cultures practiced theism and that was to be a distinguishing factor between Israel and the nations concerning the question of polytheism, monolatry, or monotheism. Social scientists express the near universal belief in God (or gods) is that “man felt the need for the ‘idea of God’ because of his limited understanding of the processes of the world and his inability to direct his own destiny.”¹¹ This is not an epistemological position that is acceptable in either Judaism or Christianity.

The idea of God does not begin with man. For if it does, then it suggests that deity is the philosophical creation of man. This contradicts the Creation narratives of Genesis. Rather God created man and his idea of God is because of divine disclosure. In these narratives, there is divine discourse to man and within the Garden of Eden episode there is mutual dialogue together with anthropopathy. For the descendants of Adam and Eve, God was not some ethereal imaginative creation to explain the creation myth; but a distinct reality that has historical implications that call for either belief or unbelief in His existence. Rabbinic theology teaches that God is not reached metaphysically, but

[T]hrough the personal experience of his revelation and his continuous operations in the world, [and he] cannot possibly be removed from it, or be confined to any particular region.¹²

This idea does not place God in Heaven where He is out of reach or in history where He is not in the present world. As declared in the preamble of nearly every Jewish prayer, He is (*melek hā 'ōlām*) “King of the Universe.”¹³

⁸ אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה. Ex. 3:14.

⁹ מֹשֶׁה.

¹⁰ Ἐγώ εἰμι. Jn. 18:6. Kuhn, 46.

¹¹ Ibid., 38.

¹² S. Schechter, *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology* (New York: Schocken Books, 1961), 25.

¹³ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם. This also carries with it the idea of God being the “everlasting king” so that the statement is both temporal and spatial. Cf. *Ber.* 4a.

Revelation of God

The idea that God reveals Himself to man is fundamental to a faith based religion even when elements of reason are conjoined with it. As there is an existential encounter between divinity and humanity, the concept of truth becomes the fulcrum that allows these two to meet.

[God is] the God who approaches man and man [is] the man who comes from God.... In the Bible this two-sided relation between God and man is not developed as doctrine, but rather is set forth as happening in a story. The relation between God and man and between man and God is not of such a kind that doctrine can adequately express it in abstract formulas.... Its concern is not with a relation which exists in and for itself, but with a relation which (so to say) occurs.¹⁴

Truth becomes self evident in the process of divine disclosure. Barth describes this disclosure as a process whereby God encounters and speaks to man. Then, man speaks or proclaims God's word. Finally, someone writes down the record of these events.¹⁵ This is the Barthian conception of the Word of God, which for him is the preeminent source of revelation. Although, the Word of God must be the foundation for divine self-disclosure and the standard for judging the validity of truth, it does not exclude other means of revelation. Because the scope of this research is concerned with divine judgment, the cosmological, ontological, teleological, and moral arguments for the existence of God are not addressed.

The Divine Names of God

God is not a generic entity as the Supreme Being. Rather, He is known not only by His actions but also by His names. Ultimately, unless knowledge of Him comes by revelation, our perception and idea may be truncated or distorted. Meister Eckhart vividly illustrates the latter point by his declaration: "God becomes God when the creatures say God."¹⁶ This bears the same faulty reasoning that a tree falling in the forest only makes a sound when someone is present to hear it. Nonetheless, a kernel of truth is present in Eckhart's statement when humanity in its recognition of God begins to perceive the reality associated with deity. Berkhof further expresses this generality by emphasizing the theological concept of the name of God, rather than specific appellations.

¹⁴ E. Brunner, *The Divine-Human Encounter* (Trans.) A.W. Loos (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1943), 46-47.

¹⁵ K. Barth, *The Doctrine of the Word of God: Prolegomena to Church Dogmatics*, Trans. G.T. Thomson (Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1936), 111-120.

¹⁶ Eckhart is quoted without reference by J. Pohier, *God – In Fragments* (New York: Crossroad, 1986), 37.

The Bible often speaks of the name of God in the singular, as for instance, in Ex. 20:7 and Ps. 8:1. When it does this, it does not refer to any special designation of God, but uses the term in a very general sense to denote His self-revelation.¹⁷

Is the name of God only a concept? In support of the same thesis, Brunner disproves his point by suggesting that the purpose of divine self-disclosure of the name of God is for communion and fellowship. When he states, “The Name of God denotes all that God is for man, and it is intended that this truth will cause men to know God” directs us to the biblical text to be able to know the divine name(s).¹⁸ Within the *Hexateuch* there are numerous singular and compound names for deity; however, since our immediate focus is within the book of Judges, our examination will be limited to those names found there. The uniqueness of these divine names in the Hebrew bible when compared to other religious texts is that these appellations are not human constructs; but rather divine self-designations.

While philosophical systems name the Deity in terms of some central quality they affirm of Him, the names for God given in the biblical record embody the features of His progressive self-revelation.¹⁹

Therefore, we turn our attention to these names, of which two have preeminence within premonarchic Israel.

Elohim

The generic name of God has four different forms. Two of the forms are singular in number and the other two are plural.

PLURAL FORMS

ELOHIM. The author of Genesis provides the first divine disclosure in the opening verse of the Hebrew bible. With the third word of that verse, the reader learns the general name of God to be *Elohim*. In the early eighteenth century, the French physician Jean Astruc associated the name with an *Elohistic* source and name for God that served as the foundation for the Documentary Hypothesis theory.²⁰

Yet, the narrator of Judges does not follow that early *Torah* pattern of first introducing *Elohim*, accepting that the *Hexateuch* forms the prolegomena for Judges and

¹⁷ L. Berkhof, *Manual of Christian Doctrine*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1933), 58.

¹⁸ E. Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of God*, (Tran.) O. Wyon, *Dogmatics, Vol. 1* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1949), 128.

¹⁹ Kuhn, 41.

²⁰ H.O. Wiley, *Christian Theology, Vol. 1* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1953), 242.

that the basic names for deity have been revealed. At this point in Israelite historiography, what follows is amplification of understanding divine-human intercourse through additional compound names. Already, a series of compound names involving *Elohim* have been introduced; yet, the narrator does not draw from that corpus of revelation, but consistently uses the first reference. This serves the revelatory rhetoric of the narrator by presenting *Elohim* as a *remez* for his readers, pointing backwards to the first creation narrative. This is crucial because *Elohim* is the Creator who is creating a creation. Although more text is given to the sixth day of creation and humanity is the crown of His creation, the focus is on *Elohim* and not the objects of that creation. There is no sense of relationship between any of the created beings and the Creator *Elohim*, except as a distant benevolent benefactor. Only as the second creation narrative unfolds does the narrator with the introduction of the compound name *YHWH-Elohim* makes that distinction apparent.

The narrator subtly uses the motif of knowing versus not knowing in his choice of divine names. He reveals this in the second prologue of Judges, where he contrasts the generation of (*Y²hōšū'a*) Joshua with the generation that followed.²¹ The focal point is that the subsequent generation (*lō'-yāḏ^a'ū 'et-YHWH*) “did not know YHWH.”²² However, before this is explored, the corollary suggests that those outside Israel, *i.e.*, the nations left in Canaan, also did not know YHWH, whereby the narrator uses the name *Elohim* as a spiritual barometer of lacking intimate relationship and knowledge of deity. The first reference of *Elohim* is made by the Canaanite king (*'^adōnī Bezeq*) Adoni-bezek.²³ The narrator has already attributed the defeat of Adoni-bezek and the ten thousand men at (*Bezeq*) Bezek to YHWH, so why does the defeated king call Him *Elohim*?²⁴ The answer sets forth the structural motif of knowing and not-knowing that pervades the book. Adoni-bezek did not know YHWH as he did not have the privilege of the Israelite covenant that included self-disclosure of the deity.

Other than being an appellation for YHWH, the next time the narrator uses it as a divine referent by (*'ēhūd*) Ehud to (*'eglôn*) Eglon, the king of (*Mô'āb*) Moab.²⁵ This presupposes that the worshipper of pagan gods would not recognize the identity of the

²¹ יהושע ה'.

²² לא־יָדָעוּ אֶת־יְהוָה ה'. Jg. 2:10.

²³ אֲדֹנִי בִזְק ה'. Jg. 1:7.

²⁴ בִּזְק ה'.

²⁵ מוֹאָב, עֶגְלוֹן, אֶהוּד ה'. Jg. 3:20.

specific name of the Israelite deity. This is expected; but when the story turns to (*Gid'ôn*) Gideon and him having already experienced a theophanic manifestation and an empowering by the Spirit of YHWH, he retreats to testing *Elohim* with a need for signs rather than operating on the word of YHWH, with whom he presumably had a relationship.²⁶ The pattern returns when the Midianite soldier interprets his friend's dream using the referent *Elohim*.²⁷ There is some ambiguity when the narrator has Gideon face the men of (*'eprayim*) Ephraim and the language he uses peculiarly to equate the victory to *Elohim* and not to YHWH.²⁸ The question is whether Gideon's faith is *Elohistic* or he is treating the Ephraimites as foreigners presuming they do not know YHWH. Or is this potentially an anti-Ephraimitic polemic that a redactor has interwoven into the narrative? This principle is illustrated further when (*Yôṭām*) Jotham declares his fable to the men of (*Š²ķem*) Shechem with the anthropomorphic creation referring to *Elohim*.²⁹ It is not surprising that the Creator sends forth an evil spirit between (*'^abīmelek*) Abimelech and the Shechemites so that these men are treated as idolaters, such that *Elohim* brings forth the judgment rather than YHWH.³⁰ The term appears frequently in the annunciation story of (*Šimšôn*) Samson, but this underscores the position of "not-knowing" that (*Mānôah*) Manoah and his wife exhibit.³¹ Even the theophanic messenger makes this point by referring to the earthly nature of Samson as a (*n²zîr*) Nazirite to *Elohim* rather than to YHWH in this Creator-creation state.³² When Samson fears dying of thirst, the narrator casts *Elohim* in that Creator role of producing water from the cleft of the hollow place in (*Leḥî*) Lehi.³³ In the story of the migration of the tribe of (*Dān*) Dan, the spies ask the (*Lēwî*) Levite to inquire of *Elohim*.³⁴ It is ironic that the narrator does not have the Levite respond with the same terminology. Even so, in the recitation of this event to the assembled Danites, the spies refer to *Elohim* as the One who has given them the land. The

²⁶ *ה' גִּדְעוֹן*. Jg. 6:36-40.

²⁷ Jg. 7:14.

²⁸ *ה' אֶפְרַיִם*. Jg. 8:3.

²⁹ *ה' יוֹתָם*, and *שָׁכֵם*. Jg. 9:7, 9, and 13.

³⁰ *ה' אֲבִימֶלֶךְ*. Jg. 9:23, 56, and 57.

³¹ *ה' שִׁמְשׁוֹן*, and *מָנוּחַ*. Jg. 13:5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 22.

³² *ה' נָזִיר*. Jg. 13:5, 7; and 16:17.

³³ *ה' לֵוִי*. Jg. 15:19.

³⁴ *ה' לֵוִי*, and *לָדָן*. Jg. 18:5.

idea of being one that does not know seems to permeate the story of the internecine war against (*Binyāmin*) Benjamin.³⁵ The narrator identifies Israel, not as the people of YHWH, but the people of *Elohim*.³⁶ Later there is a strange liturgical reference to the (*'ārôn b'rîṭ hā'elōhîm*) Ark of the Covenant of *Elohim*.³⁷ After the three battles are over and the losses have mounted, Israel shifts the blame with an egregious response to deity as they wept before *Elohim*.³⁸

Almost out of character for the narrator, he uses the term *Elohim* occasionally, when YHWH is expected. For example, after the defeat of (*Yābîn*) Jabin, the king of Canaan, he attributes Jabin's subjugation to *Elohim*.³⁹ Potentially it is because of the creative elements of nature that the deity uses to defeat His enemies; but it also may be the narrator's refusal to vilify YHWH with actions, which abrogate His character. In this case, even the absence of divine language is conspicuous with the murder of (*Sîs'rā*) Sisera by (*Yā'ēl*) Jael.⁴⁰ In the Gideon story, the narrator references the divine messenger primarily in relation to YHWH; but on one instance, he uses the term *Elohim*.⁴¹ The only potential explanation is scribal confusion, as a two-source document is not tenable.

The reader almost expects that the narrator would use the name *Elohim* much more frequently than he does throughout the various pericopes. This would help to excuse premonarchic Israel in its apostasy by blaming their actions on lack of knowledge of YHWH. However, as is seen through the book, it is the willful choices of sin that Israel makes which invokes the divine response of judgment. The narrator uses the term *Elohim* 61 times in Judges. Primarily, the plural absolute state is used.⁴² Other times there are pronominal suffixes added to *Elohim*.⁴³ Eleven times the narrator uses the word in the

³⁵ בְּנִימִן ה'.

³⁶ Jg. 20:2.

³⁷ ה' אֲרוֹן בְּרִית הָאֱלֹהִים Jg. 20:27.

³⁸ Jg. 21:2.

³⁹ ה' יָבִין Jg. 4:23.

⁴⁰ ה' יַעֲלֵל, and ה' יַעֲלֵל.

⁴¹ Jg. 6:20.

⁴² The word is used in *BHS* as אֱלֹהִים in Jg. 1:7; 2:3, 12; 3:20; 4:23; 6:20, 31, 36, 39, 40; 7:14; 8:3, 33; 9:7, 9, 13, 23, 56, 57; 10:13, 14; 13:5, 6 (2x), 7, 8, 9 (2x), 22; 15:19; 16:17, 28; 18:5, 10, 31; 20:2, 18, 27; and 21:2.

⁴³ The word (*'elōhēhem*) אֱלֹהֵיהֶם “their *Elohim*” is used in Jg. 3:7; 8:34; 9:37; 16:23, and 24. The word (*'elōhēnū*) אֱלֹהֵינוּ “our *Elohim*” is used in Jg. 10:10; 11:24, 16:23, and 24. The word (*'elōheykā*) אֱלֹהֵיכֶם “your *Elohim*” (sg.) is used in Jg. 11:24. The word (*'elōhēkem*) אֱלֹהֵיכֶם “your *Elohim*” (pl.) is used in Jg. 6:10. The narrator does not use the first person singular or third person singular pronoun forms.

construct state.⁴⁴ Because the word exists in plural form, the translator must choose whether the meaning is singular or plural. This is one of the unique Hebrew words that in its nearly 2600 occurrences more often than not it has the singular meaning of “God;” although it may occasionally mean “god.”⁴⁵ As the divine name, it represents either the “plural of majesty” or the “plural of intensity.”⁴⁶ The plural ending of the word

[S]hould be understood in the sense of an intensification and eventually as an absolutization: ‘God of gods, ‘the highest God,’ ‘quintessence of all divine powers, ‘the only God who represents the divine in a comprehensive and absolute way.’⁴⁷

Nonetheless, of the times the narrator uses the term *Elohim* not all of them refer to the Israelite deity *per se*.⁴⁸ This is because one must translate the true plural form as “gods” and thus, pagan entities distinct from *Elohim*.

’ĒLĪM. The second of the plural forms is *’ēlīm*.⁴⁹ It is formed from the primary singular form *’ēl*. Despite some misconceptions, this form does occur four times in the Hebrew bible; however, this form is not present in Judges.⁵⁰

SINGULAR FORMS

’ĒL. Of the two singular forms the most prominent form is *’ēl*.⁵¹ Usually, it is an appellative title for God. There are two different ways in Judges which the narrator uses the singular form *El*. The first way is speculative because the translation “house of *’ēl*” may actually be a geographic locution for (*Bêt-’ēl*) Bethel.⁵² Otherwise, the appellative function only occurs once. Ironically, this singular form betrays its primary function on a few occasions, whereby its alternate meaning represents a foreign “god.” The narrator employs this function to introduce the Shechemite deity.⁵³ The usage of the deity (*’ēl*

⁴⁴ The construct form (*’ēlōhê-*) אֱלֹהֵי “*Elohim* of –” is used in Jg. 4:6; 5:3, 5; 6:8, 10; 10:6, 16; 11:21, 23; 18:24; and 21:3.

⁴⁵ Preuss, 147.

⁴⁶ J.A. Loewen, “The Names of God in the Old Testament,” *BibTran* 35 (1984), 203.

⁴⁷ M. Rose, “Names of God in the OT,” *ABD* 4, 1001-1011.

⁴⁸ Jg. 2:3, 12; 6:31; 8:33; 10:13, 14; 11:24; 16:23, 24; and 18:24.

⁴⁹ אֱלִים.

⁵⁰ Ex. 15:11; Ps. 29:1; 89:7; and Dan. 11:36.

⁵¹ אֵל.

⁵² בֵּית־אֵל. Jg. 20:18; and 21:2. From this point, the more recognizable transliterated form *El* is used.

⁵³ Jg. 9:46.

B²rît) *El Berit* is not clarified in the text as to his function.⁵⁴ Because the Shechemites were a fringe cultic entity within Israelite society, there is sufficient reason to accept that *Elohim* is not represented in this deity. It may be related more closely to the Canaanite-Syrian deity *El*.⁵⁵ Notwithstanding, the morphemes used in the biblical text while potentially representing this foreign deity, functioned generically, as the earlier reference identified the Shechemite god as (*Ba'al- B²rît*) *Baal Berith*.⁵⁶

[I]n its use of *El* the Hebrew of the Bible is completely unconscious of the ancient pagan use of *El* as the proper name of the head of the Phoenician, and no doubt also of the Canaanite, pantheon. *El* in the Bible is fully synonymous with the proper name YHWH.⁵⁷

With the possible exception of the Abimelech pericope in Judges, there is no referent to this Canaanite deity. As such, the questions surrounding the Canaanite *El* are outside the scope of this investigation whereby there is no direct or indirect judgment perpetrated upon Israel by the deity.⁵⁸

'ĒLŌAH. The other singular form is *'ēlōah*.⁵⁹ Primarily it is recognized because of the plural form *Elohim*. Nonetheless, the singular form occurs 57 times in the Hebrew bible, although it is not present in Judges.⁶⁰ Within Judges, the narrator uses the divine appellation *Elohim* either to show someone that does not know YHWH or have a (proper) relationship with Him or in a role where He exhibits creative prowess.

YHWH

What is the specific name of the Israelite deity? The Tetragrammaton has been represented in numerous ways among theologians. It is not surprising since the divine

⁵⁴ אֵל בְּרִיתָהּ.

⁵⁵ T.J. Lewis, "The Identity and Function of El/Baal Berith," *JBL* 115 (1996), 402-404. F.M. Cross, Jr. contends that the deity was originally the Canaanite god *El*; however, it has metamorphically changed into the Israelite form *El Elohim* of Israel. See his, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 49. *Contra* this position, L.E. Toombs and G.E. Wright argue that this is the same God of the patriarch Jacob. See their, "The Fourth Campaign at Balāṭah (Shechem)," *BASOR* 169 (1963), 31.

⁵⁶ בְּעַל בְּרִיתָהּ.

⁵⁷ M.H. Segal, "El, Elohim, and YHWH in the Bible," *JQR* 46 (1955), 91.

⁵⁸ For a discussion on the possibility of the Canaanite *El* as the Creator who dwelt in the Garden of Eden, see R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament* (HSM 4: Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), 169-171; and H.N. Wallace, *The Eden Narrative* (HSM 32: Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1985), 79.

⁵⁹ אֱלֹהִים.

⁶⁰ It is interesting that forty-one of those occurrences are in the dialogues between Job and his three friends. The other usage of this word is primarily in poetic texts. Cf. Preuss, 151.

name occurs 5321 times in the Hebrew bible.⁶¹ Although current scholarship has retreated from its earlier position using the name “Jehovah,” the presence of that name in English bible translations allows it to enjoy an authoritative position among the masses. The problem begins with the historical use of the divine name and the misapplication of the *Torah* regarding profaning the name.⁶²

The Samaritans appear to have had a special abhorrence of using the Sacred Name, and said simply *Shema* (The Name), and about B.C. 340, it is said, even substituted in the text of the Pentateuch *Elohim* for the Tetragrammaton.⁶³

The divine name was given to Israel to be used and not to be disregarded or replaced by anomalous forms. When YHWH disclosed His name to Moses and instructed him to inform Israel, YHWH embedded the disclosure in legal terms with two profound statements: “This is My name forever, and this is (*zikri*) ‘My memorial-name’ to generation of generation.”⁶⁴ Accordingly, the name was not a possession for hiding away, but one for liturgical use. The context of the divine disclosure was not the Exodus event; but the event that allowed Israel to come and worship YHWH.⁶⁵ The sons of (*’ah^arōn*) Aaron and the successive priesthood were divinely charged with the responsibility of blessing Israel with a three-fold blessing by placing the name of YHWH on them.⁶⁶ Kleinig suggests that the divine name, although intended for liturgical use, was not the sole possession of the Levites and the priesthood. Rather, it was for the whole congregation. Wherever sacrifices of burnt offerings and peace offerings were made at the place where He caused His name to be remembered implies invoking the divine name by the one making the offering.⁶⁷ Later, (*š^alōmōh*) Solomon built a temple where the divine name may be, so that the people called by His name might worship Him.⁶⁸

⁶¹ R. Abba, “The Divine Name Yahweh,” *JBL* 80 (1961), 320.

⁶² Ex. 20:7.

⁶³ יה (š^ama) שִׁמָּה. A.L. Williams, “The Tetragrammaton – Jahweh, Name or Surrogate?” *ZAW* 54 (1936), 263.

⁶⁴ יה זִכְרִי. Ex. 3:15.

⁶⁵ J.W. Kleinig, “What’s the Use of Naming God?” *LTJ* 26 (1992), 28. Ex. 3:12, and 18.

⁶⁶ יה אֶהְיֶה. Num. 6:22-27.

⁶⁷ Ex. 20:24.

⁶⁸ יה שְׁלֹמֹה. Kleinig, 32-33. 2 Chron. 7:12-16.

FORM AND ETYMOLOGY

If the divine intent is for the people of YHWH to use His name in worship, what is the correct form? Within scholarship there are two principle positions regarding the form and etymology of the divine name. The more prominent view accepts that the reduced forms are “abbreviations or variant forms of Yahweh, still further abbreviated to *Yah*.”⁶⁹ Part of the conundrum is because of theophoric names found in the bible and in epigraphic inscriptions. Neither of the names *Elohim* and YHWH appears in their full form theophorically. Instead, there are hypocoristic forms. *Elohim* reduces naturally to the singular form *El*, where it appears at the beginning or at the end of the theophoric name. The name YHWH reduces to four different forms.⁷⁰ As a beginning of the name, it appears as (*y²hō*) or (*yô*).⁷¹ At the end of the name, it appears as (*y²hû*) or (*yāh*).⁷²

The *Tetragrammaton*, transcribed into cuneiform, appears in the names of various kings who figure in the Assyrian royal annals from about 850 till 700 B.C. It is at this period written *Ya-* or *Yau-* at the beginning and *-Yāu*, *-Yau*, *-Ya*, or *-Au* at the end of these names.⁷³

There is disagreement as to whether the hypocoristic forms function as a surrogate for the intended full name or *vice versa*. The traditional view places the *Tetragrammaton* as the divine name and uses the epigraphic inscription on the Moabite Stone *ca.* 850 BCE as *a priori* evidence. Contra this position, Driver cites four reasons why the national deity YHWH is an expanded form of the earlier tribal deity (*Yā*).⁷⁴

(1) no other Semitic race abbreviates the names of its gods, either when used independently or when compounded with other elements in proper names, although they not infrequently leave the name of the god to be supplied; (2) it is hard to believe that a name so sacred as יהוה would be commonly abbreviated, and the reason indeed why the shorter forms were alone used in proper names may be that they, not having the theological import of יהוה, were held less sacred and so more suitable for profane use; (3) the primitive names given to gods tend to be short and hard to explain, and their origin and meaning are hidden in the mists of antiquity; (4) endeavours to explain these primitive names are usually the work of a later more reflexive age, like those of the Greeks.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ M. Jastrow, Jr., “Hebrew Proper Names compounded with יה and יהו,” *JBL* 13 (1894), 102.

⁷⁰ Jastrow, 101-127.

⁷¹ יהו, יהוה, and יה.

⁷² יהוה, יהו, and יה.

⁷³ G.R. Driver, “The Original Form of the Name ‘Yahweh’: Evidence and Conclusions,” *ZAW* 46 (1928), 8. In addition, he includes a chronological table showing the development of the theophoric element in Hebrew, Aramaic, Assyrian/Babylonian texts and inscriptions from the 9th century BCE through the 3rd century BCE.

⁷⁴ יה.

⁷⁵ Driver, “The Original Form of the Name ‘Yahweh,’” 23-24.

Following some of the same reasoning, Levy based his argument on grammar and suggested the Tetragrammaton is an expansion of the real form. He states his case that the reduced form (*YĀHŪ*) is the divine name; however, the final vowel is an obsolete nominative case ending.⁷⁶ Therefore, if the paragodic (*h*) ה is removed from the Tetragrammaton, then a triliteral word exists. When the archaic nominative suffix is removed the bilateral divine name is rendered as (*YĀH*).⁷⁷

Wilson made a comparative study of the hypocoristic forms and suggested that the phonetic vocalization alters slightly from the pure form so that the theophoric personal name does not suggest irreverence; but is similar enough in form to represent the divine name.⁷⁸ By noting the cognate usage in the Arabic ending (*h*) and comparing it to the final (*H*) in the Tetragrammaton, Wilson suggests this letter serves an honorific function.⁷⁹ In Aramaic *papyri*, there is “a tendency to use ה [h] as a *litera prolongationis*, especially before [w] ו.”⁸⁰ As such, he proposes an alternate vocalization, whereby the divine name is (*YĀHŌH*), maintaining its traditional form when not vocalized.⁸¹

The etymological argument has a second hypothesis. Scholars posit that the hypocoristic forms (*yāhū*), (*yāh*), and (*y^hhō*) are connected to the Babylonian deity *Ea*, suggesting that the Tetragrammaton is “an artificial formation due to theological abstraction.”⁸² The theory was developed based upon elements of a philological study by the Himyaritic scholar Eduard Glaser.⁸³ At the end of the 19th century, those holding this position claimed strong *prima facie* evidence that the Sumerian god *Ea* was “the true ‘begetter’ of *Yah*.”⁸⁴ A text from Cuneiform tablets assert that *Ea* is *Ilu* (*El*) “the most general name

⁷⁶ יהוה.

⁷⁷ יהוה. J.H. Levy, “The Tetra(?)grammaton,” *JQR* 15 (1903), 99. *Contra* this position see, M. Jastrow, Jr., “The Origin of the Form יהוה of the Divine Name,” *ZAW* 16 (1896), 1-15.

⁷⁸ Williams, 266.

⁷⁹ א. ה. יהוה.

⁸⁰ Driver, “The original form of the name ‘Yahweh,’” 20.

⁸¹ יהוה. Williams, 266-267. He provides six proofs for his argument of vocalization.

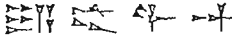
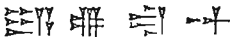
⁸² Jastrow, 102.

⁸³ E. Glaser, *Jehowah-Jovis und die drie Söhne Noah's: Ein Beitrag zur vergleichenden Götterlehre* (Jehovah-Jovis and the three sons of Noah: A contribution for the comparison study of gods), (Munich, Germany: Hermann Lukaschik, 1901). The theory has been revised, whereby *Ea* was of West Semitic origin, potentially from Arabia. Cf. R.P. Dougherty, *The Sealand of Ancient Arabia*, (*YOS* 19: New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1932), 175-181. Another variation suggests *Ea* is of Hurrian origin based on inscriptions from Nuzi. Cf. A.H. Godbey, *The Lost Tribes: A Myth: Suggestions Toward Rewriting Hebrew History* (New York: Ktav Publishing, 1974), 562.

⁸⁴ A.H. Keane, “EA; YAHVEH; DYLAUS; ZEYΣ; JUPITER,” *JQR* 15 (1903), 567.

for the deity amongst all the early Semitic peoples” as reflected in Figure 1.⁸⁵ The Cuneiform documents represent *Ea* phonetically as *Ia* and *Aê*, also. Accordingly, this form could easily mutate into the sound represented in *Yah*.⁸⁶ Driver posits this forms the basis for the divine name, which may have originated from a primeval “god-cry” *Yah!* But, when the ejaculation was prolonged, the extended form “rapidly became fixed in the imagination of the people as *Yahweh*.”⁸⁷

FIGURE 1 CUNEIFORM TEXT


Ia- ah- re- ilu

Ia- hu- um- ilu

Burney also follows this same type of reasoning. He suggests that Amorite immigrants, the supposed founders of the First Babylonian Dynasty brought this deity with them to the area. Epigraphic evidence of theophoric personal names in time of Abraham and his contemporary Hammurabi acknowledge a polytheistic cult in ancient Sumer. Nonetheless, the most prominent theophoric element includes the name of the moon-god *Sin*. The name (*Ya-ma-e-ra-ah*) may be translated “‘*Ya* indeed is the moon,’ *i.e.* the moon-god *Sin*.”⁸⁸ This philologically connects with the place *Sinai*, which derives its name from the moon-god *Sin*.⁸⁹

Nonetheless, this parallel may or may not predate the theory of the (*haqQênî*) Kenite hypothesis.⁹⁰ Originally suggested by von der Alm in 1862, he identified YHWH as the Midianite deity of Moses’ father-in-law, (*Yitrô*) Jethro, the Kenite.⁹¹ Rowley


⁸⁵ The Cuneiform figure comes from F. Delitzsch, *Babel und Bibel: ein Vortrag von Friedrich Delitzsch* (Babel and Bible: A Proposal by Friedrich Delitzsch), (Leipzig, Germany: J.C. Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, 1903), 47; cited in Keane, 573. The text originates from a table in the British Museum dated to the time of Hammurabi.


⁸⁶ Keane, 574-575.

⁸⁷ Driver, “The Original Form of the Name ‘Yahweh,’” 24.

⁸⁸ C.F. Burney, *The Book of Judges With Introduction and Notes* with “Prolegomenon” by W.F. Albright, (Ed.) H.M. Orlinsky (New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1970), 243-253.

⁸⁹ Keane, 570.

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⁹¹  יתרו. R. von der Alm, *Theologische Briefe an die Gebildeten der deutschen Nation: Band I* (Theological Letters to the Intellectuals of the German Nation: Vol. 1), (Leipzig, Germany: Verlag von Otto Wigand, 1862), 216, and 480. Ex. 3:1; 18:1; Jg. 1:16; and 4:11.

suggests that (*Qayin*) Cain is the eponymous ancestor of the Kenites.⁹² He furthers his position by reasoning that as the Israelites are the descendants of Israel and so named, the same is true in the relationship between the Kenites and Cain.⁹³ A significant point is that Cain had the mark of YHWH.⁹⁴ The biblical text does not describe the relationship of the later Kenites and YHWH; however, the author does name Jethro as the priest of Midian, which identifies his function within the land but only presumes the deity as YHWH.⁹⁵ Clearly, Moses did have an encounter with YHWH in that vicinity. That very encounter of hearing the divine name must have been remarkable because of the phonemic similarity of the Egyptian word “I am.”⁹⁶

So henceforth for Moses and for Israel “Yahweh” is equated to Egyptian “Yawey,” which translated in to Hebrew is ’EHYEH “I AM.” *What Moses did in effect was to change the etymology of “Yahweh” in the spiritual interests of enslaved Israel, and by so doing to give hope and encouragement, and a truer understanding of the nature of the God of their fathers.*⁹⁷

One other possibility is to accept the A.N.E. parallels of a pantheon of gods related to nature. This hypothesis is stretched; however, one may follow the logic. It begins by acknowledging the similarity of the Hebrew root (*hāwāh*) and the Arabic root (*hawā*) which means “to blow.”⁹⁸ The reasoning associates the divine name with “blowing” suggesting that YHWH was originally a storm god.⁹⁹ Ironically, the Song of Deborah serves as a proof-text for a Southern desert habitation and divine actions manifesting through a storm.¹⁰⁰

Other than the Moabite Stone that corroborates the biblical text, did the divine name exist in other A.N.E. texts? Four different sources have been suggested during the

⁹² חַיִּין.

⁹³ H.H. Rowley, *From Joseph to Joshua: Biblical Traditions in the Light of Archaeology* (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), 153.

⁹⁴ T.J. Meek, *Hebrew Origins: The Haskell Lectures for 1933-34* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1936), 92. Gen. 4:15.

⁹⁵ Ex. 3:1; and 18:1.

⁹⁶ A.H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar: Being an Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1927) cited by N. Walker, “Yahwism and the Divine Name ‘Yhwh,’” *ZAW* 70 (1958), 265.

⁹⁷ Walker, 265.

⁹⁸ حوى. חַיִּין.

⁹⁹ Meek, 92-93.

¹⁰⁰ Jg. 5:4-5, and 20-21. Also, note a similar passage in Dt. 33:2.

Late Bronze age; however only one of these is worthy of consideration.¹⁰¹ Within the Egyptian topographical texts of Amenophis III, a site bears the Egyptian spelling (*yh*) which may correspond with a shortened form of YHWH.¹⁰² De Moor posits this Egyptian text is the earliest extrabiblical use of the Hebrew divine name.¹⁰³ In addition to texts, there were also epigraphic inscriptions. This discussion occurs later in chapter three. However, in two different inscriptions the phrase (*lyhwh Šmrn*) “to YHWH of Samaria” and (*lyhwh Tmn*) “to YHWH of Teman” exists on jars found at *Kuntillet ‘Ajurd*, which is located about 50 km South of (*Qādēš Barnēa*) Kadesh-Barnea.¹⁰⁴ This 9th century BCE inscription attests that in the Edomite territory, YHWH was known to come from Teman and that in Samaria others shared His worship several hundred kilometers north.¹⁰⁵

MEANING

Not only is there disagreement about the etymology and origin of the divine name, there is disagreement as to the meaning of the Tetragrammaton.

[It] is a *Qal* imperfect, signifying simply, *He will be* —. The subject can be nothing else but אֱל. The narrative in Exod. iii offers a predicate of the widest possible extension. The verb, placed in the mouth of the deity, is of necessity transposed into the first person, and interpreted in the sense, *I will be what I will be*.¹⁰⁶

Typically, scholars take the trilateral root of the divine name to mean “to be” or “to exist.”¹⁰⁷ But is existence the issue in the frequent divine assertions of (*’ānī YHWH*) “I am YHWH”?¹⁰⁸ Obermann suggests that the *Qal* imperfect form is causative and should

¹⁰¹ The other potential evidence comes from: 1) (*Misrāyim*) מִצְרַיִם Egypt as the personal name with the *-ya* ending; 2) the Ugaritic *Baal* myth with the word (*yw*); and 3) a personal name (*ia-we*) in Amarna Akkadian. See R.S. Hess, “The Divine Name Yahweh in Late Bronze Age Sources?” *UF* 23 (1991), 181-188.

¹⁰² S. Ahituv, *Canaanite Toponyms in Ancient Egyptian Documents* (Jerusalem, Israel: Magnes Press, 1984), 121-122.

¹⁰³ J.C. de Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism: The Roots of Israelite Monotheism* (BETL 91: Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1990), 111-113.

¹⁰⁴ קָדֶשׁ בַּרנֶע, לִיהוָה חֲמֵן, לִיהוָה שְׁמֶרֶן.

¹⁰⁵ J.A. Emerton, “New Light on Israelite Religion: The Implications of the Inscriptions from Kuntillet ‘Arjud,” *ZAW* 94 (1982), 2-20. Emerton also addressed the problematic issue that these two aforementioned inscriptions also included the term “his *’asherah*.” The issue of a pagan consort with YHWH is beyond the scope of this examination. However, he does acknowledge that cognates in Akkadian, Phoenician, and Aramaic allow the word to be translated as “sacred place,” “grove,” or “shrine” which makes the association less innocuous. Cf. Hab. 3:3.

¹⁰⁶ G.H. Skipwith, “The Tetragrammaton: Its Meaning and Origin,” *JQR* 10 (1898), 668.

¹⁰⁷ *BDB*, 217; and Abba, 324.

¹⁰⁸ אֲנִי יְהוָה.

be considered as a “*Nomen Hiphilicum*” rather than in the terms of a “*Nomen Agentis*.”¹⁰⁹
In view of that, for him, the divine self-disclosure means:

“I am He who sustains, maintains, establishes,” viz. strength or weakness, victory or defeat, life or death; and, accordingly, the primary meaning of *YHWH*, as an epithet of the God of Israel, would have been, “Sustainer, Maintainer, Establisher.”¹¹⁰

When one views the Tetragrammaton in the context of its disclosure to Moses, the implication is the presence of deity, whether it is with Moses, Aaron, or the entirety of Israel.¹¹¹ Skipwith suggests the mystery name (*‘immānû ’ēl*) “*Immanuel*” is a further proof that “*El* is with us.”¹¹² He makes a further assertion that the Tetragrammaton functioned as an invoked war cry. It served as an encouragement to Israel facing its foes; whereas it was designed to invoke fear in the enemies by the declaration that “*YHWH* will be with us,” assuming of course the warring party understood the Hebraic meaning. The narrator of Judges infers this with the declaration of Gideon and his men before attacking the Midianites.¹¹³ The war cry was accompanied with a standard or banner.¹¹⁴ While in the Wilderness, the tribes of Israel had their own standards.¹¹⁵ En route to Mount Sinai, (*‘mālēq*) Amalek attacked Israel.¹¹⁶ Afterwards Moses erected an altar and named it (*YHWH Nissī*) “*YHWH* is my banner.”¹¹⁷ However, nearly thirty-eight years elapsed before Moses gave (*n²ḥaš n²ḥōšet wayšimēhū ‘al-hannēs*) the standard of the brazen serpent to the people.¹¹⁸ Although Skipwith noticed these elements, he failed to make an application of the New Testament use by *Yeshua* to apply the brazen serpent to Himself, as well as the angelic annunciation message to Miriam applying the mystery name to *Yeshua*.¹¹⁹

¹⁰⁹ J. Obermann, “The Divine Name *YHWH* in the Light of Recent Discoveries,” *JBL* 68 (1949), 306-309. He uses the nomenclature of *Qatal* to represent *Qal* perfect and *Yiqtol* to represent *Qal* imperfect. He bases his position on philological evidence of the Phoenician inscriptions from Karatepe.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 308.

¹¹¹ Ex. 3:12; 4:12, and 15.

¹¹² *יְהוָה עִמָּנוּ*. Isa. 7:14. Skipwith, 670.

¹¹³ Jg. 7:18, and 20.

¹¹⁴ Skipwith, 675.

¹¹⁵ Num. 2:2.

¹¹⁶ *עַמְלֵק*.

¹¹⁷ *יְהוָה נִסִּי*. Ex. 17:15.

¹¹⁸ *נִחַשׁ נְחֹשֶׁת וַיִּשְׁמְרוּ עַל-הַנָּס*. Num. 21:9.

¹¹⁹ Mt. 1:23; and Jn. 3:14.

Adonai

Another name that is used for deity is (^א*dônāy*) “Lord.”¹²⁰ Technically, this is more of a title than it is a name. Like the name *Elohim*, the term *Adonai* also exists in a plural form and has been called “*pluralis excellentiae* to express possession and sovereign dominion.”¹²¹ It shares a cognate meaning with the Babylonian word (*adānu*) meaning firm or strong. This implies the idea of the deity who is superior over humanity in power and might and thus a worthy sovereign.¹²² In addition to the gradations of relationship between master and servant, the term also denotes obligations and duties.¹²³ The narrator uses this term five times in Judges.¹²⁴

Compound Names

Although the early chapters of Genesis cover an extensive chronology, there is limited information about the identity of God and the worship ascribed to Him. This is further convoluted by the Documentary Hypothesis theory of J and E sources. The early references with uses of both YHWH and *Elohim* question whether this is one and the same God or two different ones with a different character and nature. Mosaic authorship is generally accepted for the *Torah*, with the writing of Genesis being retold to him through oral sources. Thus, Moses as the redactor employs the Yahwistic name as a substitute literary device. The testimony of Moses in Exodus 6:3 reveals that the name of YHWH had not been known in the post-diluvian era until Mount Sinai. Bright reports no contradiction between the *Elohim* and YHWH names.

The narratives were written from the point of view of Yahwistic theology by men who were worshipers of Yahweh; whether they used the name or not, they had no doubt that the God of the patriarchs was actually, Yahweh, God of Israel, whom the patriarchs, whether consciously or unconsciously, worshiped.¹²⁵

One of the *papyri* fragments from Qumran cave four would corroborate Bright. The fragment from the *Akeidah* gives a variant reading of *Elohim* for Genesis 22:14 that

¹²⁰ אֲדֹנָיִי.

¹²¹ Wiley, 247. Because of familiarity of English theological usage, the incorrectly transliterated form is used hereafter.

¹²² Meek, 79.

¹²³ M.G. Kyle, *Moses and the Monuments: Light from Archaeology on Pentateuchal Times* (Oberlin, OH: Bibliotheca Sacra Company, 1920), 14-15.

¹²⁴ Jg. 6:13, 15, 22; 13:8; and 16:28.

¹²⁵ Bright, *A History of Israel*, 96.

would substantiate the divine pronouncement that they did not know the name YHWH at that time.¹²⁶

In the second creation story, the narrator presents both of the names of *Elohim* and YHWH. However, it is in a compound construct state with the names reversed as *YHWH-Elohim*.¹²⁷ Basing his premise on African culture, Mafico proposes that the compound name is a shortened form of the longer sentence form: (*YHWH 'ēlōhē 'ābōtēkem 'ēlōhē 'ābrāhām 'ēlōhē Yiṣḥāq wē'lōhē Ya'aqōb*) "YHWH the *Elohim* of your Fathers: the *Elohim* of Abraham, the *Elohim* of Isaac, and the *Elohim* of Jacob," which was divinely spoken to Moses as an appellation to give Israel.¹²⁸ The narrator of Judges uses the same convention of a compound name, but in its shorter more recognizable form. The primary absolute-construct form is not used. Instead, he employs pronominal suffixes to represent "YHWH their *Elohim*," "YHWH your *Elohim*," and "YHWH our *Elohim*."¹²⁹

Other compound names are used; nevertheless, they may also be seen as an appositive. The predominant form is (*YHWH 'ēlōhē Yiśrā'ēl*) "YHWH the *Elohim* of Israel."¹³⁰ On two occasions, the narrator changes the construct relation to form (*'ādonāy YHWH*) "Sovereign YHWH."¹³¹ Although it may be argued that the pronouncement by Gideon is not a divine compound name, but the appellation of an altar, there is revelation associated with the name (*YHWH Šālôm*) "YHWH is peace."¹³² Following the reasoning of Obermann and accepting the theophoric name is a grammatical appellative the altar means "He who sustains (or: establishes, brings about) peace,' or else 'Sustainer of

¹²⁶ See James R. Davila, "The Name of God at Moriah: An Unpublished Fragment from 4QGenExod^a," *JBL* 110 (1991), 577-582.

¹²⁷ Gen. 2:4.

¹²⁸ יהוה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֵיכֶם אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב Ex. 3:15. *Contra* T.L.J. Mafico, I contend that his overt use of *Elohim* as a plural to impose polytheism on the patriarchs is forced and not consistent with its primary usage in the Hebrew bible. Nonetheless, when *Elohim* is translated as a singular noun, the proposal he makes has much more validity. Also, I would question his proposal that the premonarchic time encountered a fusion of the gods with YHWH, whereby YHWH is interpreted as the collective name of the different gods that he asserts were worshiped by the patriarchs because of the phrase (*'ēlōhē hā'ābōt*) אֱלֹהֵי הָאֲבוֹת "Elohim of the Fathers." Nonetheless, his hypothesis is worthy of consideration. See his, "The divine compound name אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה and Israel's monotheistic polytheism," *JNSL* 22 (1996), 157-159.

¹²⁹ The first form (*YHWH 'ēlōhēm*) אֱלֹהֵיהֶם is used in Jg. 3:7; and 8:34. The second form (*YHWH 'ēlōhēkem*) אֱלֹהֵיכֶם is used in Jg. 6:10, and 26. The third form (*YHWH 'ēlōhēnū*) אֱלֹהֵינוּ is used in Jg. 11:24.

¹³⁰ יהוה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל Jg. 4:6; 5:3, 5; 6:8; 11:21, 23; and 21:3.

¹³¹ אֲדֹנָי יהוה Jg. 6:22; and 16:28.

¹³² יהוה שְׁלוֹם Jg. 6:24.

peace.”¹³³ The final compound name is revealed through the messengers of (*Yiptāh*) Jephthah to the king of Ammon with the declaration of (*YHWH hašŠōpēṭ*) “YHWH is the judge.”¹³⁴ The Obermann formula would result in a causative meaning: “He who sustains is the Judge.”¹³⁵ The narrator does not use other divine compound names in Judges.

Elohim and YHWH

There is some debate as to whether *Elohim* and YHWH are two different deities; whether they are a single deity, later fused into one in which YHWH has supplanted *Elohim*; or they are the same deity represented by a general and specific name.¹³⁶ The testimony of Moses supports the latter position: “For YHWH your *Elohim* is *Elohim* of *Elohim* and *Adonai* of lords, the *El*, great, mighty, and awesome; who does not show partiality or take a bribe.”¹³⁷ Joshua in his address to the tribes settling in the Transjordan profoundly makes the same conclusion with a repetitive force: “*El Elohim* [is] YHWH; *El Elohim* [is] YHWH.”¹³⁸ The English versions do not carry the force of the statement choosing to translate *El* as “Mighty One” rather than transliterating the recurring name. Furthermore, they do not supply the implied copulative verb failing to make a proper sentence. It is noteworthy that there are no biblical polemics against *El* in favor of YHWH; as such, Israelite tradition identified the two as the same at an early stage in history.¹³⁹ Within the book of Judges, “*Elohim* occurs as a synonym of YHWH 33 times” of which ten of those occurrences are in compound expressions.¹⁴⁰

¹³³ Obermann, 316.

¹³⁴ יְהוָה הַשֹּׁפֵט, and יִפְתָּח. Jg. 11:27.

¹³⁵ This compound name is not included in Obermann’s article. However, this follows the principle he establishes with other theophoric names.

¹³⁶ O. Eissfeldt supports the earlier position citing the patriarchs as venerators of *El* and that with the invasion of YHWH into Canaan in the later generation, YHWH “acknowledged the superior status of *El* but then progressively supplanted Him and so became the highest and even the sole god.” This theory of Eissfeldt does not match the biblical record. See his, “El and Yahweh,” *JSS* 1 (1956), 26. J. Day holds the position that this is an amalgamated deity, which was originally two distinct deities. See his recent monograph, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan* (*JSOT Supp.* 265: Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 13–41.

¹³⁷ הַיְהוָה (kī YHWH ‘lōhēkem hū’ ‘lōhē hā’‘lōhīm wa’‘dōnē hā’‘dōnīm hā’ēl hāggādōl haggibbōr w’hannōrā’ ‘šer lō’-yiśśā’ pānīm w’lō’ yiqqah šōḥad) כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הוּא אֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים וְאֲדֹנָי הָאֲדֹנִים הַיְהוָה (Dt. 10:17).

¹³⁸ אֵל אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה אֵל אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה. Josh. 22:22.

¹³⁹ M.S. Smith, *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel* (San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1990), 8.

¹⁴⁰ Segal, 97.

If YHWH and *Elohim* are in fact the same and the compound names express His attributes and characters, then the pejorative question moves to identify how this deity relates to Creation. The German theologian Köhler suggests that there are six principle ways of this relatedness.¹⁴¹ First, He is the “God of a people.” More specifically that is Israel. The prophetess (*D²bôrāh*) Deborah reminds the people of this in her rallying of troops.¹⁴² Scriptural context further defines this into the second relation, whereby He is the “God of a land.” At some points, the biblical writers are ambiguous as to whether the term Israel refers to a people, a land, or both. The inference of the geographical area having its own deity is implied to have the dual meaning in the Song of Deborah.¹⁴³ This naturally suggests that He is not limited to territorial areas as (*’ēdôm*) Edom, (*Šē’îr*) Seir, and Sinai which are contiguous territories outside the Mosaic boundaries.¹⁴⁴ This naturally suggests that He is “God of the whole world.” The biblical writers use synecdoche to refer to the whole world by phrases such as (*’lōhê haššāmayim wē’lōhê hā’āres*) “*Elohim* of the heavens and *Elohim* of the earth;” (*YHWH ’lōhê hārûḥōt l²kol-bāsār*) “YHWH, *Elohim* of the spirits of all flesh;” and (*l²kol-maml²kōt hā’āres*) “for all the kingdoms of the earth.”¹⁴⁵ Köhler is more specific with his designation that He is the “God of a place.” He bases his rationale on Jg. 10:6, whereby the deity is located over a city or region. Although, this passage is referring to other gods, his proof text identifies the Israelite deity as (*’el-’lōhê Y²rûšālāim*) “*El*, *Elohim* of Jerusalem.”¹⁴⁶ The fifth distinction reveals Him as the “God of individuals.” The *Torah* identifies Him as the *Elohim* of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Judges does not make this reference explicitly, although the writer infers it with the reference (*YHWH ’lōhê ’abôtām*) “YHWH, *Elohim*

¹⁴¹ L. Köhler, *Old Testament Theology*, (Tran.) A.S. Todd (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1957), 37-40.

¹⁴² דְּבֹרָה. Jg. 4:6.

¹⁴³ Jg. 5:3-5.

¹⁴⁴ אֱרֹם, and שְׂעִיר. T.L. Thompson supports the thesis that the divine self-disclosure identifies the composite theophany of *Elohim*, YHWH, and the angel of YHWH in Ex. 3 to be identical. Further, he posits that YHWH originates (*sic*) from Seir or Edom. See his, “The Intellectual Matrix of Early Biblical Narrative: Inclusive Monotheism in Persian Period Palestine,” *The Triumph of Elohim: From Yahwisms to Judaisms* (Ed.) D.V. Edelman (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 117-119. *Contra* this position of Northern Arabia in favor of the Egyptian Sinai, see, T. Tyler, “Two Notes on the ‘Song of Deborah,’” *JQR* 10 (1898), 174.

¹⁴⁵ לְכָל-בָּשָׂר; אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֱלֹהֵי הָאָרֶץ; and יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הָרוּחַ לְכָל-בָּשָׂר; Gen. 24:3; Num. 27:16; and Isa. 37:16.

¹⁴⁶ אֱלֹהֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם. 2 Chron. 32:19.

of their fathers.”¹⁴⁷ The final distinction is that He is absolute or unique. He distinctively enunciates this by divine pronouncement: “I am *El* and there is no other; [I am] *Elohim* and there is none like Me.”¹⁴⁸

Scholars generally agree that the *Elohists* used the term *Elohim* as a surrogate for the divine name YHWH in the patriarchal narratives, until the divine name was formally disclosed to Moses. Accordingly, the *Elohists* could maintain continuity between Israel’s eponymous ancestors and corporate Israel by implying that the patriarchal patron deity is the same as national cultic patron deity. But the problem remains as to why the *Elohists* persisted in using the term *Elohim* when the surrogate name for YHWH was superfluous.

For E is concerned to demonstrate both that the *’ēlōhīm* is Yahweh and that Yahweh is the *’ēlōhīm*, that is, that Yahweh is the deity with whom Israel has an exclusive relationship as the national patron god. While the narrative is explicit in identifying Yahweh as the god denoted by the title *’ēlōhīm*, E at the same time makes the point that Yahweh is not merely one deity among many to be worshiped by Israel; he is rather the *’ēlōhīm*, the one god in relationship to whom the nation’s identity is to be defined.¹⁴⁹

The vacillation by the narrator of Judges between these two divine names is not a problem for Polzin, who sees the name that is used as an indicator of relationship between the deity and His subjects. More specifically, *Elohim* communicates through signs and dreams whereas YHWH speaks directly to Israel.¹⁵⁰ This becomes an identifiable *remez* to the relationship between YHWH and Moses.¹⁵¹ However, it does not disconnect Israel from knowing its deity; but prepares Israel to understand the divine nature revealed in His name.

[T]he name YHWH points to God’s relationship to Israel in both His saving acts and His retributive acts, manifesting His phenomenological effectiveness in Israel’s history. What God says, He will do. His name promises that. And He will act on behalf of His people. But YHWH does not ultimately limit the significance of His name to the children of Israel.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁷ יהוה אלהי אבותם **א** Jg. 2:12

¹⁴⁸ Isa. 46:9.

¹⁴⁹ J.S. Burnett, *A Reassessment of Biblical Elohim* (SBL 183: Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001), 150–151. In this revision of his dissertation, Burnett presents an extensive discussion on how the term *Elohim* is used both extrabiblically and biblically, making the distinction that biblical *Elohim* is not the same as the Canaanite god *El*.

¹⁵⁰ R. Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History: Part One: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1980), 172.

¹⁵¹ Num. 12:6–8.

¹⁵² C.R. Gianotti, “The Meaning of the Divine Name YHWH,” *BibSac* 142 (1985), 48. In this article, Gianotti rather than defining the divine names provides an overview of various interpretations of the Tetragrammaton. They include the unknowable, ontological, causative, covenantal, and phenomenological views.

The Divine Attributes

Once one clears the hurdles of believing in the existence of a Divine Being, placing belief in that deity, and then coming to know His name as YHWH, the logical progression produces the query of what He is like? What are His attributes? With those questions comes the problem of classification. One such arrangement views the divine attributes as either: absolute, relative, or moral.¹⁵³ A dichotomous classification examines the divine actions based on the effects produced; whereby His “immanent” attributes produce no effect; but His “transitive” attributes produce effects.¹⁵⁴ Absolute attributes are called immanent attributes, also. Relative attributes are another name for transitive attributes. The transitive attributes relate specifically between the Creator and His creation and requires the created beings for these attributes to manifest. The classification of moral attributes is a natural subdivision of the relative attributes. It is often set aside as a distinct category because it includes the attributes “which belong to the relation between God and the moral beings under His government.”¹⁵⁵ Other theological systems have divided the attributes between those that are negative and positive. This suggests that negative attributes are those in which certain limitations are denied and positive attributes are those where certain perfections are revealed.¹⁵⁶ Another dichotomous distinction is those which are communicable and incommunicable, that is “those which can be and those which cannot be imparted.”¹⁵⁷

Since this current examination is not a systematic theology, the previous schemes of classifying the divine attributes have been modified. Further, while elements of each general category may be found in Judges, not each of the necessary divine attributes are present there. This does not deny they were not at work during the premonarchic time, only that the narrator has chosen not to reveal those attributes in the historiography we have at our disposal. Because our aim is toward understanding divine judgment in this period, this focus will be restricted to the revealed attributes and representations in Judges.

¹⁵³ Wiley, 325-329.

¹⁵⁴ G. Smith, *Natural Theology: Metaphysics III* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951), 193ff.

¹⁵⁵ Wiley, 329.

¹⁵⁶ H.B. Smith, *System of Christian Theology* (New York: A.C. Armstrong and Son, 1888), 15.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

Theocentric Perspective

One way to view the attributes is to examine them from a perspective that is either theocentric or anthropocentric. Obviously, there are inherent problems in attempting to present the attributes theocentrically, simply because they must be filtered through an anthropocentric understanding. Even so, a synchronic understanding of the “reliable narrator” makes the examination tenable. The observable divine attributes are classified based upon whether they are unique to deity or they are experienced by humanity.

EXCLUSIVE ATTRIBUTES

The purpose of Judges is not to present a theological treatise. Neither is it to give a full picture of the identity of deity. However, within the narrative six different attributes may be deduced that are uniquely divine.

ETERNALITY. YHWH is eternal. This means that there is no point in time whereby He did not exist; either in time past or time future. He is described as existing outside of time such that “time” is a creative element and therefore unable to limit Him. Eternity is defined as “the attribute by which God is freed from all the successions of time and contains in himself the ground or reason of time.”¹⁵⁸

The narrator of Judges is not so bold as to come out and declare this attribute. However, it is implied by the reference in the Song of Deborah to a temporal period when YHWH was at Seir, Edom, and Sinai.¹⁵⁹ Jephthah’s messengers mention a similar period of three hundred years earlier.¹⁶⁰ Eternality has existence as its basis. Therefore, when Gideon uses the idiom (*hay-YHWH*) “as YHWH lives,” the implication is made.¹⁶¹ Yet, the concept of eternity is more obvious in the greater context of scripture.¹⁶²

IMMUTABILITY. Just as YHWH is eternal, He is also immutable. Specifically, that means that He does not change. Erickson argues that the Hellenistic understanding of immutability, which implies attributes of immobility and sterility should be discounted in favor of a Hebraic understanding.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 17-18.

¹⁵⁹ Jg. 5:4.

¹⁶⁰ Jg. 11:15-26.

¹⁶¹ הַיְיָ-יְהוָה חַי. Jg. 8:19.

¹⁶² Job 36:26; Ps. 90:1-6; Isa. 41:4; Rom. 1:20; and 2 Pet. 3:8.

[T]he biblical view is not that God is static but stable. He is active and dynamic, but in a way which is stable and consistent with His nature. What we are dealing with here is the dependability of God. He will be the same tomorrow as He is today.¹⁶³

The problem comes when one encounters the concept that YHWH repents.¹⁶⁴ Immutability does not mean that YHWH cannot change His mind; but that He in Himself cannot change. Immutability relates to the essence of deity. As such, the apparent contradiction of divine repentance does not affect immutability because the change is not in Him, but in the manner that He relates with humanity.¹⁶⁵

The biblical narrator reports through the divine messenger at (*Bōkīm*) Bochim, that YHWH would never break His covenant with Israel.¹⁶⁶ Jephthah regards his vow to YHWH as one that could not be broken.¹⁶⁷ In the divine repentance scene, YHWH declares He will not deliver Israel any more; however, deliverance does follow through Jephthah and Samson.¹⁶⁸ Yet, each of these passages unfortunately show that change or lack of change occurs between the divine-human relationship and that divine immutability can only be inferred from Judges. Nonetheless, theologians derive the doctrine through other biblical references.¹⁶⁹ The clearest record is the self-affirmation, "For I, YHWH do not change."¹⁷⁰

OMNIPOTENCE. Undeniably, YHWH is omnipotent; that is, He is all-powerful. This attribute represents deity as "the absolute and highest causality."¹⁷¹ The KJV translation of the Apocalypse presents the heavenly witness "the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."¹⁷² Erickson classifies omnipotence as a subdivision of divine infinity. Accordingly, this means that YHWH "is able to do all things which are proper objects of His power."¹⁷³ The prophet (*Yirm^āyāhū*) Jeremiah understood that nothing is too difficult for *Adonai* YHWH.¹⁷⁴ *Yeshua* made a similar declaration that with YHWH all things are

¹⁶³ M.J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1987), 279.

¹⁶⁴ Examples of this include: Ex. 32:14; Ps. 106:45; and Hos. 11:8.

¹⁶⁵ Smith, *System of Christian Theology*, 19.

¹⁶⁶ בְּכִיִּים, literally "weepers." Jg. 2:1.

¹⁶⁷ Jg. 11:35-36.

¹⁶⁸ Jg. 10:10-16.

¹⁶⁹ Ps. 102:26-27; Lam. 3:22-23; and Jas. 1:17.

¹⁷⁰ Mal. 3:6.

¹⁷¹ Smith, *System of Christian Theology*, 32.

¹⁷² Rev. 19:6.

¹⁷³ Erickson, 276.

¹⁷⁴ יְיָ מְיָדוֹ, Jer. 32:17.

possible.¹⁷⁵ YHWH manifests His divine power through nature and often through miracles. The narrator of Judges references these manifestations. The stars of the heavens and the (*nahal Qišōn*) Kishon River fight against Sisera.¹⁷⁶ He expressed His power by handing over Israel to their enemies.¹⁷⁷ Gideon questions where the divine miracles are; however, he himself receives two when he requests a sign through the fleece.¹⁷⁸ Both Gideon and Manoah are amazed at the miracle of fire consuming their respective sacrifices and the disappearance of the divine messenger.¹⁷⁹ His control over nature is seen in the story of Samson when water springs forth out of the hollow place.¹⁸⁰ By the same token, He also delivered Israel and handed their enemies over to them through conquest or war.¹⁸¹ This supernatural prowess is evident when YHWH sets the swords of the Midianite soldiers against each other.¹⁸² One of the greatest testimonies is the deliverance from Egypt that YHWH gave to Israel bringing them into the Promised Land.¹⁸³ In addition, divine power is exercised over the angelic and demonic realm. Throughout Judges, theophanic messengers do His bidding as well as an evil spirit.¹⁸⁴ Expressions of omnipotence are present throughout the scriptures.¹⁸⁵

One argument against this attribute is that God cannot do all things and thus His divine power being limited disproves omnipotence. It is a fallacious argument because He will not do that which is arbitrary, logically absurd, or contradictory.¹⁸⁶ That brings in the issue of theodicy, or the vindication of divine providence in view of the existence of evil. The argument asserts that since evil exists in the universe, how could it proceed from a Being of infinite wisdom and goodness, provided He could have prevented it by His

¹⁷⁵ Mt. 19:26.

¹⁷⁶ נַחַל קִישׁוֹן. The literal meaning is the “outermost river.” See Appendix 4, footnote 25, page 735. Jg. 5:20, and 21.

¹⁷⁷ Jg. 3:8, 12; 4:2; 6:1; 10:7; 13:1, and 20:35.

¹⁷⁸ Jg. 6:13, 38, and 40.

¹⁷⁹ Jg. 6:21; 13:19, and 20.

¹⁸⁰ Jg. 15:19.

¹⁸¹ Jg. 1:2, 4, 19; 2:18; 3:10, 28; 4:7, 9, 14, 15, 23; 7:9, 14, 15, 22; 8:3, 34; 10:11, 12; 12:3; and 13:5.

¹⁸² Jg. 7:22.

¹⁸³ Jg. 2:1, 7, 12; 5:4, 5; 6:8, 9, and 13.

¹⁸⁴ Jg. 9:23.

¹⁸⁵ Other references include: Job 9:12; 42:2; Ps. 62:2; 115:3; Rom. 1:20; and Eph. 1:19.

¹⁸⁶ Erickson, 277.

omnipotence.¹⁸⁷ It is outside the scope of this work to discuss the elements of theodicy; however, it is apparent that *Elohim* was not opposed to using an evil spirit in His judgment of Abimelech and the men of Shechem. Neither was YHWH opposed to using enemy nations to oppress Israel in order to bring them back into relationship with Him. That evil exists testifies to the divine work of creating free moral agents.¹⁸⁸ When this is understood as a teleological theodicy there is no limitation of YHWH because it is related to some future good.

Evil, then, or the possibility of evil, is considered a necessary component in the movement or transformation of present circumstances to some future, better state of affairs. Evil is a necessary ingredient to the fulfillment of some higher ideal, a goal which can involve either an individual or a cosmic-communal emphasis. That is, the *telos* can be understood to be finally realized in an individual's growth or transformation to the good, or in the universal realization of the end-goal.¹⁸⁹

OMNIPRESENCE. Another divine attribute is that YHWH is omnipresent. The concept is derived from the Latin term *omnipraesentia*, which Strong understands to mean that YHWH “penetrates and fills the universe in all its parts.”¹⁹⁰ In order to avoid the mystical concept of the divine presence through the divine spark in human beings and the philosophical concept that leads toward pantheism, it has been suggested that a more biblical concept is to speak of the “presence of God.” Garrett acknowledges the biblical teaching involves three different aspects: 1) the extensive or general presence of God; 2) the intensive or special presence of God; and 3) the unique, full, and particular presence of God.¹⁹¹ The divine presence is extensive in that nothing in creation can escape His presence. Both the Psalmist and (*Yônāh*) Jonah had this understanding.¹⁹² This general presence is implied in the narrative of Judges, although there is no specific reference to it by the narrator.

The special presence exists in three different ways. First, it is when deity draws near through theophany or through revelatory communication. Both the tribe of Judah and

¹⁸⁷ T.O. Summers, *Systematic Theology: A Complete Body of Wesleyan Arminian Divinity Consisting of Lectures on the Twenty-five Articles of Religion* (Nashville, TN: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1888), 83.

¹⁸⁸ Summers, 84.

¹⁸⁹ Stoeber, 12.

¹⁹⁰ A.H. Strong, *Systematic Theology: A compendium and commonplace book designed for the use of theological students* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1907), 279.

¹⁹¹ J.L. Garrett, Jr., *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangelical*, Vol. 1, 2nd ed. (North Richland Hills, TX: Bibal Press, 2000), 230-232.

¹⁹² **ח** יְיָ. Ps. 139:7-10; Jon. 1:3, 10; and 2:2-9.

the house of (*Yôseph*) Joseph in the conquest narrative experienced the divine presence.¹⁹³ In addition, they knew His presence on the battlefield.¹⁹⁴ The natural world experienced His presence.¹⁹⁵ Sometimes, the nearness of YHWH was experienced by a theophanic manifestation.¹⁹⁶ Second, the nearness of YHWH is evident when the barrier of sin is expiated and fellowship is possible. Often this was experienced through liturgical means, which for premonarchic Israel meant the Ark of the Covenant, worship at Bethel, or at an annual feast.¹⁹⁷ At various times, the relationship between Israel and YHWH was such that there could be communion through prayer or other forms of communication.¹⁹⁸ Yet, there were other instances when the relationship was not correct; but divine mercy prevailed and prayer communication still brought the divine presence near.¹⁹⁹ Third, the presence of the Holy Spirit whether incidental in the Hebrew bible or indwelling in the New Testament is another example.²⁰⁰ In the lives of Othniel, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson, the narrator describes how the Spirit of YHWH came upon them.²⁰¹

For the Christian, the unique presence of YHWH is demonstrated in the person of *Yeshua*.²⁰² Unless one contends that the divine messenger is a pre-incarnate theophany of Messiah, this type of presence does not occur in Judges.

OMNISCIENCE. This divine attribute means that YHWH is omniscient. The Latin does not transliterate into an observable English meaning, as this attribute has nothing to do with science. Instead, it relates to divine intelligence and its perfection. Calvin defined omniscience as “that attribute whereby God knows Himself and all other things in one eternal and most simple act.”²⁰³ His omniscience is characterized as being intuitive, simultaneous, exact, and infallible.²⁰⁴ The Arminian position on this attribute is more expansive than the Calvinist position.

¹⁹³ חֵי יְהוָה. Jg. 1:19, and 22.

¹⁹⁴ Jg. 3:28; 4:14; 6:16; 7:22; 11:32; and 20:1.

¹⁹⁵ Jg. 5:5.

¹⁹⁶ Jg. 2:1; 6:12, 13, 16; and 13:3-21.

¹⁹⁷ Jg. 18:31; 20:28; and 21:19.

¹⁹⁸ Jg. 1:1, 2; 6:36, 37, 39; 11:11, 30; 15:18; and 21:2-4.

¹⁹⁹ Jg. 10:10-16; 16:28, 30; 20:18, 23, 27, and 28.

²⁰⁰ 1 Cor. 3:16.

²⁰¹ Jg. 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19; and 15:14.

²⁰² Col. 1:19.

²⁰³ John Calvin cited without reference in Smith, *System of Christian Theology*, 23-24.

²⁰⁴ Pye Smith cited without reference in Smith, *System of Christian Theology*, 24.

Omniscience, as the word denotes, embraces all knowledge; it is not the mere capacity to know, to acquire knowledge; but its absolute and eternal possession. It embraces all things, past, present, and future; necessary, contingent, and possible.²⁰⁵

The question at hand is: What does YHWH know? There are three categories of this divine knowledge. YHWH knows everything that is distinct from Himself. Second, He knows non-existents. Third, He knows future contingents. Although, not a major category of Smith's discussion, he does acknowledge that God knows Himself. This is framed in the Latin: *ipsum eius esse est intelligere*.²⁰⁶

The narrator in Judges infers that YHWH is omniscient; however, he never states it explicitly. For example, in the conquest narrative, YHWH knew that Judah should go up first to battle against the Canaanites.²⁰⁷ In addition, He knew that Israel must be tested in relation to its fidelity to YHWH; therefore, nations were left in the Promised Land.²⁰⁸ YHWH also knew that the army that Gideon had amassed would become boastful if He did not significantly reduce them.²⁰⁹ Further, the narrator showed YHWH knew that Gideon was still afraid and needed encouragement.²¹⁰ Moreover, there is divine knowledge of the barrenness of Manoah's wife and that their offspring would not only be a male, but would begin to be a deliverer of Israel.²¹¹ Other scriptural passages identify omniscience explicitly, such as the understanding of the Psalmist.²¹²

PROVIDENCE. The final exclusive divine attribute represented in Judges is that YHWH is provident. The term originates from the Latin *providere* meaning "to see at a distance." It is ironic that the theological meaning has mutated to mean, "to look after."²¹³ Aquinas understood YHWH as provident because His design ordered the lives of those subject to Him so that they attain their end.²¹⁴ Last century, A.H. Strong expanded the teleological element.

²⁰⁵ Summers, 85.

²⁰⁶ Smith, *Natural Theology*, 199-206.

²⁰⁷ Jg. 1:1.

²⁰⁸ Jg. 2:2; 3:1, 2, and 4.

²⁰⁹ Jg. 7:2.

²¹⁰ Jg. 7:10.

²¹¹ Jg. 13:3.

²¹² Ps. 139:1-24. Other passages include: Job 12:13; Ps. 147:5; Lk. 16:15; Jn. 21:17; and Rom. 11:33-34.

²¹³ G.E. Harkness, *The Providence of God* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1960), 17.

²¹⁴ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, 22, 1, *Resp.*

Providence is that continuous agency of God by which He makes all the events of the physical and moral universe fulfill the original design with which He created it.²¹⁵

Erickson understands providence to be YHWH's continuing work through preservation of His creation and then through governance.²¹⁶ Garrett contends that divine providence is represented biblically in three ways: 1) God's overall direction of history; 2) God's agency in reference to human sin; and 3) God's care of all His creation, especially His redeemed people.²¹⁷ YHWH directs history for His eternal purposes whether that is regarding his universal divine rulership or His ultimate goal centered in the Messiah and His kingdom.²¹⁸ The narrator of Judges does not specifically address this facet. However, he infers the divine kingship with references to YHWH as Judge, and also when He was seeking an occasion against the Philistines.²¹⁹ YHWH is provident in that He responds to man because of His sin. The narrator often expresses this by YHWH giving Israel over to their enemies or exercising some form of judicial discipline.²²⁰ Whereas that may be seen as the negative side of providence, YHWH also takes care of His people. He does that by giving instruction and direction.²²¹ In addition, He raised up judges for the people as deliverers.²²² He became involved in subduing the enemies of Israel He judged.²²³ He provided for Israel to learn war so they would not be defeated.²²⁴ Also, His compassion prevails in not only raising up a deliverer, but in opening the womb of a barren woman, so that her offspring could deliver His people.²²⁵

SHARED ATTRIBUTES

Man was created in the image of God. Part of that creation act involved a sharing of the divine image at some reduced level. Some of the divine attributes He shares with humanity. Within the text of Judges, it is possible to deduce six of these attributes.

²¹⁵ Strong, *Systematic Theology*, 419.

²¹⁶ Erickson, 387-405.

²¹⁷ Garrett, 380-383.

²¹⁸ Examples of this include: Num 23:21; Dt. 33:5; 1 Sam. 12:12; Ps. 47:2; 103:19; 146:10; Gal 4:4; and Rev. 1:17.

²¹⁹ Jg. 11:27; and 14:4.

²²⁰ Jg. 2:1, 4, 15, 20, 21, 22, 23; 3:1, 8, 12; 4:2; 6:1; 10:7; 13:1; 20:18, 23, and 28.

²²¹ Jg. 1:2.

²²² Jg. 2:16, 18; 3:9, 10, 15; 4:6, 7, 9; 6:14; 7:3-7; 10:11, 12; and 11:32.

²²³ Jg. 4:23; 7:22; 8:3; and 9:23.

²²⁴ Jg. 3:2.

²²⁵ Jg. 13:3-25.

GOODNESS. A familiar liturgical response is: God is good. That goodness is infinite. The New Testament witness is that there is none good but God.²²⁶ But does that assert the attribute is not shared and the trait is not present in humanity?

Whatsoever goodness is found in any creature is but by way of emanation from that fountain, whose very being is diffusive; whose nature consists in the communication of itself.²²⁷

This divine attribute may be classified by its essential goodness or relative goodness.²²⁸ Essential goodness involves moral integrity and moral perfection.²²⁹ Divine relative goodness involves the manner in which YHWH relates with His creation, such that it embraces truth, justice, and benevolence.²³⁰ The self-disclosure by YHWH declares He is abundant in goodness and truth.²³¹ Within Judges, the narrator portrays divine goodness by not breaking His covenant with disobedient Israel, by raising up deliverers to deliver Israel, and doing what is good in His eyes to them.²³² YHWH allowing the fearful Israelite soldiers to relieve themselves from military duty infers goodness.²³³

HOLINESS. Few would contradict the statement, “YHWH is holy.” Theological questions first arise as to classification. Erickson suggests that this attribute, as well as the next two mentioned, are elements of the divine moral purity, which he further would place as an element subsumed in the goodness of God. He defines moral purity as “God’s absolute freedom from anything wicked or evil.”²³⁴ The Hebraic concept of holiness refers to that which has been set apart or sanctified for deity. It is not surprising that theologians would naturally set “holiness” apart as a divine attribute. Garrett uses the image of a wheel whereby holiness is the center of that wheel and the attributes of eternity, constancy, wisdom, knowledge, power, wrath, and glory of God are clustered around it.²³⁵ Yet, for Erickson, his systematization places holiness as a lesser attribute; however he gives it supremacy over the aspects of divine uniqueness and absolute

²²⁶ Mt. 19:17.

²²⁷ Summers, 97.

²²⁸ Ibid., 98-100.

²²⁹ Ps. 119:68; and Rom. 7:12.

²³⁰ Ps. 33:4-5; 36:5-7; and 52:1.

²³¹ Ex. 34:6-7.

²³² Jg. 2:1; 3:9, 15; 6:14; 10:15; and 13:5.

²³³ Jg. 7:3.

²³⁴ Erickson, 284.

²³⁵ Garrett, 247-264.

purity.²³⁶ Divine holiness is well known through self-disclosure at Mt. Sinai or in the presence of the (*śrāpîm*) seraphim in the heavenly court.²³⁷ Israel had the *Torah* as a reminder that they were to be holy because YHWH is holy.²³⁸ The Hebrew bible is replete with examples of divine holiness.²³⁹ Judges on the other hand does not have the word holy in its narrative. However, that does not mean that the concept is absent. The narrator depicts YHWH as holy because He is the object of prayers, oaths, and vows.²⁴⁰ At other times, He is the object of worship.²⁴¹ Moreover, He is the focal point to whom Israel offers sacrifices.²⁴² The narrator reveals the holiness of YHWH because of the special cultic relationship Samson has with Him as a *Nazirite*.²⁴³ Yet, there is one other way in which holiness is implied. Subtly, the narrator removes deity from the text at times of killing which are done out of the character of YHWH. Examples of this include the murder of Eglon, Sisera, Jephthah's daughter, Jotham's brothers, and the Levite's concubine.

JUSTICE. YHWH is just and He is righteous. This attribute reflects the manner in which YHWH deals with the subjects of His moral government. Divine justice may be categorized as that which is legislative or distributive.²⁴⁴ The idea of legislative justice acknowledges that the *Torah* and the demands that YHWH places upon His people are unquestionable and that the response of obedience is just.²⁴⁵ In another divine self-disclosure, He says, "I am YHWH who exercises loving-kindness, justice, and righteousness on the earth; for I delight in these things."²⁴⁶ Erickson points out that divine justice means "He is fair in the administration of His law," such that there is no impartiality or favoritism.²⁴⁷ On the other hand, distributive justice recognizes that the divine response of blessing or reward for obedience as well as the response of punishment

²³⁶ Erickson, 284-286.

²³⁷ *שְׂרָפִים*. Ex. 3:5; and Isa. 6:1-4.

²³⁸ Lev. 11:44-45.

²³⁹ Other examples include: Ex. 15:11; 1 Sam. 2:2; Isa. 1:4; 5:19; 29:23; Hos. 11:9; and Amos 4:2.

²⁴⁰ Jg. 1:1; 11:11, 31; 15:18; 16:28, 30; 18:5; 20:18, 23, 26; 21:5, 7, and 8.

²⁴¹ Jg. 5:2, 3, 4, 9; 6:25, 26; 7:15; 18:31; 20:1, 2, 27; 21:2, and 19.

²⁴² Jg. 2:5; 6:18; 13:15, 16, 19, 23, 26; and 21:4.

²⁴³ Jg. 13:5, 7; and 16:17.

²⁴⁴ Summers, 103-107.

²⁴⁵ Ps. 19:7-9.

²⁴⁶ Jer. 9:24.

²⁴⁷ Erickson, 288.

or discipline for disobedience is within the scope of a just deity.²⁴⁸ The narrator of Judges does not focus upon the legislative element, although the Deuteronomistic redactor has given interpretive comments upon the text that point to the *Torah*. Instead, the narrator focuses on the Israelite response to the divine covenant. With that, he expresses distributive justice whenever evil occurs.²⁴⁹ This is part of the cycle of apostasy leading to a divinely sanctioned subjugation by the enemy. On an individual level, this is seen as retribution to Adoni-Bezek and later to Abimelech.²⁵⁰ On a tribal level, the narrator reveals justice being administered to the Ephraimites and then later to the Benjaminites.²⁵¹ At other times, distributive justice is seen as a reward for covenantal obedience.²⁵² The primary representation is the raising up of a deliverer and the subjugation of the enemy force. As a *remez* back to Genesis, the narrator calls the deity: YHWH, the Judge.²⁵³ The Midrashic sages cite that “punishments go forth from God swift as lightning; but His hand has hold of justice.”²⁵⁴

LOVE. One of the moral attributes that is readily cited is that God is love.²⁵⁵ The New Testament writings frequently refer to this attribute.²⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the concept is well grounded in the Hebrew bible as well.²⁵⁷ Smith defines love as

[A] quality caused in the will by a good, by reason of which quality the will is united with that good by an affective union which antecedes physical and is consecutive upon cognitive union.²⁵⁸

Erickson suggests the four basic dimensions of divine love are benevolence, grace, mercy, and persistence.²⁵⁹ Garrett makes a slight distinction, holding that love is the primary attribute; but that five other attributes cluster around it.

Patience or forbearance is the persistence of God's love. Faithfulness is the reliability of God's love. Mercy-kindness is the deep compassion of God's love. Grace is the free and

²⁴⁸ Eccl. 12:13-14; Rom. 2:6-16; 2 Cor. 5:10; and Gal. 6:7-8.

²⁴⁹ Jg. 2:12, 14, and 15.

²⁵⁰ Jg. 1:7; and 9:56-57.

²⁵¹ Jg. 12:3-6; and 20:18-35.

²⁵² Jg. 5:11, 23; and 10:15.

²⁵³ Gen. 18:25; and Jg. 11:27.

²⁵⁴ *Sifre Dt., Ha'azinu*, 32:41.

²⁵⁵ 1 Jn. 4:8.

²⁵⁶ Jn. 5:20; 14:31; 15:9-17; 16:27; and 20:2.

²⁵⁷ Ex. 20:6; Dt. 7:7-8; 23:5; Ps. 100:5; Jer. 33:11; Hos. 2:19; 11:1; and Mic. 7:20.

²⁵⁸ Smith, *Natural Theology*, 216.

²⁵⁹ Erickson, 292-297.

undeserved condescension of God's love. Suffering is the assumed and endured pain of God's love.²⁶⁰

The term love does not appear in Judges. Instead, the narrator portrays the long-suffering of YHWH, which at times requires divine action through justice. But, is this love? It is because justice is the distribution of love.²⁶¹ The anthropopathic responses of YHWH seeing the state Israel had fallen into correctly shows His love, whether it was in raising up an oppressor or raising up a deliver to remove the oppressor.

TRUTHFULNESS. The next divine attribute is truth. Theologically put, YHWH is truth. This divine embodiment is understood by Arminian theology as the amalgamation of veracity and faithfulness.

There can be no reason for God's deceiving His creatures, as He cannot be deceived by them. His knowledge is infinite, so that He cannot be mistaken, and His holiness perfect, so that He can have no disposition to deceive; thus there must be sincerity in all His dealings with His creatures.²⁶²

Erickson understands the concept of truth to have three dimensions: genuineness, veracity, and faithfulness. The biblical record affirms that YHWH will not lie.²⁶³ The prophet Jeremiah, and later *Yeshua*, would declare that YHWH is the true God.²⁶⁴ Divine integrity goes past the understanding that God is the truth; but, that He is "the source and center of all truth."²⁶⁵ The concept is implied in Judges. When YHWH swore to Israel, He kept His promise.²⁶⁶ When Gideon needed proof that *Elohim* would deliver Israel through him as He had promised, He provided attesting miracles.²⁶⁷ In contrast to the lack of truth and integrity displayed by the men of Shechem, *Elohim* empowers Jotham's curse, and shows Himself faithful.²⁶⁸ Many other passages confirm this divine attribute.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁰ Garrett, 292. As such, the related attributes are patience, faithfulness, mercy-kindness, grace, and suffering. He also uses the term "passibility of God" to refer to the divine ability to suffer.

²⁶¹ J.F. Fletcher, *Situation Ethics: The New Morality* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1966), 86-102.

²⁶² Summers, 100-101.

²⁶³ 1 Sam. 15:29; Tit. 1:2; and Heb. 6:18.

²⁶⁴ Jer. 10:10; and Jn. 17:3.

²⁶⁵ Smith, *System of Christian Theology*, 44.

²⁶⁶ Jg. 2:15.

²⁶⁷ Jg. 6:36-40.

²⁶⁸ Jg. 9:57.

²⁶⁹ Ex. 34:6; Num. 23:19; and 1 Jn. 5:20.

WISDOM. The final shared attribute is wisdom. As such, YHWH is wise. Divine wisdom means “that God acts in the light of all the facts and in light of correct values.”²⁷⁰ The Psalmist understood creation to be an expression of that wisdom.²⁷¹ Paul understood that this wisdom is a part of divine infinity, since His wisdom is beyond the bounds of man’s searching.²⁷² The term wisdom is not used in Judges; however, the narrator embeds the concept with the divine test of Israel introduced in the prologue.²⁷³ The biblical record affirms His wisdom.²⁷⁴

Anthropocentric Perspective

Ultimately, every understanding we possess about deity is anthropocentric. The characters in the Judges narrative share their perspective. Gideon understands the deity as YHWH is peace.²⁷⁵ Later, he declares YHWH lives and YHWH shall rule.²⁷⁶ Jephthah understands deity as YHWH, the Judge.²⁷⁷ Manoah and his wife learn that in the form of the angel of YHWH, man can look upon deity and not die.²⁷⁸

Even so, deity may be misunderstood. Gideon did not know that he could make an additional request of *Elohim* and He would not become angry with him.²⁷⁹ Manoah and his wife did not know that YHWH could use their son and his marital desires as a divine occasion.²⁸⁰ Samson did not understand that *Adonai* YHWH had not forgotten him.²⁸¹ In the epilogue, (*Mikāyhū*) Micah did not understand that YHWH was not obligated to prosper him simply because he had a Levite as a priest.²⁸² Nevertheless, an anthropocentric perspective is not limited to individual revelation. The narrator often reveals it through terms of form, emotion, and will.

²⁷⁰ Erickson, 275.

²⁷¹ Ps. 104:24.

²⁷² Rom. 11:33.

²⁷³ Jg. 2:21-3:4.

²⁷⁴ Job 9:4; 36:5; Prov. 3:19; Rom. 11:33-36; 16:27; Eph. 1:8; 3:10; 1 Tim. 1:17; and Jude 25.

²⁷⁵ Jg. 6:24.

²⁷⁶ Jg. 8:19, and 23.

²⁷⁷ Jg. 11:27.

²⁷⁸ Jg. 11:22-23.

²⁷⁹ Jg. 6:39.

²⁸⁰ Jg. 14:4.

²⁸¹ Jg. 16:28.

²⁸² מִיכָיְהוּ. Jg. 17:13.

ANTHROPOMORPHIC ATTRIBUTES

In the early church, Melito of Sardis (162 CE) ascribed a body to God. Later, Tertullian modified that concept to reflect a divine *corpus* which he described as a *tertium quid*, that being His necessary form of existence.²⁸³ Origen vociferously opposed these thoughts and essentially removed deity from the earthly realm.²⁸⁴ Although *Yeshua* was the incarnate deity, He declared, “God is spirit.”²⁸⁵ The finiteness of the human mind cannot fully know YHWH or all of His attributes; thus, we use the analogy of the human form in order to comprehend deity. The biblical writers often used metaphoric language to describe YHWH in terms of man.

SIGHT OF YHWH. Of the anthropomorphic representations, the most frequently used in Judges ascribes sight to YHWH. This implies sensory observation such that YHWH has eyes. The narrator uses the idiom “the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of YHWH.”²⁸⁶

HEARING OF YHWH. The narrator implies divine hearing; however, the phrase “hearing of YHWH” does not occur in the text. Rather, the narrator uses the phrase “the sons of Israel cried to YHWH.”²⁸⁷ The narrator speaks of *Elohim* listening to Manoah and the possibility of Him hearing the men of Shechem.

VOICE OF YHWH. The next sensory manifestation anticipates that YHWH has a voice and that He speaks. Speaking either Himself or through the agency of the divine messenger, YHWH chastises Israel because they “listened not to My voice.”²⁸⁸ In typical biblical fashion, the narrator frequently uses the phrase “YHWH said.” Nevertheless, Gideon reminds *Elohim* with the words “as You have spoken.”²⁸⁹ Manoah’s wife makes the same implication when she remonstrates to her husband that “He has let us hear things like this.”²⁹⁰

²⁸³ Smith, *System of Christian Theology*, 9.

²⁸⁴ Summers, 79.

²⁸⁵ Jn. 4:24.

²⁸⁶ Jg. 2:11; 3:7, 12; 4:1; 6:1; and 13:1.

²⁸⁷ Jg. 3:9, 15; 4:3; 6:6, 7; 10:10, and 14.

²⁸⁸ Jg. 2:2.

²⁸⁹ Jg. 6:36, and 37.

²⁹⁰ Jg. 13:23.

HAND OF YHWH. Another metaphorical use describes divine power or authority. The narrator states, “the hand of YHWH was against them.”²⁹¹ Frequently the metaphor of the hand is used in Judges, but only once in relation to deity.

ANGEL OF YHWH. The (*mal’ak-YHWH*) angel of YHWH appears at various intervals throughout Judges. He is experienced at Bochim.²⁹² He curses (*Mērôz*) Meroz in the Song of Deborah.²⁹³ He appears to Gideon and then later to Manoah and his wife. There is speculation as to whether this is a theophany. That discussion is reserved for later.²⁹⁴ What is apparent is that he had a recognizable form. Gideon was concerned that he had seen the divine messenger “face to face.”²⁹⁵ Manoah’s wife recognized the divine appearance of the messenger.²⁹⁶ Manoah fearfully proclaimed that he and his wife had seen *Elohim*, when referring to the divine messenger.²⁹⁷

ANTHROPOPATHIC ATTRIBUTES

In addition to anthropomorphic representation of deity, the narrator employs the concept of anthropopathy. For biblical literalists, this is less offensive to think of deity having emotion in human terms. This is problematic for Caird, who questions the validity of making a distinction between anthropomorphisms and anthropopathisms in the biblical narrative.²⁹⁸ Nevertheless, the distinction does have theological value in that anthropomorphic language should be understood metaphorically and anthropopathic language should be understood literally.²⁹⁹

ANGER. The most demonstrative emotion is divine anger or wrath. The narrator presents this as an anticipated response to Israelite rebellion to YHWH and His covenant. The actions of Israel provoked YHWH to anger.³⁰⁰ However, the narrator is more emotive

²⁹¹ Jg. 2:15.

²⁹² מַלְאֲכֵי יְהוָה. Jg. 2:1-4.

²⁹³ מֵרוֹז. Jg. 5:23.

²⁹⁴ For a further discussion, see the sections “Angel of YHWH Narrative” within the treatment of “Source Criticism,” page 102; and “Angel of YHWH” within the treatment of “Miraculous/Supernatural,” pages 272-273.

²⁹⁵ Jg. 6:22.

²⁹⁶ Jg. 13:6.

²⁹⁷ Jg. 13:23.

²⁹⁸ G.B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1980), 172.

²⁹⁹ G.A. Cole, “The Living God: Anthropomorphic or Anthropopathic?” *RTR* 59 (2000), 22-25.

³⁰⁰ Jg. 2:12.

by expressing that the divine anger burned against Israel.³⁰¹ It is remarkable that His anger is only in connection to Israel and not to the other nations. As an attribute common to man, the Jewish sages make the distinction that “man’s anger controls him, but God controls His anger – He is master of His wrath.”³⁰²

Theologically, it has been discovered that justice and love play the dominant role both in the understanding of the function of divine anger and in the appropriateness of human anger. It has also been shown that this understanding was present in many genres of literature: proverbs, historical, narrative, prophetic announcement, hymns, laments, etc. The description of Yahweh’s person, as One who contains the passion of anger does not change ideologically from literary type to literary type.³⁰³

VENGEANCE. Instead of anger, the narrator describes divine action against the enemies of *Elohim* in a retributive emotion of vengeance. In the *Torah*, YHWH declares that vengeance belongs to Him and that He will exercise it against His enemies.³⁰⁴ The New Testament bears witness to the *Torah*.³⁰⁵ Within Judges, Adoni-Bezek, Abimelech, the men of Shechem, and the Ammonites experienced divine vengeance.³⁰⁶

COMPASSION. As a motivating emotion connected with the attribute of love, YHWH expresses compassion or tender mercies. When Gideon was fearful of dying after his theophanic encounter, YHWH issued a comforting exhortation of peace and an assurance that he would not die because of that event.³⁰⁷ That same compassion was exhibited to the fearful men in Gideon’s militia, when YHWH allowed them to be excused from their military conscription and return home.³⁰⁸ Once again, Gideon experienced divine compassion when YHWH acknowledged his fear of entering into battle, and provided him with encouragement through an interpretation of the Midianite dream.³⁰⁹

PITY AND MISERY. Israel’s sin had an affect on YHWH, just as it did on them. The divine discipline directed toward Israel also had an affect on YHWH. The narrator describes that YHWH was “moved to pity because of their groaning.”³¹⁰ Later in the

³⁰¹ Jg. 2:14, 20; 3:8; 6:39; and 10:7.

³⁰² *Midr.Ps.* 94:1.

³⁰³ B.E. Baloian, *Anger in the Old Testament* (TAR 99: New York: Peter Lang, 1992), 173.

³⁰⁴ Dt. 32:35, 41, and 43.

³⁰⁵ Rom. 12:19; and Heb. 10:30.

³⁰⁶ Jg. 1:7; 9:56, 57; and 11:36.

³⁰⁷ Jg. 6:23.

³⁰⁸ Jg. 7:3.

³⁰⁹ Jg. 7:9.

³¹⁰ Jg. 2:18.

narrative, YHWH “could bear the misery of Israel no longer.”³¹¹ This does not imply that YHWH was miserable; but, that the misery Israel experienced affected Him.

ANTHROPOSOPHIC ATTRIBUTES

In the same manner that deity may be described according to human form or emotion, the same is possible regarding human wisdom. Already, the shared attribute of wisdom has been examined; yet, it remains to investigate the divine response as it relates to will or intent. The divine will is consistent with His teleological design set forth in the scriptures. The narrator expresses the divine will when circumstances are presented with choices that are made.

YHWH does not appear in the Judges narrative as being aloof or uninvolved in the life of premonarchic Israel. When faced with Israelite apostasy and rebellion, He chooses to raise up an oppressor. When faced with Israelite cries for relief, He chooses to raise up a deliverer. Yet, in one occasion, He chose not to deliver Israel when they requested help.³¹² He chooses whether to respond with an answer to prayer. He chooses at times to send various representatives of prophets and messengers. He makes a choice to extend favor to Gideon.³¹³ Gideon experiences that by YHWH turning toward him.³¹⁴ YHWH, through the divine messenger, chooses to be detained in order to receive a sacrificial offering.³¹⁵ He chooses to bless Samson as he grows up.³¹⁶ Later, He chooses to depart from Samson.³¹⁷

At some point, we must come to terms with the unpredictability of YHWH from an anthropocentric perspective. In Himself, His actions are predictable. Nevertheless, like His creation, He, too has a will.

³¹¹ Jg. 10:16.

³¹² Jg. 10:13.

³¹³ Jg. 6:17.

³¹⁴ Jg. 6:14.

³¹⁵ Jg. 6:18; and 13:16.

³¹⁶ Jg. 13:24.

³¹⁷ Jg. 16:20.

Identification of the Judgment of God

YHWH is the central character in the book of Judges. Already, we have seen how the narrator gives the reader a glimpse into the identity of the Israelite deity through his perspective and that of his characters. From the outset, YHWH has made His presence known and felt throughout Judges, as well as the *Hexateuch*. He has disclosed His identity and nature through signs and actions. This intentional self-disclosure is for the purpose of divine-human intercourse.

God intentionally reveals who God is by reminding people of divine activity in the past and emphasizing that God continues to act in their lives. In this divine-human relationship, God expects recognition from the human partner. Again reflecting the Decalogue, this recognition should result in loyalty and obedience as a response to God's actions.³¹⁸

How does this translate into divine action in human life? In Judges, the indictment against the generation that followed Joshua is that they did not know YHWH or His work He had done for Israel.³¹⁹ This places this relationship in jeopardy since the divine prerogative of communion is replaced with judgment. It is divine justice tempered by divine love for the purpose of reconciliation. This brings us to the question, "What is the judgment of God?"

Divine Judgment: The Subject

The holiness of YHWH requires Him to judge His creation. That judgment comes in many different forms. Sometimes it is through divine intervention; but more often than not, it is through His creation. At times, it is swift and immediate; but usually the patience and forbearance of YHWH postpones judgment. Judgment may be eschatological. The acts of man create a cause and effect relationship whereby judgment is the divine response. In its divine context, judgment is defined as the response of YHWH. Divine judgment may be executed against an individual, (e.g. [(*ākân*)] Achan, [(*Hananiah*)] Ananias and [(*Sapphirē*)] Sapphira).³²⁰ However, the context is usually in regard to how individual sin affects the whole community and its faith in YHWH, thus requiring divine action. Lilley identifies three modes of involvement:

³¹⁸ L.J.M. Claassens, "The Character of God in Judges 6-8: The Gideon Narrative as Theological and Moral Resource," *HorBT* 23 (2001), 66.

³¹⁹ Jg. 2:10.

³²⁰ חֵן אֶחָד; Ἡνανίας, and Σαπφίρη. Josh. 7:16-26; and Acts 5:1-11.

Firstly, there is individual sin prejudicing the welfare of the community; secondly, there is individual sin leading the community astray; and finally, we can find the community generally adopting wrong standards.³²¹

The logical focus is on how sin committed by Israel or another nation affects Israel. No geographic or tribal distinction exempts the people of Israel from Him executing justice. Divine judgment is not limited to Israel alone. The biblical witness identifies YHWH judging entire communities and countries. Sodom, Egypt, (*Nîn^awēh*) Nineveh, and (*Bābel*) Babylon are but a few of the examples.³²²

Concept of Judgment

The biblical concept of human judgment is the twinned ideas of (*mišpat ūṣedāqāh*) justice and righteousness.³²³ Within the social structure, one seeking adjudication would proceed through the hierarchical structure until someone could interpret and apply the *Torah* to the situation. The upper levels of that structure would include the Levites, the Priests, and the king. The expectation is the one who administers judgment is twofold: “to avoid corruption and partiality; [and] to do ‘justice.’”³²⁴ Seeligmann goes a step further and while accepting the above makes the judge one who “save[s] the oppressed from the hands of the oppressor.”³²⁵

One of the problems associated with adjudication was perceiving the divine will regarding the matter. There are seven different means mentioned in the Hebrew bible: the dream oracle, (*hā'ūrīm w^ahatumīm*) Urim and Thummim, casting the (*pūr*) lot, (*'ēpōd*) ephod, (*t^arāpīm*) teraphim, (*mē hammārīm*) the water of bitterness, and necromancy.³²⁶ The *Torah* prohibits divination of the spirits of the dead.³²⁷ The water of bitterness apparently was only used to discover if a woman was unfaithful to her husband.³²⁸ Lots

³²¹ J.P.U. Lilley, “The Judgment of God: The Problem of the Canaanites,” *Themelios* 22 (1997), 4.

³²² כָּבֵל, and גִּינוּהָ.

³²³ מִשְׁפָּט וְצִדְקָה. M. Weinfeld, *Social Justice in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995)

³²⁴ B.S. Jackson, “‘Law’ and ‘Justice’ in the Bible,” *JJS* 49 (1998), 223.

³²⁵ I.L. Seeligmann, ‘Zur Terminologie für das Gerichtsverfahren im Wortschatz des biblischen Hebräisch,’ *Hebräische Wortforschung: Festschrift zum 80. Geburtstag von Walter Baumgartner* (Hebrew Word Search: Dedicated to Walter Baumgartner on his 80th birthday) [Ger.], (Ed.) Walter Baumgartner (Leiden, the Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1967), 251-278 cited in Jackson, 224.

³²⁶ מִי הַמָּוֶרִים, חֲרָפִים, אֶפֶד, פֹּר, הָאוּרִים וְהַתְּמִים. E.F. de Ward, “Superstition and Judgment: Archaic Methods of Finding a Verdict,” *ZAW* 89 (1977), 1-19.

³²⁷ Dt. 18:10-11.

³²⁸ Num. 5:5-31.

were used to discover guilty parties.³²⁹ Dreams could not be manufactured, but did occur, such as with Samuel when he was a young boy.³³⁰

In the book of Judges, only the minor judges are reported as having judged Israel. The people came to Deborah for judgment. Potentially, the Ark of the Covenant was used in an oracular sense.³³¹ However, the aberrant means of seeking judgment is implied through divination with the *ephod* and *teraphim* at the shrine of Micah.³³²

The reality of judgment portrayed in Judges is as a theocratic institution. YHWH is identified as the Judge.³³³ In the New Testament, *Yeshua* is called our (*paraklēton*) “Advocate” with the Father.³³⁴ The standard by which matters are adjudicated is the *Torah*. The context of every divine judgment is the Covenant He has with Israel. YHWH is required to execute judgment in premonarchic Israel. He has indicted the generation that followed after Joshua for not knowing Him. Instead, Israel has replaced the knowledge of deity with the knowledge of good and evil and the thorny existence that flows out of the Adam story. Ironically, YHWH must confront Israel repeatedly with His goodness and their evil as part of His judgment of sin.³³⁵ YHWH assumes the role of both divine Prosecutor and Judge. Heaven and Earth as witnesses to the Covenant at Sinai serve as the corroborating witness to the divine testimony. It is not malice because of the curse associated with Adam’s Fall; but poetic justice. Even though the circumstances of the Garden resulted in a divine sentence of expulsion, it did not mean excommunication. Judgment begins with a divine reprimand.

Yahweh was the one who of necessity punished his people, but he was also the one who would attempt to re-establish the covenantal relationship. It was only when this effort had failed that he would pass sentence.³³⁶

³²⁹ Josh. 7:14-18; and Jon. 1:7.

³³⁰ 1 Sam. 3:10-14.

³³¹ G. von Rad, *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, (Tran.) E.W.T. Dicken (London: Oliver & Boyd, 1966), 116. Jg. 20:27.

³³² Jg. 17:5; 18:14, and 20.

³³³ Jg. 11:27.

³³⁴ ὁ παράκλητον. Interestingly, it is the same term that John uses to describe the Holy Spirit. 1 Jn. 2:1.

³³⁵ S. Breitbart, “Problem of the Theodicy,” *DD 15* (1987), 228-229. He makes an interesting observation that the Doctrine of Original Sin in Christianity is based on a passage of scripture that does not use the term sin. Rather, deity does not use the word sin until Genesis 4.

³³⁶ K. Nielsen, *Yahweh as Prosecutor and Judge: An Investigation of the Prophetic Lawsuit (Rib-Pattern)*, (Trans.) F. Cryer (*JSOT Supp. 9*: Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1978), 75.

The prophetic lawsuit pattern had eight elements: 1) Appeal to heaven and earth, and everyone to listen; 2) Declaration of Yahweh's right to act as he has done; 3) Accusation against the people, who have been disloyal to the Covenant; 4) Rhetorical cross-examination, which does not expect any reply; 5) Accusatory address, usually historically founded, which summarizes Yahweh's gracious acts and the people's ingratitude; 6) Declaration of the powerlessness of the foreign gods, and of the impossibility of re-establishing the right relationship to Yahweh by means of rites; 7) Declaration of Israel's guilt; and 8) Type A: threats of destruction = declaration of war; or Type B: a positive specification of what is needed to rebuilt the relationship = ultimatum.³³⁷ Five complete accusatory addresses in the Hebrew bible use this pattern.³³⁸ Other passages have elements of the pattern, which includes the Bochim episode in Judges.³³⁹ This form of judgment operated with an Israelite awareness that YHWH punishes His people when they sin; but rewards them when they are virtuous. It was His wrath at work in times of punishment. It was His love at work in times of reward. To understand this dichotomously establishes a schism in deity that suggests He is bi-polar. YHWH is not either wrath or love; He is both. He exercises love in His wrath and jealous wrath in His love. It is questionable whether premonarchic Israel understood YHWH in these terms of unified attributes. Even so, Israel did understand that "even in the face of an unconditional sentence of judgment, repentance and reform could be expected to avert disaster."³⁴⁰ Essentially, they knew the grace of YHWH; however, that does not mean that Israel did not take advantage of divine grace.

The aim of divine judgment is reconciliation. However, the response of Israel determined when and if that reconciliation would occur, and the extent of divine discipline necessary to provoke Israel to be reconciled with YHWH. Before we identify divine judgment in Judges, a comment is necessary on the divine *modus operandi*. Regardless of the biblical passage chosen, the axiom that sin demands death stands firm. The events of Sodom and Gomorrah illustrate this. Few would question that the people of these cities deserved judgment. For the Yahwist, the question remains,

³³⁷ J. Harvey, "Le 'Rîb-Pattern' réquisitoire prophétique sur la rupture de l'alliance," *Biblica* 43 (1962), 172-196 cited in Nielsen, 15.

³³⁸ Dt. 32:1-25; Ps. 50:1-23; Isa. 1:2-20; Jer. 2:4-13, 29; and Mic. 6:1-8.

³³⁹ Jg. 2:1-5; 1 Sam. 2:27-36; 2 Sam. 12:7-12; 1 Kg. 14:7-11; 21:17-24; 2 Chron. 12:5-8; 15:1-15; Isa. 42:18-25; 48:12-19; 57:3-13; 66:1-4; Jer. 6:16-21; and Mal. 1:6 - 2:9.

³⁴⁰ A.F. Campbell, "God's Anger and our Suffering," *ACR* 59 (1982), 375. Jer. 18:1-11.

“What determines God’s judgment on Sodom, the wickedness of the many or the innocence of the few?” The guilt of the city is beyond question, but the narrator pushes Yahweh to the point of admitting that a very small number of innocent people could spare a great host, so willing is He to save. The fact that Sodom and Gomorrah are inhabited by non-Israelites indicates just how far Yahweh will go in overlooking sin for the sake of a few righteous.³⁴¹

Assuming that this principle of the *Torah* is valid for premonarchic Israel, then the logical conclusion is the number of righteous Israelites within the community of faith must have been so minute that YHWH must implement divine judgment repeatedly.

Judgment in Judges

Judgment is often understood as being distinctively negative. Further, the perception is that it is a retributive action by YHWH for that which humanity deserves. The biblical narrator expresses divine judgment against Israel. Nevertheless, judgment is not always against Israel, sometimes it is on behalf of Israel. In this light, divine judgment also has a positive understanding. Paradoxically, YHWH executes His judgment “both to further and to thwart the fortunes of Israel, or to put it in structuralist terms, [it is He] who fills the roles of both sender and opponent.”³⁴²

AGAINST ISRAEL

Just as there is a dichotomy in divine judgment having positive and negative forms, the same is true concerning His expressions of justice against Israel. The narrator does not use theological terminology such as divine presence or absence; however, these concepts are present in Judges.

DIVINE PRESENCE. The divine presence of YHWH is the primary means of administering judgment against His people. It was not through some manifestation like the one Israel experienced at Sinai. Nonetheless, He administered judgment through various emissaries. Surprisingly, there was some distance in the divine presence regarding judgment. The Spirit of YHWH actively moved upon several of the judges; however, He never dispensed judgment, except through the agency of the delivering judge. That manifestation was limited to warfare activity.

³⁴¹ J.L. Crénshaw, “Popular Questioning of the Justice of God in Ancient Israel,” *ZAW* 82 (1970), 385.

³⁴² J.C. Exum, “The Centre Cannot Hold: Thematic and Textual Instabilities in Judges,” *CBQ* 52 (1990), 411. In narrative critical terms, He assumes the role of protagonist and antagonist. This is addressed in chapter four.

ANGEL OF YHWH. The Angel of YHWH was an instrument of divine judgment. However, the divine messenger functioned within this realm both for and against Israel. Specifically, the negative function involved the theophany at Bochim. The judgment involved an indictment and a sentence regarding how YHWH would leave the Canaanites in the land and use their gods and religion against Israel.³⁴³

PROPHET. The prophetic office is present with an unnamed male and with Deborah. In both instances, these individuals were representatives of judgment. However, only the unnamed prophet was exercising a judgment against Israel.³⁴⁴ The judgment came in two forms. First, when Israel cried out to YHWH, He did not follow the expected pattern of raising up a deliver. Instead, He sent a prophet. Second, the prophet brought a denunciation against Israel.

EVIL SPIRIT. On one occasion, YHWH uses an (*rûaḥ rā'āh*) evil spirit to do the divine bidding.³⁴⁵ Wilcock states, YHWH uses

[T]he peculiar property which evil has of undoing itself. All he needs to do is to send the evil spirit to make, as I have said, the first tear in the fabric of the Abimelech/Shechem covenant, and all begins to unravel. There is no other intervention. None is needed. God's almighty power is seen most chiefly in his showing mercy and pity; he has little need to use it in judgment; he has but to take his restraining hand off the brake and wicked men will run to their own destruction, and 'all who take the sword will perish by the sword.'³⁴⁶

OTHER NATIONS. The most recurrent form used in Judges are other nations. YHWH had left the nations as part of His test of Israel's fidelity.³⁴⁷ The narrator describes that YHWH empowered the nations against Israel.³⁴⁸ This does not imply that He dictated to them how to oppress or punish Israel. Neither does it imply that YHWH condoned the ways Israel was subjected by these nations. This discussion of the oppressive nations occurs later.³⁴⁹

DIVINE ABSENCE. In a strict interpretation, the concept of divine absence is impossible. How can YHWH be absent when by His nature He is omnipresent? Thus, divine absence must be explained in terms of "the loss of intensification in divine

³⁴³ Jg. 2:1-4.

³⁴⁴ Jg. 6:8-10.

³⁴⁵ רוח רעה ה. Jg. 9:23.

³⁴⁶ M. Wilcock, *The Message of Judges: Grace Abounding* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1993), 101. *Contra* Wilcock, I would disagree because the evil spirit is a divine agent of judgment, and thus, YHWH does use it in judgment.

³⁴⁷ Jg. 2:22 – 3:4.

³⁴⁸ Jg. 3:12.

³⁴⁹ See the section, "Nations Used in YHWH's Test," pages 284-301, in chapter three.

presence.”³⁵⁰ YHWH does not disappear; however, the manifestation of His nearness and of His communion is absent. At various points in Judges, YHWH is conspicuously absent. After the deliverance through Gideon, the narrator makes no mention of divine presence. The accounts of the minor judges are devoid of divine presence. Divine absence is apparent in the Abimelech narrative, although the effects of judgment are experienced through His emissary, the evil spirit. The absence of YHWH intimates chaos within society. The events portrayed of Abimelech and the Shechemites reflects a divine judgment that causes disintegration and destruction because of divine absence.³⁵¹

IN BEHALF OF ISRAEL

Despite the wickedness and sin of Israel, YHWH executed justice by causing His judgment to not only work against Israel; but also in behalf of Israel. YHWH was never aloof to judgment. It came in many forms that exhibited His divine attributes. It should not be surprising, that in His choice of human deliverers, He reveals Himself.

[H]is working through his servants has meant that they reflect in themselves and their operations something of him and of his. Othniel is a saviour because his God is a Saviour. Ehud is left-handed, just as his God regularly saves ‘left-handedly.’ Barak obeys commands, just as his God always keeps his own rules. Gideon’s strength is made perfect in weakness, which is how his God works, supremely when in the end of the ages he comes himself in the frailty of human flesh. But the thing which our writer brings to the fore is the thing in which the human judge does reflect the divine Judge. In Old Testament and in the New, God shows himself as the God who never goes back on his word.³⁵²

As we have already discussed, YHWH is anthropopathic in His response. The Jephthah pericope portrays that when YHWH becomes involved with Israel in its judgment it will also be “deeply personal and emotional rather than as merely formal and legal.”³⁵³ Therefore, certain of His divine attributes are reexamined.

WISDOM. Each divine act of judgment is predicated by wisdom. The design of judgment is presented in the context of a cyclical pattern. While the cycle and its constituent parts are addressed later in chapter five, the reality is YHWH had an established plan of action. Israelite apostasy would bring a divine response. YHWH chose primarily to use other nations as divine agents of judging Israel. Wisdom is expressed by

³⁵⁰ T.E. Fretheim, *The Suffering of God: An Old Testament Perspective* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984), 65.

³⁵¹ Wilcock, 101.

³⁵² Ibid., 123-124.

³⁵³ B.G. Webb, *The Book of Judges: An Integrated Reading* (JSOT Supp. 46: Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1987), 75.

YHWH leaving the other nations in the vicinity without allowing Joshua to complete dispossess them. This served many purposes. It was much more than a test of Israel's fidelity or teaching Israel warfare. It was an opportunity for YHWH to be glorified in the removal of the false gods of the Canaanites. The holy war that occurred in Judges 1 and elsewhere when a military deliverer came to the fore was a divine decree of judgment against the pagan culture, in which He used Israel as His agent of judgment.³⁵⁴

RIGHTEOUSNESS. Inherent in divine judgment is the reality that YHWH is righteous and acts in righteousness. The Abimelech story illustrates this point. Both Abimelech and the Shechemites were acting with treachery epitomizing evil. The narrator uses irony to show divine righteousness in the face of human injustice.

He had begun the process by sending the evil spirit of 9:23, whose paradoxical task was to set in motion the punishment of evil, and who caused Abimelech and Shechem to break faith with each other so that God might keep faith with his own principles of justice.³⁵⁵

The incident at (*Gib³'āh*) Gibeah and the subsequent internecine war against Benjamin is problematic because of the internal schism of the people and the manner in which judgment is inflicted.³⁵⁶ At first, everything appears to be against Israel and Benjamin. However, the justice of YHWH requires all parties to be punished for their sin. Divine judgment occurs through civil war and through the estrangement between Israel and YHWH.³⁵⁷

PROVIDENCE. YHWH is provident and in control. This does not change the reality despite however it may appear that He may not be in control in Judges. The Abimelech narrative illustrates this case-in-point. The reader is never told whether Abimelech knew of Jotham's parable and prophetic curse.³⁵⁸ Yet, YHWH knew of it. Similarly, the reader is not told whether the unnamed woman of (*Tēbēš*) Thebez knew of the curse against Abimelech.³⁵⁹ However, the irony is not only that YHWH would use an unnamed woman against the king as an instrument of justice in a patriarchal society; but that the woman would have a millstone with her at the top of the tower, be in a position directly over the

³⁵⁴ Lilley, "The Judgment of God," 7-8.

³⁵⁵ Wilcock, 102.

³⁵⁶ גִּבְעָה.

³⁵⁷ P.E. Satterthwaite, "'No King in Israel': Narrative Criticism and Judges 17-21," *TynBul* 44 (1993), 82-83. Jg. 20:18-35.

³⁵⁸ Jg. 9:7-20.

³⁵⁹ תֵּבֶז.

doorway, and would with precision drop the stone on Abimelech's head.³⁶⁰ That is providential. Wilcock states, "So in the end several apparently unrelated things come together to bring about God's purposes."³⁶¹ In addition, YHWH's test of Israel is an example of divine providence.

God's decision to leave some inhabitants unconquered is the product of his foreknowledge that Israel would go astray and the obvious need to have a means of coercing the wayward nation.³⁶²

MERCY AND PITY. Against the heathen, *Elohim* was vengeful. He expressed retribution to Adoni-Bezek. Abimelech received his just reward of retribution. However, when viewed as a positive juridical function, divine vengeance is a judgment against the enemies of YHWH while simultaneously He shows mercy and pity to those who love and obey Him. Throughout the premonarchic period, YHWH showed Israel mercy. An indication of that merciful judgment was the temporal limitations placed upon the oppressors. Divine judgment is restrained by mercy. The Jewish sages understood that the Judge of all the earth would do right; but if strict justice was enforced the world could not be maintained.³⁶³

Divine Judgment: The Object

This foundation of the identity of God and an examination of His peculiar judgment move the focus of the study to the people of God. This problem of identifying these people is equally if not more complex. Thus, our problem shifts to identify "Who are the people of God?"

Ways of Defining Israel

Following the renewed propagation of the human race at the beginning of the postdiluvian era, the whole earth used the same language.³⁶⁴ In the ancient Near East land of (*Šin'ār*) Shinar with the building of the tower and the city of (*Bābel*) Babel the

³⁶⁰ Jg. 9:53.

³⁶¹ Wilcock, 102. Jg. 9:56-57.

³⁶² L. Eslinger, *Into the Hands of the Living God* (JSOT Supp. 84: Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 80.

³⁶³ *Gen.R., Lek Leka*, 39:6.

³⁶⁴ Gen. 11:1. An issue of disparity regards the phrase (*kol-hā'āreṣ*) כְּלִי-הָאָרֶץ, which is disputed as being all inclusive of the earth or only a limited territory in Mesopotamia. A broader application can be sufficiently argued because it follows the Table of Nations. See Archer, *SOTI*, 223-227.

languages of the peoples were confused and the peoples were scattered from that location.³⁶⁵ The foundation of the families of the earth poses another problem, specifically with the diversity of each ethnic group deriving from Noahic lineage in the Table of Nations.³⁶⁶

"The reader must not come to this text with erroneous presuppositions. The table of nations does not reveal humanity either according to race or according to language. Rather, these are nations that were politically and historically distinct from one another or related to one another."³⁶⁷

For von Rad, the significance of this priestly table for biblical theology is "that it shows fulfillment, the execution of God's command to Noah and his sons: 'Be fruitful and multiply.'"³⁶⁸ Brueggemann identifies this as the political world of Solomon, whereby "the basic principal of organization is not racial, ethnic, linguistic, or territorial, but political [reflecting] networks of relations at a given time."³⁶⁹

Of all the nations and peoples who were present at Babel, clearly one ethnic people group has been singled out of those who shared a common language origin at Shinar.³⁷⁰ Our inquiry is limited to that nation whose election originates from its

³⁶⁵ שִׁנְעָר, and בָּבֶל. Gen. 11:2-9. Y. Aharoni and M. Avi-Yonah, *The Macmillan Bible Atlas*, rev. ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1977), 21. Though there remains some question as to its exact location, traditionally it has been placed in modern day Iraq.

Mathews introduces a judicial parallelism between the expulsions of man individually and corporately from both Eden and Babel in *NAC*, 467. The autonomous nature of man is seen as a judicial pronouncement with the division of the languages and the peoples by D.E. Gowan, *When Man Becomes God: Humanism and Hybris in the Old Testament* (PTMS 6: Pittsburgh, PA: The Pickwick Press, 1975), 14-15.

³⁶⁶ Gen. 10:1-32.

³⁶⁷ von Rad, *Genesis*, 140.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 144. Gen. 9:1.

³⁶⁹ W. Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 91-92. Further, it is an integral part of the Noahic narrative and the promise of re-population of a common humanity more than focusing on an ethnographical list presented in a non-mythological way. See W.G. Plaut, *The Torah: A Modern Commentary, Vol. 1 – Genesis* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1974), 96.

³⁷⁰ The Sumerian tradition embodies the idea of a single universal language; however, F.A. Spina addresses the uniqueness of the Israelite tradition in Ancient Near Eastern literature, "Babel," *ABD* 1:561-562. Although it lacks the element of a singular language, others view this as an expropriation from the Babylonian *Enuma Elish*, such as E.A. Speiser in *Genesis: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Garden City, MI: Doubleday, 1964), 75. G. von Rad approaches this as an Israelite etiological saga in *Genesis*, 150-151.

Demographic census research by the International Program Center of the U.S. Bureau of Census at the Internet URL address of <http://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/ipc/popclockw> as of September 23, 2001 enumerates the global population at 6,175,151,022. These people live in 185 political national divisions as recognized by the United Nations. "Members of the United Nations" in *EDE* [CD-ROM]. Also, see *Rand McNally Atlas of the World*, Millenium ed. (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1999).

monotheistic Creator.³⁷¹ Such a question classifying people groups has its own inherent pitfalls. Does an ethnic birthright and parentage automatically qualify everyone? Alternatively, does the salvific and faith issue become more of a compelling factor than lineage? Then, there is the awareness that not everyone in an ethnic subset will adhere to a specific worship of God, based on the issue of free will.

Who are these people that could proclaim with veracity and certainty that they are the people of God and adhere to a Judeo-Christian ethic and theology.³⁷² Moreover, the biblical texts identify a people whom God has chosen as His own.³⁷³ This election is from the perspective of a divine judge who has selected a specific people who He sovereignly initiates through covenantal rites for soteriological purposes, which allow judgment to be administered.³⁷⁴

“According to the Old Testament, YHWH’s activity has to do with Israel, but his actions are not once and for all. Rather, it is through his historical activity that YHWH elects a group, a people, to enter into community with him.”³⁷⁵

This is further complicated with questions of different biblical descriptions of these people.³⁷⁶ Historically, the hermeneutical interpretations of biblical revelation have

³⁷¹ J. Blanchard writes in *Does God Believe in Atheists* (Auburn, MA: Evangelical Press, 2000), 25-26, that recent anthropological studies reflect that monotheism is the original belief of all primitive people and that polytheism, pantheism, and animism are a degeneration from the original belief in one supreme being.

³⁷² Anthropologists could make the argument that some of the tribal ethnic groups if properly evaluated have the same monotheistic faith as the adherents of Judaism and Christianity, although the name of the deity is either unknown or is used with different nomenclature. The approach taken in this research is an identification of who constitutes worshipers of God from a biblical perspective that includes people from a conglomerate of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic groups. Those of the Islamic faith are not included because their monotheistic revelation of (*‘allah*) الله is not יהוה. See K. Cragg, a pioneer in the field of Islamic and Christian relationships who examines the Muslim deity in *Call of the Minaret* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), 35-68. Cragg’s studies shows that the character of God as shown in Islam is not the same deity as that portrayed in scripture.

³⁷³ Dt. 7:6-7; Col. 3:12; and Rev. 17:14.

³⁷⁴ T. George in “Election” in *HBD*: 407-409, identifies five motifs of Israel as the object of God’s election to include: 1) Sovereign initiation, 2) Covenant, 3) Certain individual representations of the community, 4) Service to God, and 5) Remnant.

³⁷⁵ H.D. Preuss, *Theologie des Alten Testaments: Band 1: JHWHs erwählendes und verpflichtendes Handeln* (Stuttgart, Germany: W. Kohlhammer, 1991), *Old Testament Theology: Vol. 1*, (Tran.) L.G. Perdue (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 24.

³⁷⁶ The creation of man in the *Imago Dei* in Gen. 1:26-27 could connote such a people. Yet, there are more implicit references, such as in the Abramic call (*l’gōy gādōl*) לגוי גדול “for a great nation” in Gen. 12:2. Further there is the nationalistic reference as (*yiśrā’ēl*) יִשְׂרָאֵל “Israel” in Gen. 32:28 (H 32:29) and (*h’nē-yiśrā’ēl*) בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל “the sons of Israel” in Gen. 32:32 (H 32:33). In addition, there are those references that require further investigation such as (*li s’gullāh*) לִי סִגְלָה “My own possession” in Ex. 19:5; (*s’erūt*) שְׂאֵרִית “remnant” in Zech. 8:6; and New Testament references to (*tēn basileian tou theou*) τῆν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ “Kingdom of God” in Acts 28:31; (*theō zōntos*) θεοῦ ζῶντος “sons of the Living God” in Rom. 9:26; and (*tē ekklesia*) τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ “the church” in 1 Cor. 1:2.

been the seedbed for the dogmas introducing new cults, sects, and denominations.³⁷⁷ The people who incorporate biblical Israel are somewhat enigmatic. With their introduction formally as a people, their constituency differs with successive eras and geographical dwelling places.

The Pentateuchal passages refer to Israel as an individual who is the offspring of Abraham (*'abrāhām*) and Isaac (*Yiṣḥāq*).³⁷⁸ Other references include his offspring who are known as the "Twelve Tribes."³⁷⁹ As this thought is developed in the *Torah*, Israel not only includes these tribes as a Sinaitic unit but those who are aliens and sojourners who have entered the cultus through covenantal adherence.³⁸⁰

The nation is structured together loosely in a tribal form during the entrance of this people into the Promised Land.³⁸¹ Four major models explain the nature of this Israelite invasion.³⁸² Two of these models express Israel's presence as an entry into the land from outside Canaan (*K²nā'an*).³⁸³ The other two challenge the historicity of the text

³⁷⁷ The Jehovah's Witnesses describe their allegiance and identity as the people of God even in their name. See "Jehovah's Witnesses" in *EDE* [CD-ROM]. See E.B. Samuel who discusses the heretical nature of the British Israelite sect in *Israel and Judah: Who are They?* (London: The Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel, 1973), 4-18.

³⁷⁸ Gen. 25:26 describes the birth of (*Ya^aqōb*) יַעֲקֹב who is called this before his name change to Israel. His father is יִצְחָק and grandfather is אַבְרָהָם.

³⁷⁹ This has three different forms. The first mention is in the Danite blessing of Gen. 49:16 as (*šibṭê Yiśrā'el*) שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל "tribes of Israel." An expanded form is at the end of the passage in Gen. 49:28 as "the twelve tribes of Israel" which is the same form with the cardinal numerical reference. A reference in Rev. 7:4 adds to this construction with (*phulēs huiōn Israēl*) φυλῆς υἱῶν Ἰσραήλ "tribe of the sons of Israel."

³⁸⁰ Dt. 1:16 is a passage involving judgment where foreigners had become members of the household. Based on the pronominal suffix construction (*gērō*) גֵּרֹו "his alien," it shows them sojourning with Israel in the Wilderness. See P.E. Dion, "Israël et L'Étranger dans le Deutéronome" (Israel and the Stranger in Deuteronomy) [Fr.], in *L'Altérité Vivre Ensemble Différents: Approches Pluridisciplinaires* (The Otherness: Living Together Although We Are Different: A Multidisciplinary Approach), (Eds.) M. Gourges and G.D. Mailhot (Montréal, Canada: Bellarmin/Cerf, 1986), 211-233.

³⁸¹ This is a reference to the geographic territory promised by God in the covenant cut with Abraham in Gen. 15:18-21.

³⁸² These four models are identified as conquest, settlement, revolt, and evolutionary. See the overviews of these models by G.W. Ramsey, *The Quest for the Historical Israel* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1981), 65-98; M. Chaney, "Ancient Palestinian Peasant Movements and the Formation of Premonarchic Israel," in *Palestine in Transition*, (Eds.) D.N. Freedman and D.F. Graf (Sheffield, England: Almond/ASOR, 1983), 39-90; and N.K. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1979), 189-233.

³⁸³ חִי יַעֲקֹב. The conquest model is the traditional perspective. The dispute of when this event occurred hinges either on an early or late Exodus date. The archaeological evidence supports this model. See W.F. Albright, "Archaeology and the Date of the Hebrew Conquest of Palestine," *BASOR* 58 (1935), 10-18; and J. Bright, *A History of Israel*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1975), 118-139. The second model, the settlement model, became an alternative only in the twentieth century.

with Israel's emergence from within Canaan.³⁸⁴ In the historical narratives of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and the introductory chapters of 1 Samuel, the question is whether an individual tribe connotes Israel as a people as a subset of the whole or whether the whole must be considered.³⁸⁵ Historically, ethically, and religiously an examination determines the characterization of this tribal system in Judges in respect to Israel.³⁸⁶

The subsequent period of the monarchy presents a different view of the people. No longer seen in a tribal form, a national unity with an earthly king was inaugurated.³⁸⁷ Through the era of the united kingdom of Israel, there is one perception that finds a metamorphosis with the national schism into the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah (*Y'hūdāh*).³⁸⁸ Does this dichotomy with different regents and geographic territories of a north-south polarity represent Israel as two distinct units?³⁸⁹ Or rather, does the introduction of the northern kingdom of Israel disqualify the southern kingdom of Judah?

Albrecht Alt introduced the idea of a nomadic pastoral people banding together into an Israelite federation in "The Settlement of the Israelites in Palestine," in *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion*, (Tran.) R.A. Wilson (Garden City, MI: Doubleday, 1968), 173-222. Its proponents and opponents, including E.H. Merrill, have made severe criticism of this model in *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1987), 122-126.

³⁸⁴ The revolt model was proposed in 1962 as an alternative to the external invasion based on biblical and archaeological evidence suggesting that the Canaanite power structures were replaced by an internal peasants' revolt. Based on a sociological rather than a biblical approach, this model rejected the idea of a common ancestral tie and identifies the commonality within ideology. See G.E. Mendenhall, "The Hebrew Conquest of Palestine," *Community, Identity, and Ideology: Social Science Approaches to the Hebrew Bible*, (Eds.) C.E. Carter and C.L. Myers (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 100-120. The final one is the evolutionary model. In contradistinction to recent Israelite history, this model postulates that the Israelites emerged from a peaceful existence within the land of Canaan rather than in a revolutionary manner. This controverts the biblical material. See R.S. Hess, "Early Israel in Canaan: A Survey of Recent Evidence and Interpretations," *PEQ* 125 (1993), 131-132; and K.L. Younger, "Early Israel in Recent Biblical Scholarship" *The Face of Old Testament Studies*, (Eds.) B.T. Arnold and D.W. Baker (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House), 176-206.

³⁸⁵ Previous scholarship has suggested an amphictyony predating the Greek city-states, where a twelve tribe confederation was bound together at its altar and worship of YHWH in Premonarchic Israel. See A. Alt, "The Origins of Israelite Law," *EOTHR*, 133-169.

³⁸⁶ This occurs in chapter three.

³⁸⁷ 1 Sam. 8-10 presents the search, the anointing, and the choosing of (Šā'ul) שאול Saul as the first king of Israel.

³⁸⁸ See 1 Kg. 12:1-20 for the narrative of the unwise decision of (*R'hab'om*) רַחַבְעָם King Rehoboam that enacted the schismatic event. The new kingdom is יהודה. R. Case, II analyzes Rehoboam's lack of leadership skills that led to this situation in "Rehoboam: A Study in Failed Leadership," *Presbyterion: Covenant Seminary Review* 14 (1988), 62.

³⁸⁹ Certainly 1 Kg. 12:19 introduces the phrase (*bêt Dāwid*) בֵּית דָּוִד "house of David" which has a variant rendering as (*bêt Y'hūdāh ûBinyāmîn*) בֵּית יְהוּדָה וּבִנְיָמִין "house of Judah and Benjamin" in 12:23. The biblical evidence reflects two separate kingdoms in two separate locations, with two separate kings, and with two separate names. The enmity between these two kingdoms also resulted in wars between them. See H. Donner, "The Separate States of Israel and Judah," *Israelite and Judean History*, (Eds.) J.H. Hayes and J.M. Miller (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1977), 384-390.

All of this is further complicated by the exilic period.³⁹⁰ With the dispersion of the northern kingdom by Assyria does the nomenclature “Lost Tribes of Israel” have a validity which obliterates these people and their descendants from being Israel?³⁹¹ Then there is the Diaspora of the southern kingdom by successive conquering regimes.³⁹² This examination of God’s peculiar judgment becomes a mute historical point, if Israel has ceased to exist. At some point, an understanding of whether the idea of Israel is static or whether it is an evolving entity becomes necessary.

With the New Covenant era and apostolic literature, the Church is introduced.³⁹³ Does this term and its human embodiment constitute Israel? Further, is there a replacement of Old Testament Israel with the New Testament Church? On the other hand, is there a balance between the two that accepts them as mutually existing side by side? Alternatively, are they mutually exclusive concepts? Exploring this hermeneutical problem determines whether there is an addition or replacement to those who are reflected as the Old Testament people of God.³⁹⁴

³⁹⁰ This would include the exile of the northern kingdom to Assyria in 722 BCE (2 Kg. 17:18) and subsequent deportations of the southern kingdom to Babylon beginning in 598-582 BCE (Jer. 52:30). See G. Hardin, “Exile,” *HBD*: 449-451.

³⁹¹ Sephardic Jew Don Isaac Abravanel confronted his brethren and his opponents with a three-act messianic drama in 1503. He used Hebrew bible references to show God’s vengeance on both Christians and Muslims, followed by the return of the Ten Lost Tribes, and ending with the resurrection of the dead. See B. Netanyahu, *Don Isaac Abravanel: Statesman and Scholar*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society, 1972). A recent work by Y. Davidy explores the exile and Israelite Settlement and movement examining legends, genealogies, and anthropology making the distinction between Jew and Israel and the tribes in *The Tribes: The Israelite Origins of Western Peoples* (Hebron, Israel: Russell-Davis Publishers, 1993), 119-449. He did a subsequent work focusing on the Diaspora of the ten northern tribes with rather startling conclusions in *Ephraim: The Location of Lost Israelite Tribes in the West According to the Bible, Jewish and Non-Jewish Tradition, and General Fact* (Hebron, Israel: Russell-Davis Publishers, 1995), 20-271.

³⁹² These dispersions would include those by Babylon in the sixth century BCE, Rome in the first century CE, Spain in the fifteenth century, Russia in the nineteenth century, and European Axis powers in the twentieth Century. See D.G. Roskies, (Ed.), *The Literature of Destruction: Jewish Responses to Catastrophe* (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 13-459.

³⁹³ There are 117 singular and plural uses of the word (*ekklesia*) ἐκκλησία in *SECB*.

³⁹⁴ One of the first to provide a Messianic apologetic to the question of Israel, the Church, and replacement theology, offering another possibility to the debate is B. Wootten, *In Search of Israel* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 1988), 49-78, and *Who is Israel? And Why You Need to Know* (St. Cloud, FL: Key of David Publishing, 1988), 41-88. Within Messianic Judaism/Messianic Christianity there is an general debate to this question. K. Silberling produced the first academic theological response. See her, “The Ephraimite Error: A Position Paper Submitted to the International Messianic Jewish Alliance,” 1999. This unpublished document can be viewed at <http://www.mjaa.org/position>. An extensive rabbinical response followed. See M.J. Koniuchowsky, *The Truth About All Israel: A Refutation of the I.M.J.A. Position Paper on the Two Houses of Israel: Shema Kol Yisrael-Hear All Israel Responds* (Miami Beach, FL: Your Arms to Israel, 2000).

Finally, the current era invokes the query of national and religious Israel because of the establishment of the State of Israel with its independence on May 14, 1948.³⁹⁵ A secular and religious dichotomy exists in the nation that is causing the people to evaluate the question “Who is Israel?” themselves. Is there any connection between biblical and modern Israel? Is the latter a legitimate ancestor of the former or are they two unrelated distinct groups? Nonetheless, questions exist regarding who is Israel, based on the perspective of the different biblical genres, eras, and geographies. Nearly all of these questions regarding the identity of Israel are beyond the scope of this investigation. However, understanding the identity during the period of the Judges is applicable.

Israel in the Premonarchic Period

As the book of Judges begins, Israel is settled in the land of Canaan and the conquest narratives of Joshua are repeated as a prologue. Judah and the house of Joseph were the most successful in their land conquest and the removal of the enemy nations. However, these tribes did not eradicate their enemies completely. For the other tribes mentioned, the conquest annals are a dismal reminder of their failure to fulfill the divine command of dispossessing the enemy. The biblical narrator does not comment on how Israel came to be in the land; however, he follows the Deuteronomist’s position of immigration from Egypt through a period of forty years of wandering in the wilderness before crossing the Jordan River and entering the land of Canaan. It is beyond the scope of our investigation to examine the various hypotheses regarding Israel’s emergence into the land. Rather, this examination focuses on Israel as they appear in the land during the premonarchic period.

REPRESENTATIONS

Does the narrator present a single representation of Israel in Judges or are there multiple representations? Or does the terminology reflect distinct social structures that are

³⁹⁵ Does the nation’s recent declaration of independence as a result of the Zionist efforts of Theodor Herzl and others, the 1917 Balfour Declaration, and the November 29, 1947 UN Partition Plan of Israel and Transjordan (now Jordan) constitute biblical Israel ethnically or geographically? See “Israel (country)” in *EDE* [CD-ROM]. The anniversary of her (*Yôm Hā’ašma’ût*) יוֹם הָעֲצִמָּאוּת “Day of Independence” is celebrated based on the Jewish lunar-solar calendar date of אֲיָר 5 (5 *’îyār*), which causes the event date to fluctuate each year. In the Islamic world, the date of Israel’s independence is referred as (*Al-Nakbah*) النكبة, literally “the disaster,” as it is viewed from the Arabic perspective. The Arabic anniversary of this event is remembered annually based on the Gregorian date, rather than the Islamic calendar, because it is a non-Qur’anic event.

only loosely connected? The sociological implications of premonarchic Israel are examined in chapter three; but the question remains who is the object of divine judgment.

ISRAEL. The term Israel occurs 2517 times in the Hebrew bible, 184 of those times are in Judges. In addition, the term “Sons of Israel” is an alternate form, which appears 638 times in the Hebrew bible, with 61 of those occurrences in Judges.³⁹⁶ Danell believes the variation in the Semitic patterns of speech alternation between the two forms is arbitrary.³⁹⁷ Yet, Block shows that the term “Sons of Israel” has three different meanings: 1) the literal sons of Jacob; 2) male Israelites, as opposed to females; and 3) a collective designation.³⁹⁸

SONS OF JACOB. The Genesis account identifies that the natural progeny of Jacob included twelve sons and one daughter. The term “Sons of Israel” is not used with this meaning in Judges.

MALE ISRAELITES. The Hebraic form is ambiguous as to gender. The politically correct rendering of the term is “Children of Israel.” The scriptural context is the determining factor as to whether the meaning includes males and females or it exclusively means males. Potentially, the narrator uses the term twelve times to refer to an assembly of male Israelites, especially since the context is warfare.³⁹⁹

COLLECTIVE DESIGNATION. The primary usage in Judges is collectively. In this regard, the narrator allows the pejorative term “Sons of Israel” or “Israel” to represent the characters of the story. Frequently, the narrator does not make the distinction of whether this represents the entire corporate entity or a portion of the whole. What he represents is an ethnic group consisting of “those who conceive of themselves as being alike by virtue of their common ancestry, real or fictitious, and who are so regarded by others.”⁴⁰⁰ Similarly, Mojola makes this ethnic distinction.

³⁹⁶ D.I. Block, “‘Israel’ – ‘sons of Israel’: A study in Hebrew eponymic usage,” *SR 13* (1984), 322-323. Block makes the observation that the premonarchic occurrences of the term “Sons of Israel” outnumber its monarchic and post-monarchic use by a 5:1 ratio.

³⁹⁷ G.A. Danell, *Studies in the Name Israel in the Old Testament* (Upsala, Sweden: Appelbergs Boktryckeriaktiebolag, 1946), 67.

³⁹⁸ Block, “‘Israel’ – ‘sons of Israel,’” 302-303. Block also makes the distinction that the term “Sons of Israel” does not occur as the genitive designation for deity. Nor is it used with reference to judges or kings.

³⁹⁹ Jg. 1:1; 3:2, 27; 4:24; 8:22; 20:1, 13, 18, 19, 30, 32, and 35.

⁴⁰⁰ T. Shibusani and K.M. Kwan, *Ethnic Stratification: A Comparative Approach* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), 47 cited in I. Finkelstein, “Ethnicity and Origin of the Iron I Settlers in the Highlands of Canaan: Can the Real Israel Stand Up?” *BA 59* (1996), 203.

Iron Age I Israelites clearly *are* an ethnic group, if one adopts a minimal definition of an ethnic group as one that is biologically self-perpetuating, shares a fundamental, uniform set of cultural values, including language, constitutes a partly independent interaction sphere, has a membership that defines itself, as well as being defined by others as a category distinct from other categories of the same order, and perpetuates its sense of separate entity both by developing rules for maintaining 'ethnic' boundaries as well as for participating in inter-ethnic encounters.⁴⁰¹

While the collective use may refer to the entirety of all that could be named Israel, the use in Judges regularly refers to a social subunit. The smallest possible reference is for Israel to mean an individual Israelite. The narrator does not employ this usage. Within the premonarchic societal structure, the first social unit is the nuclear family.⁴⁰² Similarly, the narrator does not make the identification of the nuclear family as Israel, even though he represents nuclear families in the narrative. The next larger social unit is the (*bêt 'ab*) "house of the father," which is a type of extended family.⁴⁰³ This is a significant societal structure in premonarchic Israel. There are no judgments directed at an individual extended family; although their presence is notable in the Gideon, Abimelech, and Micah pericopes. The next hierarchical level is represented by the (*mišpāhāh*) clan, which may have a military name as (*'elep*).⁴⁰⁴ As the societal unit increases in size, the narrator equates it with Israel, even though it is still a significant subset of the whole. The largest unit of premonarchic society is the (*šēbet*) tribe.⁴⁰⁵

TRIBES. The twelve tribes of Israel may be viewed two different ways. First, they are individual ethnic entities as descendants of their respective eponymic tribal father. Second, the tribes exist in some type of loose confederation.

The issue of an independent tribe existing is not a major contention. Lindars, who suggests that the Judges narrative "does not support a theory of inter-tribal organization," does contend the lists of the Conquest Narrative, the Song of Deborah, and the Minor Judges supports tribal existence and provides information for understanding tribal society.⁴⁰⁶ A close reading of Judges reveals that not every tribe is mentioned. The Song

⁴⁰¹ A.O. Mojola, "The 'Tribes' of Israel? A Bible Translator's Dilemma," *JSOT* 81 (1998), 23.

⁴⁰² The nuclear family discussion is in chapter three, on pages 192-193.

⁴⁰³ בֵּית אָב *BDB*, 3, and 48-49. This discussion occurs in chapter three, on pages 193-196.

⁴⁰⁴ מִשְׁפָּחָה, and אֶלֶף. *BDB*, 108-110, and 986-987. The formal discussion of this societal level occurs in chapter three, on pages 196-199.

⁴⁰⁵ שֵׁבֶט *BDB*, 1046-1049. See the discussion in chapter three, on pages 199-200.

⁴⁰⁶ B. Lindars, "The Israelite Tribes in Judges," *Studies in the Historical Books of the Old Testament*, (Ed.) J.A. Emerton (*VT Supp.* 30: Leiden, the Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1979), 95.

of Deborah is the closest representation of a complete listing of tribes.⁴⁰⁷ However, the activity of all the tribes joined together is only implied in the civil war narrative of chapter twenty. The tribe of (*Gād*) Gad is not mentioned, although it may be represented by those from the area of Gilead.⁴⁰⁸ The tribe of Levi is not mentioned, but because its members were dispersed throughout the land, the mention of several Levites and priests confirm the existence of the tribe.

The confederation of tribes has many hypotheses. One is the amphyctonic league proposed by Noth.⁴⁰⁹ An alternate view suggests, “these groups slowly banded together into clans and later on into tribes for mutual support and protection specifically under pressure.”⁴¹⁰ For Danell, the Deuteronomist portrays singular tribes or groups of tribes as a generalized unity, which is a synecdoche for Israel.⁴¹¹ Rogerson is not willing to concede that premonarchic Israel was a segmentary society. Instead, he holds the apparent parallel between the two that draws that conclusion is based on a false syllogism.⁴¹² Distinction should be made regarding the tribal confederacy as to whether its purpose was military or religious. The general scholarly consensus is that era did have temporary military tribal confederacies; however, the existence as Alt would propose of a proto-monarchic tribal union for the worship of YHWH is tenable at best.⁴¹³ Kallai notes there are thirty passages that give a listing of the twelve-tribe system within Israel. Two of those passages are in Judges: the conquest annals and the Song of Deborah.⁴¹⁴ Although not every tribe is represented in these passages, they represent a geographical system that encompasses all of Israel.⁴¹⁵ The reality is the evidence of the Judges narrative, despite the Deuteronomistic imprint of redactors, does not support the ideological hypothesis of a

⁴⁰⁷ A. Globe, “The Muster of the Tribes in Judges 5:11e-18,” *ZAW* 87, (1975), 169-183.

⁴⁰⁸ מִן גִּלְעָד.

⁴⁰⁹ M. Noth, *Das System der zwölf Stämme Israels* (The Plan of Israel’s Twelve Tribes) [Ger.], (Darmstadt, Germany: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1966).

⁴¹⁰ R. de Menezes, “The Tribes of Israel,” *Jeevadhara* 24 (1994), 124.

⁴¹¹ Danell, 67.

⁴¹² J.W. Rogerson, “Was Early Israel a Segmentary Society?” *JSOT* 36 (1986), 20-21.

⁴¹³ S. Grosby, “Kinship, Territory, and the Nation in the Historiography of Ancient Israel,” *ZAW* 105 (1993), 3-18.

⁴¹⁴ Jg. 1:2-35; and 5:14-18.

⁴¹⁵ Z. Kallai, “The Twelve-Tribe Systems of Israel,” *VT* 47 (1997), 53-90; *idem*, “A Note on the Twelve-Tribe Systems of Israel,” *VT* 49 (1999), 125-127.

pan-Israelite tribal league during the period of the judges.⁴¹⁶ Nevertheless, what it does support is chosenness of the people of YHWH during this period.

ELECTION

The focus of attention in the Hebrew bible squarely rests upon YHWH's interaction with specifically, the people identified as Israel. This special covenant relationship exists because of the divine election of Israel.

CONCEPT OF CHOSENNESS. To be divinely chosen is a great honor; but with it comes a great responsibility. Neither the biblical nor the rabbinic writings understand the election of Israel to mean a type of racial superiority.⁴¹⁷ Neither is the idea of "exclusivity of salvation" a part of this concept.⁴¹⁸

BIBLICAL CONCEPT. The word (*bāḥar*) "choose" occurs 153 times in the bible.⁴¹⁹ It is ironic that the only use of the word in Judges is not YHWH choosing Israel; but rather YHWH indicting Israel for choosing other gods.⁴²⁰ The election of Israel occurred in two phases. First, it was with Abraham (Abram at the time of election).⁴²¹ The Abramic call predestined him to be a great nation, conditioned upon him leaving his ancestral home and going to the land which YHWH would show him.

Election also occurred in connection with Moses and the Exodus event. The prophet (*Hôšēa*) Hosea recalls, "When Israel was a youth I loved him and out of Egypt I called My son."⁴²² (*Y^ṣhezqē'l*) Ezekiel states, "On the day when I chose Israel" YHWH made Himself known to Israel and swore to them to deliver them from Egypt.⁴²³ Even earlier, Isaiah using various titles for Israel, such as Jacob and (*Y^ṣšurūn*) Jeshurun, reminded them that it was YHWH who had chosen them.⁴²⁴ At one point in its history, Israel had thought that YHWH had rejected them after choosing them. YHWH rectified

⁴¹⁶ N.P. Lemche, *Early Israel: Anthropological and Historical Studies on the Israelite Society Before the Monarchy* (VT Supp. 37: Leiden, the Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1985), 291-294.

⁴¹⁷ Dt. 7:7.

⁴¹⁸ R. Jospe, "The Concept of the Chosen People: An Interpretation," *Judaism* 43 (1994), 130.

⁴¹⁹ בָּחַר. Köhler, 82; and BDB, 103-104.

⁴²⁰ Jg. 10:14.

⁴²¹ Gen. 12:1-3.

⁴²² הוֹשֵׁעַ. Hos. 11:1.

⁴²³ יְהוֹקָאֵל. Ezek. 20:5-6.

⁴²⁴ יִשְׂרָאֵל. Isa. 41:8, 9; 44:1, 2; and 49:7.

this improper understanding through a prophetic utterance by Jeremiah informing them of the impossibility of either His covenant or their election nullified.

Thus says YHWH, "If My covenant with day and night ceases, and the statutes of the heavens and earth I have not established, then I would reject the seed of Jacob and David My servant, not taking from his seed rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But I will restore their fortunes and have mercy on them."⁴²⁵

In the New Testament, the teachings of *Yeshua* did not negate the election of Israel as the chosen people of YHWH. The doctrinal teaching leans toward a soteriological purpose. Pauline theology does not replace Israel with the church. Instead using the metaphor of the olive tree speaks of being grafted into the tree.⁴²⁶ The New Testament believers are called "Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."⁴²⁷ Thus, the original design of Abraham being a blessing to all the families of the earth is realized in salvation through *Yeshua*. There is an extensive discussion on the relationship between Israel and the Church; however, that is beyond our current scope of investigation.

RABBINIC CONCEPT. Rabbinic theology builds upon the biblical material and proposes certain reasons for Israel's election. One theory suggests it was predestined before the foundation of the world was created.⁴²⁸ However, the majority of the theories are related to man's response to deity. Some rabbis suggest that YHWH chose Abram because of his rejection of his father Terah's *teraphim*.⁴²⁹ Rabbi Berechiah implies it is because Israel "took upon themselves the yoke of My Kingdom at Sinai" agreeing to be obedient.⁴³⁰ Another proposal states that the nations of the world were asked to receive the *Torah*, but all of them refused except Israel.⁴³¹ Even another rabbi suggests it is because of Israel's humility to receive the *Torah*.⁴³²

Within modern Judaism, the Rabbinic concept of election is formulated into the holiday liturgical prayers. The service during the Feast of Tabernacles is intoned,

You have chosen us from all peoples; You have loved us and taken pleasure in us, and have exalted us above all tongues; You have sanctified us by Your commandments and

⁴²⁵ Jer. 33:25-26. Note the earlier reference in verses 20-21.

⁴²⁶ Rom. 11:17-24.

⁴²⁷ Gal. 3:28.

⁴²⁸ *Gen.R.* 1:4.

⁴²⁹ *Gen.R.* 12.

⁴³⁰ *Pes.K.* 2:17a. Cf. Ex. 24:7.

⁴³¹ *Mek., Bahodesh, Yitro*, 5.

⁴³² *Tanh.* 5:9a.

brought us near unto Your service; O our King, You have called us by Your great and Holy Name.⁴³³

PURPOSE OF ELECTION. Because Israel has been chosen, there is a moral responsibility. Abraham was divinely chosen for two reasons. First, he would become the progenitor of Israel, and thus Israel could be elected through his lineage. However, election is not automatic. It required a response of free will to choose to accept the position of election. Thus, it could be said that "Chosenness is mutual; the chosen people is also the choosing people."⁴³⁴ Abraham made that response evidenced by his migration to Canaan. Israel made that response when called upon by Joshua to make a choice.⁴³⁵ Second, it was so all of the families of the earth should be blessed. The divine intention has the good of humankind in mind.

Abraham made the way for Israel. Because of the divine covenant with Abraham another covenant was made with Israel in the Wilderness. The covenant makes demands of Israel through the *Torah*. The Christian misconception is that by Israel embracing these demands, it has subjected itself to a legal system devoid of grace. Obedience to the commands of *Torah* is a Hebraic act of faith.

Living by *Torah* is Israel's grateful response to the covenant of grace made with Israel at Sinai by its Redeemer and Creator. The covenant is of grace because it is a gift of God's free love and is accepted by Israel as such. Living by *Torah* is by no means the way into this covenant; it is rather Israel's response to the gift of the covenant. It is how Israel lives because of its election, and that election is God's free gift.⁴³⁶

A natural response of a *Torah* obedient lifestyle would be to fulfill the divine mission of being a "light for the nations."⁴³⁷ Inherent in the Abramic call is the expectation that all the families of the earth would be blessed. Israel's election gives them the responsibility of testifying to the world of YHWH. The divine design is that through Israel, the nations of the world would turn to YHWH "and all the ends of the earth be saved."⁴³⁸

CONSEQUENCES OF ELECTION. Covenant infidelity by Israel affects their elect status. It does not affect it in a manner whereby Israel is unelected, because from the

⁴³³ *Siddur Kol Yaakov / The Complete Artscroll Siddur: Nusach Ashkenaz* (Brooklyn, NY: Mesorah Publications, Ltd., 1984), 725.

⁴³⁴ Jospe, 135.

⁴³⁵ Josh. 24:15, and 22.

⁴³⁶ P.M. van Buren, *A Theology of the Jewish Christian Reality: Vol. 2: A Christian Theology of the People Israel* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1983), 76.

⁴³⁷ Isa. 42:6.

⁴³⁸ Isa. 45:22.

divine perspective YHWH has made this election irrevocable.⁴³⁹ Nonetheless, there is a divine response because in Israel's elect state, sin and rebellion cannot go unchecked. The prophet (*'āmôš*) Amos prefaces his rebuke with the recognition of election and uses this as the premise for YHWH's punishment of Israel because of its iniquity.⁴⁴⁰

It is *because* they are God's people, God's elect, with whom God made covenant, that God must now hold them to account for their misdeeds. Israel's mission is to *be* Israel, recognizably so in the earth. Unfaithfulness to God and to the covenant is no way to be recognized as God's distinct people in the world! Election is free, but election has consequences.⁴⁴¹

Israel, in the premonarchic time, had the position of being the chosen people of YHWH because of past divine covenantal action. Divine judgment is a necessary component related to election. Israel was the object of divine judgment because it had a special, intimate relationship with YHWH. This covenantal arrangement brought with it the consequences of YHWH holding Israel accountable for its sin and bearing that moral responsibility.⁴⁴²

⁴³⁹ Harrelson and Falk, 187. Rom. 11:29.

⁴⁴⁰ חַמּוֹשׁ. Amos 3:2.

⁴⁴¹ Harrelson and Falk, 185.

⁴⁴² Jospe, 139.

CHAPTER 3

REVIEW OF DIACHRONIC CRITICAL SCHOLARSHIP IN JUDGES

The introductory pages of most commentaries discuss the book from historical, cultural, lexical, syntactical, theological, philosophical, and literary perspectives.¹ An exhaustive discussion of each of these divisions of biblical interpretation is not pursued, since the scope of this work is not to produce another commentary on Judges. Rather, where the elements of criticism and hermeneutics provide indirect background or direct interpretive material relative to the peculiar judgment of God, these areas are explored to provide a framework for understanding the passages selected for exegesis in chapter five.

As the interpretative critical systems of examining the biblical text have increased over the past century, the investigation in this chapter will approach the scholarship from a diachronic methodology. This includes the more traditional historical-critical approach of canonical, textual, the various forms of the “older” literary criticism, social-scientific criticism, and an examination of historicity. The major point of departure is where the diachronic approach is concerned with the language of the text as it changes through time; the synchronic approach deemphasizes the importance of the historical context of the narrative. The synchronic methodology examines the narrative from a perspective of contemporary textual criticism and reader criticism. This examination of synchronic criticism is addressed in chapter four.

¹ Although not each of the commentary series devote significant space to introductory critical issues, some of the series examined does. Cf. Block, *NAC*, 21-73; Boling, *AB*, 3-45; Burney, xxxiii-cxxviii; E.R. Dalglish, *The Broadman Bible Commentary: Vol. 2 – Leviticus-Ruth*, (Gen. Ed.) C.J. Allen (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1970), 377-389; C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Vol. 2 – The Book of Judges*, (Trans.) J. Martin (Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1866; reprint Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1996), 175-182; and H. Wolf, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Volume 3, Deuteronomy – 2 Samuel*, (Gen. Ed.), F.E. Gæbelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 375-384.

Canonical Criticism

The English word “canon” finds its origin in the Hebrew word (*qoneh*), borrowed from the Babylo-Assyrian word (*qanu*) describing a reed or a rod.² When the term is applied to biblical literature, it is that which has been measured and found acceptable as Scripture.³ The issues surrounding how the canon was formed, the tests of canonicity, and the identities of the authorities who discriminated between that which should be considered as either authoritative or apocryphal are beyond the scope of this study.⁴ Nonetheless, it is important to recognize that each of the major canons include Judges.

As critical biblical scholarship approaches new methodologies, some of the nomenclature such as lower and higher criticism falls away. Notwithstanding, the vocabulary of some terms evolves. This investigation of canonical criticism is concerned with the more historical definition of the Judges text from a perspective of acceptance within the canonical structure rather than the newer technical definition as a discipline that bridges the gap from redaction criticism into a synchronic examination.⁵ The idea of a new critical approach, also called “canonical criticism” was born in the context of the

² קנה. BDB, 889; and I.E. Mozeson, *The Word: The Dictionary That Reveals the Hebrew Source of English* (New York: SPI Books, 1989), 40. This reedy plant found growing in marshes was distinguished for its length and straightness. Thus, it was used as a measuring standard. Cf. E.H. Merrill, *An Historical Survey of the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1986), 17.

The Hellenistic form of the word (*kanōn*) reflecting this same straight measuring rod interpreted means “that which regulates, rules, or serves as a norm or pattern for other things.” κανών. In the second century CE, the term among Christians came to stand for revealed truth or theologically “the rule of faith.” See BAGD, 403; and H.J. Flanders, Jr., R.W. Crapps, and D.A. Smith, *People of the Covenant: An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1973), 25.

³ Wiley, 185.

⁴ For a discussion on these issues surrounding canonization, see S.Z. Leiman, *The Canonization of Hebrew Scripture: The Talmudic and Midrashic Evidence* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor, 1976), 40-42; H.H. Rowley, *The Growth of the Old Testament* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963), 160-178; J.A. Sanders, *Torah and Canon* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1972), 21-45; and R.H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1941), 50-70. J.H. Hayes provides a succinct presentation of canonization in “The Canon of the Old Testament,” *An Introduction to Old Testament Study* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1979), 16-44. The influence of the examination of the Qumran scrolls as it relates to canonical studies is discussed by J.A. Sanders in “Cave 11 Surprises and the Question of Canon,” *New Directions in Biblical Archaeology*, (Eds.) D.N. Freedman and J.C. Greenfield (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1969), 101-116. With the advocacy of B.S. Childs, canon criticism and its affirmation in the believing community is addressed by G.T. Sheppard, “Canon Criticism: The Proposal of Brevard Childs and an Assessment for Evangelical Hermeneutics,” *SBET* 4 (1974), 3-17.

⁵ J. Blenkinsopp, *Prophecy and Canon: A Contribution to the Study of Jewish Origins* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977), 96-123; and W. Brueggemann, *The Creative Word: Canon as a Model for Biblical Education* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1982), 1-13.

“new literary criticism.” The advocates of this approach are concerned with the process of shaping the text and its finished state.⁶

Canonical Date

The dating of the Hebrew bible canon is predicated by whichever canonical authority one ascribes supremacy. Since later acceptance by major traditions is a mute point, the focus is on the earliest possible acknowledgement of canonicity. The first person to speak definitively about a collection of sacred writings was Josephus in the first century CE.⁷ The possibility exists that the canon may have been closed at the rabbinical council at Jamnia, circa 90 CE.⁸ If not then, certainly it was closed with the writing of Jesus ben Sirach circa 190 CE where he references the books of the prophetic canon in “The Wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach.” The prologue of Ecclesiasticus makes two specific references to the Hebrew bible canon when it states:

Whereas many and great things have been delivered unto us by **the law and the prophets, and by others that have followed their steps**, for the which things Israel ought to be commended for learning and wisdom; and whereof not only the readers must needs become skilful themselves, but also they that desire to learn be able to profit them which are without, both by speaking and writing: my grandfather Jesus, when he had much given himself to the reading of **the law, and the prophets, and other books of our fathers**, and had gotten therein good judgment.⁹

Although canonicity had not been officially proclaimed, evidence to support general usage of the *Torah*, Prophets, and Writings are attributable to their New Testament usage by *Yeshua*, several of the apostles, the writer of Hebrews, and even

⁶ N.K. Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1985), 23-24. For a detailed discussion of this new technical approach of the two main proponents of canonical criticism, see; B.S. Childs, *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context*, 6-17 and J.A. Sanders, *Canon and Community: A Guide to Canonical Criticism* (GBS: Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984), 21-68. For a succinct understanding of the different methodologies of these two canonical critics and the limits of the discipline, see M.C. Callaway, “Canonical Criticism,” *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and their Application*, (Eds.) S.L. McKenzie and S.R. Haynes (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 142-155.

⁷ Josephus, in *Contra Apionem I*, 8, 37-43, describes a collection of 22 books, which many believe to be the same as the 24 book Jewish canon, although Lamentations was joined with Jeremiah and Ruth with Judges. His work is dated circa 90-95 CE. See *Josephus: With an English Translation by H. St. J. Thackeray: Against Apion: Vol. 1* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), 179.

⁸ A technical presentation of canonization involving Jamnia is made by J.P. Lewis, “What Do We Mean by Jabneh?” *JBR* 32 (1964), 125-132. Christian scholarship refers to the town as Jamnia; however, the actual Hebrew name is (*Yābneh*) יָבְנֵה. Later scholarship addressed some of the points of dating; suggesting that canonical approval did not come until the next century because the decisions of the synod were not universally accepted. Cf. Hayes, 16-44.

⁹ Ecclus. Prologue, emphasis added. B.A. Sizemore, Jr., “The Canon and Text of the Old Testament” *The Broadman Bible Commentary: Vol. 1 Rev.: General Articles, Genesis – Exodus*, (Gen. Ed.) C.J. Allen (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1973), 51. See also Ecclus. 49:10.

Satan. Clearly, *Yeshua* made many Pentateuchal references.¹⁰ In a discussion on the infallibility of the Scripture, New Testament scholar Rudolph Bultmann wrote:

Jesus agreed always with the scribes of his time in accepting without question the authority of the [Old Testament] Law. When he was asked by the rich man, 'What must I do to inherit eternal life,' he answered, 'You know the commandments,' and he repeated the well-known Old Testament Decalogue.... Jesus did not attack the Law but assumed its authority and interpreted it.¹¹

Some of *Yeshua*'s references to the Prophets included (*Dāwid*) David, Solomon, (*'ēlīyāhū*) Elijah, (*'ēlišā'*) Elisha, Jonah, and (*Z²karyāh*) Zechariah.¹² As far as Judges is concerned, most of the references in the Hebrew bible are allusions to this premonarchic period.¹³ However, the Psalmist describes certain of the antagonistic characters from the book.¹⁴ Early Judaism provides additional allusions, which would support early date canonization.¹⁵ Although there are no quoted passages in the New Testament, the writer of Hebrews illustrates the faith of Gideon, (*Bārāq*) Barak, Samson, and Jephthah.¹⁶ Within the synoptic gospels the allusionary references made by the authors are much less clear.¹⁷ There are no other explicit references in the New Testament.

¹⁰ There are references by Jesus to: (*Hebel*) הֶבֶל Abel (Lk. 11:51), Noah (Mt. 24:37-39; Lk. 17:26-27), Abraham (Jn. 8:56), the institution of (*B²rit milāh*) בְּרִית מִלָּה circumcision (Jn. 7:22), (*S²dōm*) סְדֹם Sodom and (*'āmōrah*) עֲמֹרָה Gomorrah (Mt. 10:15; 11:23-24; Lk. 10:12), (*Lōt*) לוֹט Lot (Lk. 17:28-32), Isaac and Jacob (Mt. 8:11; Lk. 13:28), the manna (Jn. 6:31, 49, 58), the wilderness serpent (Jn. 3:14) and repeated references to Moses as the giver of the *Torah* (Mt. 8:4; 19:8; Mk. 1:44; 7:10; 10:5, *et.al.*). See J.W. Wenham, *Christ and the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1972), 12-13.

¹¹ R. Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), 61-62.

¹² חַי וְחַיִּים, אֱלִישָׁע, אֶלְיָהוּ, and זְכַרְיָה. There are references by *Yeshua* to: David (Mt. 12:3-4; Mk. 2:25-26; Lk. 6:3-4), Solomon (Mt. 6:29; 12:42; Lk. 11:31; 12:27), Elijah (Lk. 4:25-26), Elisha (Lk. 4:27), Jonah (Mt. 12:39-41; Lk. 11:29-32), and Zechariah (Lk. 11:51).

¹³ Cf. Ruth 1:1; Neh. 9:26-29; Ps. 78:56-64; and 106:34-46. These and the other biblical and apocryphal references are discussed in the following chapter on historical interpretations of Judges as it relates to this peculiar judgment.

¹⁴ Cf. Ps. 83:9-12 where Sisera, Jabin, (*'ōrēb*) עֹרֵב Oreb, (*Z²'ēb*) זֵעֵב Zeeb, (*Zebah*) זִבְחָה Zeba, and (*Salmunnā'*) זַלְמוֹנָא Zalmunna are mentioned. The first two refer to the Deborah narrative (4-5) and the remainder with the Gideon narrative (7-8).

¹⁵ Cf. Ecclus. 46:11-12; *Lives of the Prophets* 16:3; and numerous Midrashic references in Pseudo-Philo 25:1-48:5.

¹⁶ בְּרָק. Hebrews 11:32-34 would be proof for canonicity of Judges by the time this epistle was written in the first century CE.

¹⁷ Cf. Lk. 1:15 and Mt. 2:23 with the birth of Samson as a Nazarite (13:4). See Lk. 1:31 as a *remez* of the angelic visitation prior to pregnancy of Samson (13:3). Note the comparison in Lk. 1:42 with the blessedness of Jael (5:24).

Canonical Placement

Through history, three distinct Hebrew bible canons have emerged: 1) Jewish, 2) Roman Catholic and Orthodox, and 3) Protestant.¹⁸ Although the three canons differ in the number of books, each canon has placed Judges second, within its section order. These three canons each place the book within the section theologians have entitled, “Historical.”¹⁹ Nonetheless, there is a digression from this order in the second century CE Syriac Peshiṭta, where the insertion of Job after the Pentateuch makes Judges the eighth book.²⁰

Within the Hebrew text, the book of Judges follows the same system of book order as in the English versions with it following Joshua and preceding Ruth. In the Hebrew canon it is in the section known as (*N^ṣbi’im*) “Former Prophets” of its tripartite organization.²¹ Because of its inclusion in the (*Tanā”k*), Talmudic sages accepted the canonical status of this book due to an oblique Kabbalistic reference that such holy writings can defile the hands.²²

Another system of designation locates it as the second book of “Deuteronomistic History.”²³ Elsewhere, the Latin term *Heptateuch* became a scholarly synonym for the first seven books of the bible.²⁴ With further examination of Deuteronomic redaction, additional terms of *Octateuch* and *Enneateuch* were coined that included the book of Judges.²⁵

¹⁸ Sanders would also include the Samaritan canon in the list. See his *Canon and Community*, 34.

¹⁹ The first known printed usage of the designation of “Old Testament,” a reference to the תנ”ך was by Melito, Bishop of Sardis, circa. 180 CE. The Jewish canon contains 24 books and places Judges in its second section of the Former Prophets. The Roman Catholic and Orthodox canon contains 45 books, yet within their book of Daniel, it contains additional books from the Protestant Apocrypha (The Story of Susanna, The Song of the Three Young Men, and The Story of Bel and the Dragon). The Roman Catholic canon contains one additional book, Baruch. The Protestant canon includes 39 books, of which Judges is found among the Historical Books also. See J.K. West, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1981), 4-9.

²⁰ Archer, *SOTI*, 76.

²¹ נְבִיאִים. The complete reference to the Hebrew canon is (*Tôrāh, N^ṣbi’im, ûk^ṣtûbîm*) תּוֹרָה וְנְבִיאִים וְכְתוּבִים. See footnote 80 regarding its placement in the Greek LXX.

²² תְּהַרְגֶנּוּ. *Yad*. 3:5. This is based on Midrashic *sod* that causes a status change in the reader to become defiled (or expose his uncleanness) by the holiness of the writing.

²³ D.G. Kent, *Layman’s Bible Book Commentary: Vol. 4 – Joshua, Judges, Ruth* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1980), 84.

²⁴ E. Sellin, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 10th rev. G. Fohrer, (Trans.) D.E. Green (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1978), 104.

²⁵ *Ibid*. The *Octateuch* included the books of Genesis – Samuel, with first and second Samuel being treated as one book. The *Enneateuch* made an addition of the book of Kings to the *Octateuch* volume.

Title

The title of this book has an ancestral trail from Hebrew to Greek to Latin and then to English. The shortened Hebraic form is (*šōp^ʔtîm*) translated “Judges”, whereas it has a fuller form of (*Sēper šōp^ʔtîm*), translated “Book of Judges”.²⁶ The Septuagint likewise has a short and long Greek form of (*Kritai*) and (*hē tōn kritōn biblos*) also translated the same way, as are the two Hebrew forms.²⁷ The Vulgate version around 400 CE translated “Book of Judges” into the Latin *Liber Judicum*.²⁸

Traditionally, the modern translations have followed the form of the LXX, Peshitta, and the Vulgate by translating the word or words.²⁹ A departure from this is found in Origen with his transliteration of the title.³⁰ Philo took this matter even further with his descriptive title “The Recorded Book of Judgments.”³¹ This descriptive enlargement is also found in the Syriac and Arabic versions as “The Book of the Judges of the Children of Israel.”³² Although he did not translate the text, Ahlström views the idea of the (*šōp^ʔtîm*) as tribal chieftains or rulers and suggests a more accurate rendering of the title would be “The Book of Tribal Rulers.”³³

Nonetheless, there is a departure in the Hebrew methodology in selecting a title from the existing tradition in the *Torah* by choosing a descriptive label from the opening phrase of the book. Rather, this derivation comes from the protagonists in the book who have “judged” Israel.³⁴

²⁶ סֵפֶר שׁוֹפְטִים and שׁוֹפְטִים ח. See BHS, 399.

²⁷ Κριταί and ἡ τῶν κριτῶν βίβλος. See Dalglish, 377.

²⁸ A.E. Cundall, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries: Vol. 7 – Judges & Ruth: An Introduction and Commentary*, (Gen. Ed.) D.J. Wiseman (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1968), 15.

²⁹ A succinct discussion on the title of the book and how the English versions, specifically adopted what may be viewed as an inappropriate translation of שֹׁפֵט is reviewed by E. Easterly, “A Case of Mistaken Identity: The Judges in Judges Don’t Judge,” *BibRev* 13 (1997), 41-43, 47.

³⁰ R.C. Ridall, *Beacon Bible Commentary: Vol. II – Judges and Ruth*, (Ed.) A.F. Harper (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1965), 105.

³¹ ἡ τῶν κριμάτων ἀναγραφομένη βίβλος, (*hē tōn krimatōn avagraphomevē biblos*). See Webb, *The Book of the Judges*, 18.

³² M. Henry, *A Commentary on the Whole Bible: Vol. 2 – Joshua to Esther*, rev. & corrected. (Iowa Falls, IA: World Bible Publishers, n.d.), 120.

³³ G.W. Ahlström, *The History of Ancient Palestine from the Paleolithic Period to Alexander’s Conquest (JSOT Supp. 146)*: Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 372. A discussion of the Hebrew term follows.

³⁴ Eight men are described as having “judged” or “led” Israel (Jg. 3:10; 10:2-3; 12:7-14; 15:20; and 16:31). See Wolf, 375.

Interestingly enough, the only nominal usage of “judge” apart from the introductory material is as a divine appellation of Yahweh.³⁵

Definition

The basis for the title is the Hebrew verb (*šāpat*).³⁶ The Apostle (*Paulos*) Paul gives an oblique illustrative reference to the judges ruling over Israel during a Sabbath sermon in a Pisidian Antioch synagogue.³⁷ The *Torah* explains the self-evident meaning of passing judgment:

You shall appoint for yourself **judges** and officers in all your gates which YHWH your Elohim is giving you, according to your tribes, **and they shall judge** the people with righteous **judgment**.³⁸

Uniquely, this word encompasses the concept of the judges’ “service as leaders” of the people of Yahweh. This leadership involved judicial issues of a civil nature, but it did not exclude military action.³⁹

An overview of the text reveals certain facts that concern the office of the judge. This office was valid for the whole of the Israelite confederacy. Second, there was no hereditary transmission. The judges occupying the office were both male and female, as well as from different tribes. Third, the appointment was for life. Once appointed, the judge remained in the office until death. Finally, the judges held the office in unbroken succession.⁴⁰

The human designation of judge resembled the Greek (*archōn*), as they were military chieftains with absolute administrative powers because they were divinely

³⁵ There are six times the noun appears in 2:16-19. The singular divine reference is in Jg. 11:27. See Boling, *AB*, 5.

³⁶ שָׁפַט. See *BDB*, 1047-1048.

³⁷ Παῦλος. שָׁפַט (šā’ul) אֵלִי. See Acts 13:19-20.

³⁸ See Dt. 16:18, emphasis added. Grammatically, this form is found as a plural participle (*šōpē’îm*) שֹׁפְטִים, a perfect form using the *Waw* consecutive (*w^ošōpētū*) וַיִּשְׁפֹּט, and as a noun (*mišpat*) מִשְׁפָּט, respectively.

³⁹ Civil leadership included Jephthah (Jg. 12:7), (*’ibšān*) אִבְזָן Ibzan (Jg. 12:9), (*’ēlōn*) אֵילֹן Elon (Jg. 12:11), and (*’abdōn*) אֲבִדֹן Abdon (Jg. 12:13-14). Eleven such uses of this word are as a participle designating the act or work of the person. In military leadership there was Othniel, (*’ēhūd*) אֶהוּד Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson, with some consideration being given to Shamgar. See L. Wood, *Distressing Days of the Judges* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), 4-5.

⁴⁰ D.A. McKenzie, “The Judge of Israel,” *VT* 17 (1967), 120. There is some confusion in the deductions that he has made. For example, although the office was valid for all of Israel, this does not imply that the particular judge ruled over all of the tribes. His fourth point must be based on an overlapping chronology, rather than a new judge immediately following the death of his predecessor.

chosen to rule in a theocratic structure.⁴¹ Because of the type of governmental leadership provided, the word carries a definition of “executive leaders.”⁴² These human representatives of Yahweh would not only adjudicate but also vindicate with the sense of defend, deliver, avenge, and punish.⁴³ As an oriental sovereign sitting in judgment their function was as an avenging deliverer.⁴⁴ Another designation that more aptly describes these judges is that of “warrior rulers.”⁴⁵ These definitions are utilized and further explained in the exegesis. Ultimately, this Hebrew verb “does not designate a unique act of deliverance or of condemnation, but a series of acts of government.”⁴⁶

A similar usage of ruling and judging was found outside the borders of Israel. The Akkadian officials used the word (*šāpiṭu*) to describe their judge.⁴⁷ Within the Phoenician colonies the word (*sufetes*) described their parallel function as chief magistrates.⁴⁸ The same title for the governmental rulers is found among the Ugarits as (*šptn*) and the appointed high officials in Assyria called (*šapitum*).⁴⁹

Since the judges were not elected or chosen because of social status or nobility, they differed from their ancient Near Eastern counterparts.⁵⁰ This difference was further magnified by the fact they were called directly by Yahweh and in certain instances empowered by the Spirit of Yahweh and endowed with miraculous power.⁵¹ Using this English terminology of “judge” does not properly fit the text linguistically.⁵² An additional criticism is the use of the soteriological verbiage of deliverance and

⁴¹ ᾧ ἄρχων. See *BAGD*, 113-114; and Ridall, 105.

⁴² Archer, *SOTI*, 299.

⁴³ The Latin words *judicare* and *vindicare* flow out of שָׁפַט. See, G.F. Moore, *The International Critical Commentary: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Judges* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1895, reprint 1989), xi.

⁴⁴ G. Bush, *Notes on Judges* (New York: Newman & Ivison, 1852; reprint Minneapolis, MN: James & Klock Publishing, 1976), iii-iv.

⁴⁵ J.L. Crenshaw, *Old Testament Story and Faith: A Literary and Theological Introduction* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1992), 119.

⁴⁶ H.S. Cazelles, “Shiloh, the Customary Laws and the Return of the Ancient Kings,” in *Proclamation and Presence*, (Eds.) J.I. Durham and J.R. Porter (Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1970), 241.

⁴⁷ Wolf, 375.

⁴⁸ A.R. Fausset, *A Critical and Expository Commentary on the Book of Judges* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1885; reprint Minneapolis, MN: James & Klock Publishing Co., 1977), 1.

⁴⁹ J. Gray, *Joshua, Judges, and Ruth* (Greenwood, SC: Attic, 1967), 202.

⁵⁰ A.H. Lewis, *Judges/Ruth* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1979), 11.

⁵¹ Keil and Delitzsch, 177.

⁵² None of the judges are called שֹׁפְטִים in the text. Also, the root שָׁפַט does not appear in the major sections. Cf. Block, *NAC*, 22-23.

liberation.⁵³ Mafico takes the root (*špt*) to mean the judicial role was one of ruling leadership that restores harmonious relations through peace.⁵⁴

Ascribing a meaning of “ruling” rather than the erroneous translation of “judging” does not negate the function of the judges; rather it points to them being subordinate in executing divine justice and judgment.⁵⁵ This position was taken by Hertzberg allowing this root to have a double meaning of “rule” and “judge.”⁵⁶ As a result, judgment rendered in the ancient Near East becomes “one of the important royal functions, but, needless to say, it was only one of the royal responsibilities.”⁵⁷ From a Deuteronomistic perspective these heroic individuals bare the title שפט “because they were the forerunners of the kings who were the supreme judges.”⁵⁸ These are the distinctions that allow the book to have the title of Judges, because judges and deliverers were divinely raised up as saviors, by providence to represent the Heavenly King and Judge to His people under Israelite theocracy.⁵⁹

⁵³ Note the usage of (*yāš'a'*) נָשַׁא for salvation and deliverance with Othniel (Jg. 3:9), Ehud (Jg. 3:15), Shamgar (Jg. 3:31), Gideon (Jg. 6:15 and 8:22), (*Tôlā'*) תוֹלַע Tola (Jg. 10:1), Jephthah (Jg. 12:3), and Samson (Jg. 13:5). This idea of divine judgment seen in a salvific manner is discussed later.

⁵⁴ The specific reference is to that of (*šālôm*) שָׁלוֹם. Cf. T.L.J. Mafico, “Judge, Judging,” *ABD* 3:1104-1105.

⁵⁵ Easterly, 43, and 47.

⁵⁶ H.W. Hertzberg, “Die Entwicklung des Begriffes *mišpāṭim* AT” (The development of the concept of *mišpāṭim* in the Old Testament), *ZAW* 40 (1922), 256.

⁵⁷ T. Ishida, “The Leaders of the Tribal Leagues ‘Israel’ in the Pre-Monarchic Period,” *RB* 80 (1973), 520. He accepts the idea of a dual meaning of שָׁפַט and takes the idea forward with the same meaning for the monarchs that followed.

⁵⁸ M. Weinfeld, “The Period of the Conquest and of the Judges as seen by the Earlier and the Later Sources,” *VT* 17 (1967), 118.

⁵⁹ Fausset, 1.

Textual Criticism

Although the technical term of lower criticism is outdated in its usage, the science of text criticism provides us with the most accurate translations of extant papyri and codices from which to base biblical exegesis. The *ḥ* of Judges, aside from the obscure vocabulary of the Song of Deborah, is among the best preserved of the Hebrew bible.⁶⁰ It is ironic that this critical science would emerge from an examination of the results of the periodic copying of manuscripts “which was intended to preserve the integrity of the text, that rendered the text subject to corruption.”⁶¹

The scope of this study is not to focus on every textual error or question in the manuscripts; but it is to examine those areas that provide background material for exegetical study of God’s peculiar judgment.⁶² Ultimately, these variant issues will be determined not so much from dating the oldest manuscripts but through the rise of comparative philology.⁶³ This new discipline within textual criticism examines the archaic and forgotten meanings through cognate languages. This may expose formerly textual problems as philological problems of obscurity.⁶⁴ Because of the recent development of this science, further expert studies regarding Judges is necessary and is not included in this study.

Manuscripts and Ancient Versions

With the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls, there is fragmentary evidence from the Qumran community of the book of Judges. Portions of the book were found in Caves One and Four. The fragments examined from Cave 1 are entitled 1QJudg. It included

⁶⁰ Wolf, 380. For a review of some of the textual problems associated with Jg. 5, see E. Tov, “The textual history of the Song of Deborah in the A text of the LXX,” *VT* 28 (1978), 224-232.

⁶¹ P.K. McCarter, Jr., *Textual Criticism: Rediscovering the Text of the Hebrew Bible* (GBS, OTS: Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1986), 26.

⁶² For a treatment on the science of textual criticism see J. Weingreen, *An Introduction to the Critical Study of the Text of the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Oxford Press, 1981) and E. Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament: An Introduction to the Biblia Hebraica*, (Trans.) E.F. Rhodes (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), 103-119. D.R. Ap-Thomas provides a succinct introduction to this field in *A Primer of Old Testament Text Criticism*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, England: Basil Blackwell, 1964). The influence of Qumran on textual traditions is discussed by F.M. Cross, Jr. and S. Talmon, (Eds.) *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 226-277.

⁶³ C.E. Armerding, *The Old Testament and Criticism* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 97-127.

⁶⁴ For an evaluation of this recent critical discipline, see J. Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1968), 14-94, and 288-300.

fragments from the text of 6:20-22; 8:1; 9:1-4 (another to 9:4-6); 9:28-31; 9:40-42 (another to 9:40-43); and 9:48-49.⁶⁵ Barthélemy reports that none of this Cave One material included complete lines and there remains “another thirty pieces to the Judges manuscript, each containing one to three words or portions of words, most often on more than one line.”⁶⁶ The two fragments that were found in Cave 4, enumerated as 49 and 50 have been entitled 4QJudg^a and 4QJudg^b, respectively. The forty-ninth document contains part of 6:3-13. The fiftieth document preserves the entirety of 21:12-25 and a fragment of 16:5-7.⁶⁷

Codex Alexandrinus (LXX^A) and Codex Vaticanus (LXX^B) represent two distinct Greek Septuagint (LXX) versions of this text.⁶⁸ Origen created his *Hexapla*, which has failed to have a surviving manuscript.⁶⁹ It is possible he used the uncial κ and the minuscules *gn dpt*.⁷⁰ The addition of the miniscule *w* has also been suggested.⁷¹ Because of the unusual number of textual variants, there is the thought that these two codices reflect different translations. Rahlfs’ LXX presents a dichotomy with the Alexandrian text at the top of the page and the Vatican text at the bottom.⁷²

The textual debate initially centered on the theory of two distinct translations. Proponents of this theory, spanning three centuries include Grabe, Lagarde, Rahlfs, and Kahle.⁷³ Jellicoe reviews a historical account of this debate.⁷⁴ The opposing view

⁶⁵ J.D. Barthélemy and J.T. Milik, “Qumran Cave 1,” *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1955), 62-64. For a copy of the scroll catalogue see G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, rev. and extended 4th ed. (London: Penguin Books, 1995), xxxvi-lvi.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁶⁷ J.T. Barrera, “Textual Variants in 4QJudg^a and the Textual and Editorial History of the Book of Judges 1,” *RQ 14* (1989-90), 229-245.

⁶⁸ Wolf, 380.

⁶⁹ Boling, *AB*, 38-39.

⁷⁰ F.M. Cross, Jr., “The Contribution of the Qumrân Discoveries to the Study of the Biblical Text,” *IEJ 16* (1966), 84.

⁷¹ McCarter, 89.

⁷² Alfred Rahlfs, *Septuaginta, 2 Vols.*, Stuttgart, Germany, 1935; reprint Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979. This follows the design of Ussher in 1665 who presented a two-column version preferring LXX^B first and then LXX^A on the right column.

⁷³ Webb, *The Book of Judges*, 15. He summarizes and lists the dichotomous position of J.E. Grabe (1705), P.A. de Lagarde (1891), A. Rahlfs (1935), and Kahle (1959). Also, he lists among the Greek revisionist theory adherents: Pretzl (1925), Billen (1942), C. Cooper (1948), Soisalon-Soininen (1952), and W.R. Bodine (1980).

⁷⁴ S. Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 280-283. For their individual viewpoints, see J.E. Graeae, *Epistola ad Millium* (Letter to Millius) [Lat.], (Oxford, England, 1705) and P.A. de Lagarde, *Septuaginta-Studien, Teil I* (Septuagint Studies, Part 1) [Ger.], (Göttingen, Germany: Erster Theil, 1891), 14-71.

came in the nineteenth century by O.F. Fritzsche and A. Schulte who argued that the LXX^B is “a neutral text uninfluenced by third and fourth century Christian recensions.”⁷⁵

The consensus of those investigating this problem falls into three distinct schools:

The Alexandrian and Vatican texts of Judges are derived, one from the other; or are influenced, one by the other; or are of distinctly different dates, one later than the other. And the majority holds that A is more nearly the original LXX.⁷⁶

Research from the first half of the twentieth century of a comparison of synonymous substantive vocabularies of the LXX^A and LXX^B texts posited the influence on the LXX^A version of Judges by Theodotion.⁷⁷ Boling summarizes the textual evidence between the two uncials of Judges and concludes a higher percentage of first rate readings with LXX^A.⁷⁸ Nonetheless, these two texts “may be characterized as an effort to improve the original LXX by a certain freedom of rendering *ad sensum*, rather than literally.”⁷⁹

The textual history of the book may be examined showing it to be an individual unit that is separate from Joshua and especially Ruth. This is seen in the various manuscripts of the Septuagint. Both LXX^A and LXX^B place Judges in its traditional location. However, Codex Basilano known as LXX^N gives an order of Joshua, Ruth, Judges, and 1 Kings.⁸⁰

Among Greek authors, Philo represents the earliest extant reference to the book, when he describes the incident at (*P²nû'ēl*) Penuel.⁸¹

⁷⁵ O.F. Fritzsche, *Liber Iudicum secundum LXX Interpret.* (The Book of Judges following the Septuagint Translator), (Zurich, Switzerland: Libraria Schabelitziana [Caesar Schmidt], 1867) [Lat.]; and A. Schulte, *De restitutione atque indole genuinae versionis graecae in libro Iudicum* (The restoration of the original and genuine Greek version in the book of Judges) [Lat.], (Leipzig, Germany: Fock, 1889) cited in C.M. Cooper, “Theodotion’s Influence on the Alexandrian Text of Judges” *JBL* 67 (1948), 63.

⁷⁶ Cooper, “Theodotion’s Influence on the Alexandrian Text of Judges,” 64.

⁷⁷ C.M. Cooper, “Studies in the Greek Text of the Book of Judges: The Synonyms of the Alexandrian and Vatican Codices,” (Ph.D. diss., Dropsie College, 1941). Cooper accepts that his research was based on nominal comparisons and further examination should be made regarding the other parts of speech in order to be more conclusive.

⁷⁸ Boling, *AB*, 41-42, and 297-301.

⁷⁹ Cooper, “Theodotion’s Influence on the Alexandrian Text of Judges,” 68.

⁸⁰ Ⲭ Ιησοῦς, Ρούθ, Κριταί, and βασιλειῶν Α'. H.B. Swete, *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1902), 201-202. Other than the Basilano LXX version, all other Ⲭ and Ⲡ texts are consistent with the traditional placement of Judges.

⁸¹ Ⲡ פְּנֵאֵל. Webb (*The Book of Judges*, 14, and 213) in his rationale about the book cites Philo’s *Confusion of Tongues*, 129-132 as a source of literature that dates secular usage of biblical material, specifically as it relates to the overthrow of the tower comparing it to the tower of Babel. See Jg. 8:8. See Philo: *With an English Translation by F.H. Colson*, Vol. 4 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949).

Other clues to the textual history may be obtained from the Syriac Peshitta. There are fifty-six known \mathfrak{S} manuscripts dating from sixth to nineteenth century.⁸² The text tradition places manuscripts *6h7*, *7a1*, *7g1*, and *8a1* as representing a homogeneous group that “represent a type of text of their own, and that we do not have (as far as Judges is concerned).”⁸³ The most reliable readings, despite them not being the oldest are the manuscripts *7g1* and *9a1*.⁸⁴

Burney places “slight critical value” on \mathfrak{S} as well as \mathfrak{I} noting them to be recensions of the Hebrew text in comparison with the LXX.⁸⁵ Moore acknowledges a “constancy second only to the Hebrew.”⁸⁶ In support of his research and the studies of both Moore and Burney, Dirksen states “the Peshitta goes back to a Hebrew original which is much closer to the Masoretic text than the text which underlies the LXX.”⁸⁷ However, Moore maintains that the textual critical supremacy is found with the Greek versions.⁸⁸ Another version that bears on the text is the *Targum* (\mathfrak{T}). Burney relegates the *Targum* in the same category as the \mathfrak{S} .⁸⁹ For Moore, it is more useful in Jewish exegesis and is of little critical value.⁹⁰ Where the Song of Deborah is concerned in *Targum Jonathan* there is no substantive evidence that its author “took as his Hebrew text anything different from what has come to be known as the Masoretic text.”⁹¹

⁸² P.B. Dirksen, *The Transmission of the Text in the Peshitta Manuscripts of the Book of Judges* (Leiden, the Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1972), xi-xii; 1-20. He briefly discusses each of the manuscripts and the textual variants reflecting the peculiar readings in each of them. The manuscripts are grouped based on antiquity and then between Western and Eastern designations.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 26-41.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁸⁵ Burney, cxxvii.

⁸⁶ Moore, xlvii. Nonetheless, he ascribes \mathfrak{S} is more important to the interpreter than the textual critic.

⁸⁷ Dirksen, 107. He strongly supports that \mathfrak{S} is not dependent upon the LXX.

⁸⁸ Moore, xlv.

⁸⁹ Burney, cxxvii.

⁹⁰ Moore, xlvii. He cites four different versions he has examined ($\mathfrak{T}^{\text{ven.1}}$, $\mathfrak{T}^{\text{ven.2}}$, $\mathfrak{T}^{\text{reuch.}}$, and \mathfrak{T}^{m}).

⁹¹ D.J. Harrington, “The Prophecy of Deborah: Interpretative Homiletics in Targum Jonathan of Judges 5,” *CBQ* 48 (1986), 439. With his understanding of Midrashic homily, he is more interested in the targumist’s message of Israel’s response to *Torah* and the consequences that follow with its rejection. For an English translation of $\mathfrak{T}^{\text{Jon}}$ see A. Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic, Volume II: The Former Prophets according to Targum Jonathan* (Leiden, the Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1959), 45-93.

Manuscript Errors

Scribal corruption of the text may be classified as to letters, words, phrases, or lines that have been altered, inserted, or deleted from the original composition. Burney, although not exhaustive, provides a substantive list of these three divisions of manuscript errors of Judges in the *textus receptus*.⁹²

In an effort to determine whether these textual errors have an impact upon the juridical element, each of these 272 errors have been examined and included as appendices 1-3, which are listings of the textual errors by alteration, insertion, and deletion, respectively. Each of these appendices is subdivided into categories and includes the verse reference, the Hebrew *BHS* text, its translation, and transliteration, as well as the emended Hebrew text with its translation and transliteration.

Alteration

The largest of the three categories of scribal errors are those which have been altered. Appendix 1 lists each of these 196 alteration errors. The most substantial listing of textual corruption is in the area of confusion of letters, where one consonant is confused with another due to its similarity. There are 58 instances of this confusion.

Metathesis has occurred ten times through letters that have been transposed, and six times through clause transposition.⁹³

Homophony has occurred thirty times.

Substitution through propinquity has occurred seven times.

Fission of words where there has been a wrong division has occurred six times. There is a singular occurrence of the wrong division of a sentence.

Errors due to the use of abbreviation in writing have occurred seven times.

⁹² Burney, cxxii-cxxviii. All the numerical listings of these scribal errors are referenced to Burney unless otherwise noted. Where relevant to the dissertation, these corruptions are presented in the exegetical passages.

Another scheme used is to list the textual problems either as “unintentional changes” or “intentional changes” with the latter reflecting issues of harmonization and expansion, conflation of two or more variant readings, and removal of difficult or objectionable expressions. An unintentional omission in Jg. 20:13 is included in the discussion. See Armerding, 119-125.

A third possible way of expressing textual corruption is through changes that expand, shorten, or those that do not change the length of the text, as well as those which are deliberate changes. See McCarter, 26-61.

⁹³ The corruption of the inverted word order in Jg. 20:10 has been addressed; yet, its analysis or scribal confusion does not enter the scope of divine juridical action. Cf. R.G. Boling, “Some Conflate Readings in Joshua-Judges,” *VT* 16 (1966), 294-295.

Errors in vocalization due to variations in the vowel pointing have occurred thirty times.

Grammatical solecisms have occurred in various instances. There are six cases of masculine for feminine substitution and three cases of feminine for masculine substitution. There are six cases of singular for plural substitution and ten cases of plural for singular substitution. There is a single occurrence of third person for first person. There are four cases of false tense.

There are nine cases of intentional perversion of the text. One of the cases involved a euphemistic insertion, where a suspended (*n*) ך, removes the scandal implied to the revered Moses.⁹⁴ It is one of the biblical passages containing (*’ôṭîyôṭ t’lôyôṭ*) “suspended letters”.⁹⁵

Finally, there are two cases of unclassified corruption of the text.

Insertion

The second category of scribal errors is those where additional letters, words, or phrases have been inserted into the text. There are 47 instances of this within the book of Judges. Evidence of dittography is present in both words and letters. There are four times it is present in words and five times in letters.

Doublets are present fifteen different times.⁹⁶

There are twelve occurrences of marginal notes inserted in the text.

There are an additional six insertions explicative of an already corrupt text.

Five other insertions in the text remain unclassified.

Deletion

The smallest of the three categories of scribal errors is those where letters, words, and/or phrases have been deleted from the text. There are 29 of these errors by deletion. Homoeoteleuton has occurred twice with the omission of an intervening passage due to having a similar ending. One of those cases falls into the category of parablepsis.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ McCarter, 59. He refers to the passage in Jg. 18:30.

⁹⁵ אֹתֵיּוֹת תְּלוּיּוֹת. See C. McCarthy, *The Tiqqune Sopherim and Other Theological Corrections in the Masoretic Text of the Old Testament* (OBO 36: Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981), 225-229.

⁹⁶ The passage in 10:4 is addressed; however, its examination does not enter the scope of this research. Cf. Boling, “Some Conflate Readings in Joshua-Judges,” 295-297.

⁹⁷ McCarter, 39-40. He refers to the passage in Jg. 16:13-14.

There are two instances of haplography. One instance is haplography of letters being omitted. The other instance is haplography of words.

There are eight cases of prosaizing.⁹⁸ Three cases involve the deletion of the definite article. One case involves the deletion of the conjunction. Three cases involve the deletion of the preposition. One case involves the deletion of a particle.

Homoeoarkton has occurred seventeen times with the omission of an intervening passage from the beginning of two similar sentences. Ten occurrences are omissions of single words or parts of words, whereas seven occurrences are of sentences or parts of sentences.

Manuscript Emendations

Because the emendations are difficult to grasp out of their context, Appendix 4 is a literal translation of every verse that has been emended. Each of the twenty-one chapters has been emended in some way, with the obvious concentration being within chapter five. Of the total 618 verses in the book, 164 verses have been emended. A chart reflecting the textual errors by category may be found in Appendix 5.

Although the translation choices included favor a Hebraic transliteration of proper names and geographic places, frequently they are not part of the scribal errors. The other translation choices clarify the Hebraic idiom and utilize modern vernacular. Although this enhances the reading of the various pericope and expresses background information, the emendations do not change the overall nature of the pericopes or the essence of the book.

The work of textual criticism does not significantly affect the reading of Judges in relation to the thesis' purpose. However, where these nuances accentuate the cyclical elements, they are highlighted in chapter five.

⁹⁸ McCarter, 56-57. This error involves a scribal error of adjusting poetry into prose grammatical and syntactical forms.

Historical Literary Criticism

Traditionally, the hermeneutical approach has been a combined historical and literary approach. At times, this segmentation tends to leave elements of the exegesis untouched. Therefore, the traditional critical methods are employed; however where new innovative approaches of examination provide previously unaddressed historical insights, these will be included. Some of these newer diachronic approaches include sociological and anthropological investigation within social scientific criticism.

Source Criticism

The book of Judges presents certain source questions that are foundational to exegesis. The question of authorship and dating of the material takes a basic dichotomous approach.⁹⁹ Until recently, the question of unity of composition was highly contested due to the JEDP theory.¹⁰⁰ Statistical linguistics, one of the new hermeneutical approaches, although not conclusive supplies supporting evidences for questions of authorship.

Composition

AUTHOR

From the outset, the authorship of Judges remains speculative, as there is not any internal evidence from the text. External evidence provides the only information to answer this dilemma. There are two basic positions. Either there was a single author of the work or it was a collaboration of more than one author. This question is further complicated because of the tripartite structure of the book and the origin of the source material.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ N.C. Habel provides a guide to source criticism in *Literary Criticism of the Old Testament* (GBS, OTS: Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1971), 7. I. Engnell details the Scandinavian approach in *A Rigid Scrutiny: Critical Essays on the Old Testament*, (Trans.) J.T. Willis (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969).

¹⁰⁰ Although recognizing blocks of material as source documents, Armerding discounts the Graf-Wellhausen approach as an outmoded view that relates more to the development of Israel's history and religion rather than source criticism. See Armerding, 37. For a discussion on the changes in source criticism methodology and its relationship to the Documentary Hypothesis theory see P.A. Viviano, "Source Criticism," *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and their Application*, (Eds.) S.L. McKenzie and S.R. Hayes (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 35-57.

¹⁰¹ Wolf, 377.

Of those who hold to the single authorship theory, the primary candidate would be (*šmū'ēl*) Samuel.¹⁰² The first evidence is the absence of his personal story as the greatest of the judges. Within the book there is a systematic attack on idolatry that characterizes the spirit of Samuel.¹⁰³ Goslinga reasons that Samuel, as the key “man of God” for this period would have been the divine choice in writing this as the chosen channel of God.¹⁰⁴ Lewis suggests that the writing be linked to the early part of the monarchy which would have been the period in which Samuel lived.¹⁰⁵ Jordan notes the theme of there being no human king in Israel as a proof for Samuel’s authorship based on his passionate plea with the nation recorded in 1 Samuel 8 and his high regard for YHWH as king over Israel.¹⁰⁶

In the Patristic Period, Bishop Patrick declared the prophet Samuel as the penman.¹⁰⁷ The tractate *Baba Bathra* 14b identifies the rabbinical order of the prophetic books and cites Samuel with the authorship of Judges: “ושפטים ורות. שמואל כתב ספרו.”¹⁰⁸ (Samuel wrote his book and Judges and Ruth.) Keil and Delitzsch find that the Talmudic evidence for Samuel is tenable. Nonetheless, they contend that it could have been pseudepigraphally “written at his instigation by a younger prophet of his school.”¹⁰⁹ Wolf agrees that the main author may have been a younger associate of Samuel.¹¹⁰

Ridall does not declare authorship conclusively; but lists as other possibilities to include (*Pinhās*) Phinehas, (*Hizqiyāhū*) Hezekiah, and (*ezrā*) Ezra.¹¹¹ Sellin rejects the Talmudic position based on Deuteronomic recension.¹¹² One of the arguments against

¹⁰² שמואל ח.

¹⁰³ D. Jackman, *The Communicator's Commentary: Vol. 7 - Judges, Ruth*, (Gen. Ed.) L.J. Ogilvie (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1991), 24-25. Although there is no identifiable reference to Samuel in Judges, he is classified as a judge in 1 Sam. 7:15.

¹⁰⁴ C.J. Goslinga, *Joshua, Judges and Ruth*, (Trans.) Ray Togtman, *The Bible Students' Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1968), 223-235.

¹⁰⁵ Lewis, 15.

¹⁰⁶ J.B. Jordan, *Judges: God's War Against Humanism* (Tyler, TX: Geneva Ministries, 1985), xi.

¹⁰⁷ Henry, 120.

¹⁰⁸ *Bab.B 14b* is quoted from I. Epstein, (Ed.) *Hebrew-English edition of the Babylonian Talmud*, 13 vols. (London: Soncino Press, 1963-1976).

¹⁰⁹ Keil & Delitzsch, 182.

¹¹⁰ Wolf, 377.

¹¹¹ שמואל, חזקיהו, and פינחס. Ridall, 105. Also, (*Nāṭān*) נתן Nathan and Gad have been added to this list of possibilities by Cundall (*TOTC*, 26).

¹¹² Sellin, 206. Even with his rejection of Samuel as the author, he acknowledges the anonymity of the author.

Samuel's authorship is his lack of enthusiasm for a king.¹¹³ Another argument against him as the author is the religious historical interpretation found in Judges is lacking in Samuel. "The character of the two works shows conclusively that Judges was not composed by the author of Samuel."¹¹⁴

Among those who subscribe to the Deuteronomic school of thought, Muilenburg suggests that the author would have been familiar with history, rather than having a prophetic understanding looking forward and thus may have been members of the scribal family of (Šāpān) Shaphan.¹¹⁵

With all of the androcentric possibilities for authorship, one must not relegate feminine authorship as being implausible. The most likely female candidate for the book would be Deborah.¹¹⁶ By regarding the book as a female satire against male authoritarianism, the elements of mockery, irony, derision, and parody present censure against the male "heroes." This forms a polemic against hostile Israelite arrogance that disregards the humanity of women. This satirical vein presents each male judge negatively. This is due to their individual and corporate response to each of the female characters within the text.¹¹⁷ With this type of analysis, Bledstein ascribes authorship to (Huldāh) Huldah, the prophetess.¹¹⁸ This type of approach to the text and characterization is consistent with feminist criticism. Nonetheless, within that field of criticism, the identification of a single author is not nearly as important as it is to discern the gendered voices speaking through the text. In a recent co-authored work, Brenner and van Dijk-Hemmes conclude that Judges as a whole is not likely to have been authored by a woman; but, the feminine voice is clearly present.¹¹⁹

In an effort to prove or disprove the conjecture of a diversity of authorship, Judges has been scrutinized through a non-historical method known as statistical linguistics.

¹¹³ Lewis, 16. Cundall (*TOTC*, 26) makes the same point on the issue of the monarchy, which puts him in variance with Talmudic tradition. Although the phrase "there was no king in Israel" may prove authorship after the monarchy began, I disagree that this phrase is a polemic for or against the monarchy, despite its repetition in the text. Cf. 1 Sam. 8 and 12.

¹¹⁴ Moore, xiii.

¹¹⁵ מִשְׁפָּחַת שָׁפָן. 2 Kg. 22:3, and 12. J. Muilenburg, "Baruch the Scribe" in *Proclamation and Presence*, (Eds.) J.I. Durham and J.R. Porter (Richmond, VA: John Knox Publishers, 1970), 219-220.

¹¹⁶ S.D. Goitein, "Women as Creators of Biblical Genres," *Prooftexts* 8 (1988), 1-34.

¹¹⁷ A.J. Bledstein, "Is Judges a woman's satire of men who play God?" *A Feminist Companion to Judges*, (Ed.) A. Brenner, (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 34-54.

¹¹⁸ מִשְׁפָּחַת שָׁפָן. Bledstein, 53. She goes a step further by identifying Huldah as the Deuteronomist.

¹¹⁹ A. Brenner and F. van Dijk-Hemmes, *On Gendering Texts: Female and Male Voices in the Hebrew Bible (BibIntS 1)*: Leiden, the Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1993), 17-32.

This method analyzes involuntary speech habits by the author and examines them in such a way that the “habits of speech and writing become as recognizable as fingerprints.”¹²⁰ Although much of this type of investigation is helpful in isolating strands and sources, this study did reveal the main text of stories (chapters 3-12) were by the same author and the two Samson traditions (chapters 13-15 and 16) were also by the same author.¹²¹ If a statistical variant of 5% or less is accepted, then this method provides us statistical evidence for homogeneity of common authorship.¹²²

The identity of the author can not be definitively known. Yet, the author was prophetic in nature and measured the faithfulness of Israel against the background of Yahweh’s covenant. It appears that he used original sources to present a unified composition.¹²³ Also, he had information about locations that would have been lost to an author from a later century.¹²⁴ The author used literary skills to craft together a tapestry of source material for this history of the Judges period.¹²⁵ Recognizing there have been redactors leaving their imprints on the text, there is reason to accept this work as a unified entity, as discussed below. Ultimately, the absence of the human author along with the separate “voices” of the book is not as important as the presence of the “omniscient narrator.”¹²⁶

¹²⁰ Y.T. Radday, G. Leb, and S. Talmon, “The Book of Judges Examined by Statistical Linguistics” *Biblica* 58 (1977), 495.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 496.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 498-499. These three statisticians suggest that this method should not be used exclusively but should be considered along with the traditional historical-linguistic criteria.

¹²³ Archer, *SOTI*, 303.

¹²⁴ Lewis, 15-16. He cites that Gezer was a stronghold of Canaan (Jg. 1:29) but had become a part of Israel as a wedding gift to the king by the pharaoh of Egypt during the Solomonic period (1 Kg. 9:16). During the period of Judges (Jg. 1:21), Jerusalem was a Jebusite city and in the reign of David it had been conquered. Based on the grammatical structure of the sentence, the author reveals he would have known about the house of God in (*Šilōh*) הַשִּׁלֹּחַ Shiloh (Jg. 18:31) having been moved to another place.

¹²⁵ P.D. Guest, “Can Judges Survive without Sources?: Challenging the Consensus.” *JSOT* 78 (1998), 43-61. Guest further argues that this is the product of a single writer.

¹²⁶ L.R. Klein, *The Triumph of Irony in the Book of Judges* (Decatur, GA: Almond Press, 1988), 11-12. Klein does not assume understanding the identity of the author is unimportant. Rather, she stresses that with all of the redaction and collection of tribal narratives and hero stories that the awareness of YHWH is divinely directing both the author and the characters of the stories, except in the cases of unprincipled action.

DATE

The question of dating is connected with the identity of the author. Thus, we clearly are placed with assessing whether the author lived in the early monarchic period or during a much later period of the monarchy.

The historical context cannot be excluded at this point. This is discussed in more detail in a later section. At present, there are some clues from internal evidence. Almost as parentheses, both the first and last verses are helpful. The period is “after the death of Joshua.”¹²⁷ The repetitive phrase “there was no king in Israel” is problematic and is addressed later.¹²⁸ The question of the control of the city of (*Y²rûšālam*) Jerusalem, then known as (*Y²būs*) Jebus, provides support for an early authorship prior to the reign of King David.¹²⁹ The reference to (*Gāzer*) Gezer and its Canaanite inhabitants reflects a period before King Solomon and 970 BCE.¹³⁰ The preeminence of (*Šîdōn*) Sidon as the chief Phoenician city rather than (*Šōr*) Tyre affirms a date before the twelfth century BCE.¹³¹

Because consonantal confusion in the text gives two significantly different meanings, textual criticism helps to determine the correct reading of the problematic passage in Jg. 18:30. If the text is emendated to replace (*’āreš*) “land” with (*’ārôn*) “ark”, it becomes a point for considering authorship.¹³² This would help to place the authorship after the Philistine’s had captured and returned the Ark of the Covenant.¹³³ Although not

¹²⁷ Jg. 1:1; and 2:8.

¹²⁸ Jg. 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; and 21:25. Conservative scholarship suggests a date that early in the monarchy, where one could look backward in time and cast a negative tone on the premonarchic era.

¹²⁹ יְרוּשָׁלַם and יָבוּס. As discussed in footnote 80, Jg. 1:21 reveals the Jebusite control over the city, which remained until David took control over the area as reflected in 2 Sam. 5:6-10. This would lend support to a pre-Davidic dating. The question is whether this would only include the source material or would involve both source and redaction. The capturing of the stronghold has been dated about 1048 BCE. See Jackman, 24.

¹³⁰ גִּזְרִי. See Wolf, 378. He discusses how the city was a dowry gift of Pharaoh to one of Solomon’s wives. Ridall, 106, mentions the same wedding present but gives an earlier date of 992 BCE. Jg. 1:29; and 1 Kg. 9:16.

¹³¹ צִידֹן and צֹר. Tyre emerged as the predominant city over Sidon by this century. Jg. 3:3; and Enns, 8.

¹³² אֶרֶץ and אָרוֹן.

¹³³ The phrase “until the captivity of the land” has caused many to accept late authorship with this referring to either Assyrian captivity (722 BCE) or Babylonian captivity (586 BCE). See Boling, *AB*, 266. Yet, when a textual emendation is made because of consonantal confusion, then the ark (and its captivity) becomes the focus. See Appendix 9, page 828. See E.J. Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969), 169-170. Fausset, 8, cites the ark was the heart of the national theocracy and its captivity was the same as the captivity of the people, referring to this passage and 1 Sam. 4:11-7:2. Wolf, 378, dates the capture of the ark and the death of עֲלִי

as obvious as the previous references, the Isaianic allusion to the defeat of (*Midyān*) Midian by Gideon would date this before the seventh century BCE.¹³⁴

Cundall takes these same passages and supports authorship around 980 BCE, although acknowledging that there is no place for dogmatism on the matter.¹³⁵ Bush makes his early dating within the reign of (*Šā'ûl*) Saul or the first years of David's reign based on the absence of Chaldean words.¹³⁶ He claims these words are present in Babylonian exilic writings and it would prove the date of this writing to be several centuries prior to that captivity.¹³⁷ The common element of the internal evidence for this early monarchal date is David's capture of Jerusalem around 990 BCE.¹³⁸

Hamlin places the author at approximately 609 BCE, following the death of King (*Yō'sīyāhū*) Josiah during the scribal period.¹³⁹ He makes this deduction from the internal evidence of both Judges and Jeremiah, thus placing the date five centuries after the events occurred. He cites this as evidence because:

The 'false pen of the scribes' had brought Covenant teaching into disrepute (Jer. 8:8), [and because] chaos was threatening the nation from two directions: (1) the unfaithfulness of both leaders and people (Cf. Judg. 2:11-13), and (2) the attacks of external enemies (Cf. 2:14-15).¹⁴⁰

Tollington hypothesizes from a post-exilic perspective that the source materials, especially from the epilogue (17-25) could not have been joined prior to the Babylonian captivity. She places the epilogue as a polemic for a community seeking restoration

(*'ēli*) Eli, (1 Sam. 4:18) at 1075 BCE. He further cites 1 Sam 4:21 and "the glory departed" with the verb גָּלָה (*gālāh*) "departed" having the same root as captivity, as further proof for this text and an early date. Also see *BDB*, 162-163.

Although Ridall places composition within the reign of either Saul or David, he concedes that some may base a late date monarchy based on the exile because of Tiglath-pileser (2 Kg. 15:29) or the fall of Samaria (2 Kg. 17:6). However, he translates the phrase "until the land was made naked" making this synonymous with the time of Deborah (Jg. 4:3 and 5:6-8) or Gideon (Jg. 6:2-6). See Ridall, 106.

There is yet, a third possibility, which maintains the phrase "captivity of the land." This would involve Dan being overpowered by foreign invaders (Jg. 18:27-28) and recapturing the site from the invaders by their own military prowess at the border. This would place the date of composition within the early Davidic reign. See Archer, *SOTI*, 303.

¹³⁴ מִדְיָן. Ridall, 106. Jg. 7:21-25; and Isa. 9:4.

¹³⁵ Cundall, *TOTC*, 27.

¹³⁶ שְׁאֵל.

¹³⁷ Bush, v.

¹³⁸ Archer, *SOTI*, 300-303. Although based from a different hermeneutical approach, Keil, 182, accepts the date of authorship within the reign of Saul or the first seven years of the reign of David.

¹³⁹ יֵאֵשֶׁרָה. E.J. Hamlin, *At Risk in the Promised Land: A Commentary on the Book of Judges* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 2-3.

¹⁴⁰ Hamlin, 4.

during the time of (*Haggai*) Haggai and Zechariah.¹⁴¹ She further argues for Davidic traditions within the prologue (1-2) as a monarchical position advocated by Haggai.¹⁴²

Guest refutes the tendency to ascribe later dates than the Davidic monarchy based on source material that is pre-Davidic. She questions the scanty eighth century archaeological evidence as a support for late authorship.¹⁴³

STRUCTURE

The sources the author used were not composed chronologically.¹⁴⁴ However, that which was included formed a three-part division. This generally has been accepted as an Introduction (1:1-3:6), Main Body (3:7-16:31), and the Appendix (17-21).¹⁴⁵ Although not a complete denial of the three divisions in Judges, Soggin includes a fourth division (1 Samuel 1-7), which is his conclusion to the book.¹⁴⁶

The main body of hero narratives from (*ʿotnīʿēl*) Othniel to Samson finds such general acceptance among scholars, that the need to redress this is unnecessary.¹⁴⁷ The focus is rather placed on the narratives that precede and follow the main passage. In the introduction, the question is whether it has a single or double introduction. The older tradition favors a single prologue concluding at 2:5 as a later redactional unit.¹⁴⁸ There are problems with the first introduction involving the two different strands. They show inconsistencies between chapter one and two regarding Joshua.¹⁴⁹ Approaching the problem from a different vantage, Williams accepts the single introduction based on a

¹⁴¹ חַגַּי. J.E. Tollington, *Tradition and Innovation in Haggai and Zechariah 1-8* (JSOT Supp. 150: Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1993), 125-181.

¹⁴² *Idem*, "The Book of Judges: The Result of Post-Exilic Exegesis?" *Intertextuality in Ugarit and Israel* (Leiden, the Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1998), 194-196.

¹⁴³ P.D. Guest, "Dangerous Liaisons in the Book of Judges" *SJOT* 11 (1997), 242.

¹⁴⁴ Bush, v. The problem of the chronology within the book is addressed later.

¹⁴⁵ Fausset, 9-11. The consensus on this three-unit subdivision is almost unanimous. The points of divergence come as to where the introduction ends and where the main body begins. That question is equally divided with the point of the introduction including only Jg. 1:1-2:5.

¹⁴⁶ J.A. Soggin, *When the Judges Ruled* (New York: Association Press, 1965), 9. He is part of the school that limits the introduction to Jg. 1:1-2:5 in his structural division.

¹⁴⁷ עֹתְנִיֵּאל חַגַּי.

¹⁴⁸ Driver, "The Origin and Structure of the Book of Judges," 258, and 263. Although not an exhaustive list, some of the other proponents include: (Boling, *AB*, 30); (Cundall, 18); (Dalglish, 380); (Kent, 91); (Moore, xiii); (Ridall, 109); (Soggin, *When the Judges Ruled*, 8); (Wolf, 382); and (F.E. Young, "Judges," (Ed.) C.F.H. Henry [*BibExp* 1: Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1960, reprint 1985], 246).

¹⁴⁹ Cf. M.A. Sweeney, "Davidic Polemics in the Book of Judges," *VT* 47 (1997), 518-519. The issue of Joshua being dead in chapter one and being reported alive in chapter two is beyond the scope of this research.

solar calendrical cycle applying to the tribal rulers present in the main section, but beginning at 2:6.¹⁵⁰ Brettler extends the prologue slightly to 2:10. He notices a parallel structure in the first and last chapters with the interrogative oracle “Who shall go up for us?” With this question and its same answer, “Judah” he supports the singular prologue.¹⁵¹

The primary argument for a double introduction has equal support and has been revived among recent literary critics.¹⁵² The context of the second introduction reveals the historical cycle that dominates the central passage.¹⁵³ It is further mirrored as a military failure against a national religious failure.¹⁵⁴ Klein accepts a parallelism between the two introductory narratives that provides the elements necessary for the ironies that follow.¹⁵⁵ Another proof that is cited is the double introduction is balanced by a double conclusion (17-21).¹⁵⁶ The final support for this second narrative being included in the introductory section is a parallelism with the double conclusion of the book of Joshua (Josh. 13:1-16 and 24:1-31).¹⁵⁷

The third section is not questioned as to its beginning and end or to the fact there are two different narratives that are present. The first observation is how this section is named. The primary name given is as an “Appendix”.¹⁵⁸ There is a two-fold rationale.

¹⁵⁰ J.G. Williams, “The Structure of Judges 2.6—16.31,” *JSOT* 49 (1991), 77-85. This is indeed an interesting hypothesis for the unity of the work based on a cyclical pattern found in the main body. He compares this text with the yearly cycle of life. A closer view of this seasonal calendar cycle and its relationship to tribal sub-groupings is examined later.

¹⁵¹ The reasoning is somewhat faulty centering on the supremacy of Judah, because this would lead to also accepting only one conclusion rather than the double conclusion narrative. His rationale would actually be an additional support for the double introduction and double conclusion discussed later. His Judean manifesto and its relationship to the Judean monarchy are beyond our scope, unless the issue was pressed regarding the ultimate eschatological Judean king and judgment, which is explored elsewhere. See Jg. 1:1-2; and 20:18. Cf. M. Brettler, “The Book of Judges: Literature as Politics,” *JBL* 108 (1989), 399-402.

¹⁵² The more recent scholars include: (Webb, *The Book of Judges*, 81) and R.H. O’Connell, *The Rhetoric of the Book of Judges* (*VT Supp.* 63: Leiden, Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1996), 347-354. Others who take this position include: (Block, 58), (Burney, xxxiv), (Bush, viii), (D.R. Davis, *Such A Great Salvation: Expositions of the Book of Judges* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1990], 12), (Fausset, 9), (Jackman, 25), and (Keil and Delitzsch, 175).

¹⁵³ K.L. Younger, Jr., “Judges 1 in its Near Eastern Literary Context,” *Faith, Tradition, and History: Old Testament Historiography in its Near Eastern Context*, (Eds.) A.R. Millard, J.K. Hoffmeir, and D.W. Baker (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 222.

¹⁵⁴ Younger, “Judges 1,” 223.

¹⁵⁵ Klein, *The Triumph of Irony in the Book of Judges*, 13.

¹⁵⁶ Exum, “The Centre Cannot Hold,” 413. Cf. Younger, “Judges 1,” 224.

¹⁵⁷ E. O’Doherty, “The Literary Problem of Judges 1,1-3,6,” *CBQ* 18 (1956), 6.

¹⁵⁸ Those who see the last section as an appendix rather than as a conclusion include: (Anderson, 63), (Boling, *AB*, 29-31), (Brettler, 408), (Burney, xxxvii), (Dalglish, 387-388), (Fausset, 10-11), (Flanders,

The narratives are claimed to be two unconnected traditions.¹⁵⁹ Further, there are the late date Deuteronomic and Deuteronomistic additions for these two supplements, which give the idea of being a last addition to the existing framework of the text presented.¹⁶⁰

The section has also been given the name “Epilogue.” This carries more of a notion of editorial conclusion rather than the narratives being appended to the text.¹⁶¹ As an epilogue, it draws a conclusion of “the early history of the people of God ‘at risk in the Promised Land’ [tragically taken] to a further descent into evil.”¹⁶² This downward spiral witnessed in the final narratives as a structural capstone points out “the ultimate consequences of Israel’s intermarriage with the nations that were not driven out of the land.”¹⁶³ The cultural condition is one context to view this segment.¹⁶⁴

Taken in a similar vein, the unraveling of the religious moral fiber of the premonarchic nation due to the idolatry, sexual perversion, and breakdown in the social code of hospitality must be arrested before a complete anarchic disintegration.¹⁶⁵ The literary conclusion of this could be effected by certain resolutions. Klein suggests there are “three resolutions” (17, 18-19, and 20-21) that close out the book.¹⁶⁶ Block identifies as “the climax” (*sic*) the depths to which Israel descends in the book’s conclusion.¹⁶⁷ Adopting a cause and effect motif, Enns shows that the final section is more than an appendage; but a reflection that follows the cyclical pattern on the consequences of the period of the judges.¹⁶⁸ Moore simply classifies the last section as “two additional stories

Crapps, and Smith, 211), (Jordan, xviii), (Keil & Delitzsch, 308-309), (Kent, 131), (Ridall, 109), (West, 220), (Wolf, 382-384), and (Young, 261).

¹⁵⁹ Cundall, 25.

¹⁶⁰ Boling, *AB*, 29-31. Boling refers to the first edition (2:6-6:6, 6:11-10:5, and 10:17-15:20) as the eight century pragmatic collection. The second edition (2-18) is the seventh century Deuteronomic framework. The third edition (1-21) is the sixth century Deuteronomistic framework.

¹⁶¹ This in no way denies that the third section was not part of the author’s original intent. Cf. G.A. Yee, “Introduction: Why Judges,” *Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, (Ed.) G.A. Yee (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995), 3-5.

¹⁶² Hamlin, 143.

¹⁶³ Sweeney, 526.

¹⁶⁴ S.J. Schultz, *The Old Testament Speaks: A complete survey of Old Testament history and literature*, 3rd ed. (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1980), 105. Views the three sections from a cultural approach: Prevailing conditions (1:1-3:6), Oppressing nations and deliverers (3:7-16:31), and Cultural conditions in the days of the judges (17-21 and including Ruth).

¹⁶⁵ A.E. Cundall, “Judges—An Apology for the Monarchy?” (Ed.) C.L. Milton, (*ExpT* 81: Edinburgh, Scotland: T&T Clark, 1970), 180.

¹⁶⁶ Klein, *The Triumph of Irony*, 141-185.

¹⁶⁷ Block, *NAC*, 473.

¹⁶⁸ Enns, 11-17. His structure is derived from the period of judges looking at it from the perspective of the causes (Jg. 1:1-3:6), the conditions (Jg. 3:7-16:31), and the consequences (Jg. 17:1-

of the times of the judges.”¹⁶⁹ Although, there are no judges mentioned in the last segment, Lewis highlights “the tribal problems of the judges” as his conclusion.¹⁷⁰

This final section has proponents that claim its inclusion by the author is due to the nature of there being a double conclusion.¹⁷¹ Webb emphasizes the rhetorical literary sense of the conclusion as a polemic showing prominence to Judah, as is present in the introduction.¹⁷² Soggin follows the same train of thought, but instead reflects a conquest theme that is paralleled in the introduction by the conclusion conquests by Dan (17-18) and conquest against Benjamin (19-21).¹⁷³ Another support for this double conclusion is the “balanced, symmetrical shape.”¹⁷⁴ Exum notes the absence of “cyclical time” which has been exhausted by the arrival of the conclusions.¹⁷⁵ Younger reveals an internal enemy within Israel in both conclusion narratives, whereas the enemy was external in both introductory narratives.¹⁷⁶

Not everyone has adopted a clearly defined tripartite macro-structure. Jackman suggests there are almost as many structural sections as there are chapters. At times he groups judges together and in the case of Gideon and Samson these narratives are given

21:25). However, within his third section, he chooses to make a further tripartite scheme of idolatry (Jg. 17-18), immorality (Jg. 19), and anarchy (Jg. 20-21).

¹⁶⁹ Moore, xiii-xiv.

¹⁷⁰ Lewis, 18-20.

¹⁷¹ Exum, *CBQ* 52, 413. She disagrees strongly with the idea of the usage of the term appendix as being misleading due to what she calls a balanced double introduction and conclusion. Others that hold the similar view include: (Soggin, *When the Judges Ruled*, 64), (Webb, *The Book of Judges*, 197-198), and (Younger, “Judges 1,” 224).

¹⁷² The references to Judah in the introduction include: (Jg. 1:1-4, 8-10, and 16-19). Those in the conclusion include: (Jg. 17:7, 8, 9; 18:12, 20; 19:1, 2, and 18). Cf. Webb, *The Book of Judges*, 197-203.

¹⁷³ Soggin, *When the Judges Ruled*, 64-73.

¹⁷⁴ Webb, *The Book of Judges*, 197. He makes use of musical analogies and refers to an Overture, in two parts (Jg. 1:1-2:6 and 2:7-3:6) and a Coda, in two parts (Jg. 17-18 and 19-21). His support of the idea of a coda can be noted by the repetition of phrases (Jg. 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; and 21:25); he calls the refrain.

¹⁷⁵ Exum, “The Centre Cannot Hold,” 425.

¹⁷⁶ Younger, “Judges 1,” 225.

four and three of the nineteen sections, respectively.¹⁷⁷ Another such macro-structure derivation is found in the five sets of pairs.¹⁷⁸

UNITY

As the unity is examined, Cundall puts forth the idea that rather than the term “author,” the term “editor” would be better served and shows the three segments to be one unit.¹⁷⁹ The fact of later redaction does not negate a unified *corpus* of source material. Archer is a strong proponent of an unmistakable unity of arrangement and structure that exhibits “a single dominant idea: Israel’s welfare depends upon her spiritual relationship to Jehovah.”¹⁸⁰

Keil and Delitzsch assert a unity of authorship based on the richness of the allusions to the *Torah* and the legal worship. They further outline that there are no differences in language or style “that would overthrow the unity of authorship or render it questionable.”¹⁸¹ Young supports that the combination of both the oral and written source materials used by the author allowed the development of a structure of remarkable unity.¹⁸²

Whether there was Deuteronomistic recension or post exilic Deuteronomistic redaction is not the question to examine.¹⁸³ Greenspahn questions all but three chapters of

¹⁷⁷ Jackman, 31-32. His outline structure is: Incomplete Conquest (Jg. 1:1-2:5), Uncovering the meaning of the Book (Jg. 2:6-3:6), Patterns of Unpredictability (Jg. 3:7-31), A Famous Victory (Jg. 4-5), Gideon: In God’s Base Camp (Jg. 6:1-32), Gideon: Proving God (Jg. 6:33-7:8), Gideon: Divine Strategy (Jg. 7:9-25), Gideon: The Tests of Success (Jg. 8), The Power that Corrupts (Jg. 9), Sin’s Dead End (Jg. 10), Learning from God’s Providence (Jg. 11:1-28), The Enemy Within (Jg. 11:29-12:15), Samson: God Intervenes (Jg. 13), Samson: God Overrules (Jg. 14), Samson: God Empowers (Jg. 15), Samson: God Judges (Jg. 16), Beware of False Gods (Jg. 17-18), The Infection of Godlessness (Jg. 19:1-20:11), and The Purging of Evil (Jg. 20:12-21:25).

¹⁷⁸ Jordan, xvii-xix. His structure includes: Two Introductions (Jg. 1:1-3:6), Two Exemplary Judges (Jg. 3:7-3:20), Two Unlikely Judges (Jg. 4-9), Two Compromised Judges (Jg. 10-16), and Two Appendices (Jg. 17-31). One problem that immediately surfaces is the disappearance of Shamgar (Jg. 3:31).

¹⁷⁹ Cundall, *TOTC*, 28.

¹⁸⁰ Archer, *SOTI*, 303. He cites that there are characteristic formulas that consistently introduce and close each narrative section. The introductory formula is “And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord” (Cf. Jg. 3:7, 12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; and 13:1). The concluding formula is “and the land had rest X years” (Cf. Jg. 3:11, 30; 5:31; and 8:28).

¹⁸¹ Keil and Delitzsch, 181.

¹⁸² He upholds the structure the author used precludes the objection of its divisive critics. See Young, 179.

¹⁸³ Both of these issues are addressed later.

Judges as being Deuteronomic.¹⁸⁴ The issue at question is whether the author, with this tripartite structure of material, edited the sources or whether it is a compilation of many different authors and stories. Recent scholarship has “demonstrated that far from [Judges] being a collection of traditions of varying dates and provenance, the book is a far more integrated narrative than previously realized.”¹⁸⁵

The entire book is presented in a “tragicomic framework” with the holy war material of chapters one and nineteen through twenty one.¹⁸⁶ Yet, another view of this editorial unity is seen from the perspective of a pan-Israelite ideal. The tribal structure is the unifying literary device that presents the hero narrative as an “action [that] is portrayed as neither local nor limited.”¹⁸⁷ Malamat presents a geographical unity, showing that each narrative is tribal in nature. It begins with the southern tribes and successively moves northward to reflect the entire territory.¹⁸⁸ Lilley carries the idea of a unified work further as his appraisal centers around the steady deterioration of Israel and the tribal disintegration that anticipates and necessitates the establishment of the monarchy.¹⁸⁹ Gooding approaches the unity from a point of a chiasmic literary structure. Accordingly, the Gideon narrative becomes the focal point of the author’s bracketing comparisons.¹⁹⁰ In addition, there is another literary approach the author

¹⁸⁴ F.E. Greenspahn, “The Theology of the Framework of Judges,” *VT* 36 (1986), 385-396. He further contends that the framework is not internally consistent. He strongly disagrees with a Deuteronomic *genre* for the book; but holds that from a theological perspective of oppression and salvation from a patient God, the core material is unified. Nonetheless, he sees the prologue and appendices as later additions.

¹⁸⁵ Guest, “Dangerous Liaisons in the Book of Judges,” 241. See also, K.R.R. Gros Louis, “The Book of Judges,” in K.R.R. Gros Louis, J. Ackerman & T. Warshaw, *Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narratives* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1974), 141-162; J.P.U. Lilley, “A Literary Appreciation of the Book of Judges,” *TynBul* 18 (1976), 94-102; Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist*; D.W. Gooding, “The Composition of the Book of Judges,” *Eretz-Israel: Archaeological Historical and Geographical Studies* 16, Harry M. Orlinsky, (Ed.) (Jerusalem, Israel: Israel Exploration Society, 1982), 70-79; also Webb, *The Book of Judges*; and Klein, *The Triumph of Irony in the Book of Judges*.

¹⁸⁶ Boling, *The Book of Judges*, 37. He holds that this warfare framework unifies the individual warfare pericopes in the central narratives.

¹⁸⁷ W.J. Dumbrell, “‘In Those Days There was No King in Israel; Every Man Did What Was Right in His Own Eyes.’ The Purpose of the Book of Judges Reconsidered,” *JSOT* 25 (1983), 24-25.

¹⁸⁸ A. Malamat, “Charismatic Leadership in the Book of Judges,” in *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God: Essays on the Bible and Archeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright*, (Ed.) F.M. Cross, et.al. (New York: Doubleday, 1976), 153-168.

¹⁸⁹ Lilley, “A Literary Appreciation of the Book of Judges,” 98-101. His approach is one that begins from the point of authorship rather than redaction, which he states, proves unities that are dismissed by older historical-critical methods.

¹⁹⁰ Gooding, 70-79. He develops his chiasmus throughout the book, with the Gideon narrative (Jg. 6:1-8:32) being the center of the structure. He links the two-part introduction (Jg. 1-2) with the two-part conclusion (Jg. 17-18 and 19-21). He connects the amputation of the king’s big toes and thumbs (Jg. 1:6-7) with the dismemberment of the concubine’s body (Jg. 19:29).

utilizes in order to affirm the unity of the text was the permeating convention of irony.¹⁹¹

STYLE

The author has employed the use of characteristic formula statements. As a result, a cyclical framework with its constituent elements may be observed throughout the text. While not all elements of the framework are found each time, enough are present to characterize the style as formal and repetitive. The textual structure of which the hero stories are modeled are found in Table 1.

TABLE 1
FORMULAIC STATEMENTS IN JUDGES

Formula Statement	References
And the children of Israel did evil	3:7; 3:12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1
And He sold them into the hand of X ¹⁹²	3:8; 4:2; 6:1; 10:7; 13:1
And the children of Israel served X Y years	3:8; 3:14
And when the children of Israel cried unto YHWH	3:9; 3:15; 4:3; 6:7; 10:10
YHWH raised up a deliverer	3:9; 3:15
And the Spirit of YHWH came upon him	3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 14:6; 14:19; 15:14
And the land had rest Y years	3:11; 3:30; 5:31; 8:28
And he judged Israel Y years	10:2; 10:3; 12:9; 12:11; 12:14; 15:20; 16:31

In addition to the primary framework, there are also two other important formulaic phrases. The first one is the interrogative “Who shall go up first?” This question which always suggests Judah is found in the introduction and the epilogue.¹⁹³ The other more familiar phrase is “in those days there was no king in Israel.” This formula is only present in the epilogue narratives.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ Klein, *The Triumph of Irony in the Book of Judges*, 37-199. She notes the irony manifests in the judges chosen: a left handed secret agent (Ehud), a woman who commands a male warrior (Deborah), a coward (Gideon), a bastard (Jephthah), and a lover of foreign women who forsakes his Nazirite vow (Samson).

¹⁹² The variable X refers to the oppressive nation and the subsequent variable Y refers to the number of years.

¹⁹³ Jg. 1:1; and 20:18. An exception to this was when the priests and Levites were in the forefront in the battle of (*Y^orihō*) יריחו Jericho and in the battle led by (*hammelek Yehōšāpāt*) המלך יהושפט King Jehoshaphat. Cf. Josh. 6; and 2 Chr. 20.

¹⁹⁴ Jg. 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; and 21:25.

VOCABULARY

The vocabulary of Judges characteristically refers to the Israelite deity as YHWH. However, there are references made to Him as Elohim.¹⁹⁵ Occasionally, the name is compounded in a construct relationship as YHWH (*Elohim*) God.¹⁹⁶ In two instances, He is called (*Adonai YHWH*) Lord GOD.¹⁹⁷ The appellation of YHWH the Judge underlies the activity of YHWH throughout the book.¹⁹⁸

INTERRUPTIONS

As previously discussed, the Judges material has a tripartite structure. Within the main body of the hero stories, there are several interruptions between the Gideon and Samson narratives. The inclusion of the Abimelech narrative after the Gideon story follows chronologically; however, Abimelech is the antithesis of the judge and serves as an anti-hero narrative; thus interrupting the normal pattern.

The most obvious interruption is in regard to the minor judges. Tola and (*Yā'ir*) Jair are mentioned in the opening verses of chapter ten.¹⁹⁹ Then, the narrative moves to the Jephthah deliverance.²⁰⁰ At the end of chapter twelve, the remaining minor judges, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon are mentioned.²⁰¹ The question is whether to see the two lists of minor judges interrupting the deliverer/hero narratives. The lengthy Jephthah narrative may also conversely be seen to interrupt the lists of these minor judges.

CONTRADICTIONS/INCONSISTENCIES

A careful analysis of Judges, within itself, and between the Book of Joshua reveals several contradictions and inconsistencies in the narrative. These areas of difference are found in the Conquest, Angel of YHWH, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, and Benjamin narratives.

¹⁹⁵ Jg. 1:7; 4:23; 6:20, 36, 39, 40; 7:14; 8:3; 9:7, 9, 13, 23, 29, 56, 57; 10:10; 13:5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 22; 15:19; 16:17, 28; 18:5, 31; 20:2, 18, 27, 31; and 21:2.

¹⁹⁶ At some points it is the LORD our God, the LORD your God, the LORD their God, or the LORD God. Jg. 2:12; 3:7; 4:6; 5:3, 5; 6:8, 10, 26; 8:34; 11:21, 23, 24; and 21:3.

¹⁹⁷ Jg. 6:22; and 16:28.

¹⁹⁸ Jg. 11:27.

¹⁹⁹ יַאִיר. Jg. 10:1-5.

²⁰⁰ Jg. 11:1 – 12:7.

²⁰¹ Jg. 12:8-15.



CONQUEST NARRATIVE. The context of chapter one is after the death of Joshua; however, chapter two recounts the death of Joshua and thus it is chronologically out of sequence.²⁰²

The most satisfying solution to this apparent conflation or overlapping of sources is to understand Judges 1:1 – 2:9 as a literary bridge connecting the end of the account of Joshua with the introduction to the narratives of the judges. Joshua 24:19 states that “Joshua son of [Nūn] Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of a hundred and ten.” In exactly the same words the author of Judges 2:8 records Joshua’s death. To avoid beginning the book with Israel’s apostasy and to show that this apostasy did not immediately follow Joshua’s death, the historian starts out by recounting a campaign by Judah and Simeon against the Canaanites who still remained here and there in the southern hill country.²⁰³

The story of the capture, torture, and death of Adoni-Bezek of Bezek is inconsistent with the account in Joshua, where his name is (^a*dōnī Sēdeq*) Adoni-Zedek.²⁰⁴ There is difference of opinion on this matter. Moore assumes the Judges passage is a corruption of the Joshua account.²⁰⁵ Even though Jerusalem figures in both narratives it should be noted that Adoni-Zedek was king of Jerusalem and Joshua killed him by hanging him from a tree in (*Maqqēdāh*) Makkedah.²⁰⁶ Then Adoni-Bezek was brought to Jerusalem as a captive to die there, at some point after the death of Joshua. The theophoric name of Adoni-Bezek is problematic as there is no known deity by the name of (*Bezeq*) Bezek.²⁰⁷ However, if this is a political title, its support is based on the location of Bezeq, site of (*Kirbet Bezqah*) Khirbet Bezqa near Gezer, despite the fact that Bezeq was not known for being a prominent city.²⁰⁸

There is another inconsistency in regard to Jerusalem. The conquest campaign of Judah describes the capture and destruction of the city by fire.²⁰⁹ However, the Joshua account only speaks of the death of the king of Jerusalem and not the destruction of the city.²¹⁰ This is further complicated by the narratives of Judges and 2 Samuel which show

²⁰² Jg. 1:1; and 2:6-9.

²⁰³ מִן הַיַּרְדֵּי. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 142.

²⁰⁴ אֲדֹנִי-זֶדֶק. Josh. 10:1-27; and Jg. 1:5-7.

²⁰⁵ Moore, 16.

²⁰⁶ מִקְדָּה. Josh. 10:26-28.

²⁰⁷ בִּזְק. B. Lindars, *Judges 1-5: A New Translation and Commentary*, (Ed.) A.D.H. Mayes (Edinburgh, Scotland: T&T Clark, 1995), 15.

²⁰⁸ خربة بركة. Boling, *AB*, 55.

²⁰⁹ Jg. 1:8

²¹⁰ Josh. 10:22-27.

the Jebusites having control of Jerusalem.²¹¹ The proposed reconciliation of the sources would suggest that the Joshua account reflects the death of the king of Jerusalem which was subsequently followed by the Judges account.

At that time Jerusalem was captured by Judahites and burned, but its population was not destroyed. In fact, shortly thereafter the Jebusites regained control, and neither Judah (Josh. 15:63) nor Benjamin (Jg. 1:21) could dislodge them again.²¹²

ANGEL OF YHWH NARRATIVE. The narrative presents a pattern of YHWH judging Israel by the raising up of an oppressive enemy. In the repentance of Israel, YHWH speaks through the judge, who is His representative. The account of the weeping at Bochim presents a theophany whereby the language of the angel of YHWH is attributed to YHWH.²¹³ The entrance of this angel contradicts the normal paradigm of using an oppressive nation to bring Israel to repentance. Another contradiction exists between the accusation of disobedience in verse two and the commendation for obedience in verse seven. Lindars suggests that this can be resolved by seeing these events as simultaneous, albeit in reverse chronological order “each in its own way preparing the ground for the situation which begins the story [of the premonarchic era] in verse 11.”²¹⁴

DEBORAH NARRATIVE. The parallel prose and poetic accounts of the deliverance through Deborah and Barak are not without their difficulties. The first of these inconsistencies is in regard to Deborah. She is clearly at the forefront of both accounts with a prominent position; however, once the battle begins she disappears from the text, whereas Barak does not.

The second problem is the question of tribal involvement in the militia action. The prose account only mentions the tribes of (*Naptālî*) Naphtali and (*Z²bûlun*) Zebulun.²¹⁵ The Song of Deborah includes six tribes in the battle.²¹⁶ In an effort to harmonize this contradiction, Malamat suggests that the narrative account highlights Naphtali and Zebulun as the tribes that risked the most in the field. He proposes that the

²¹¹ Jg. 1:21; and 2 Sam. 5:6-8.

²¹² Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 144.

²¹³ Jg. 2:1-5. For a further discussion, see the section “Angel of YHWH” within the treatment of “Miraculous/Supernatural,” pages 272-273.

²¹⁴ Lindars, *Judges 1-5*, 95.

²¹⁵ נַפְתָּלִי, and זְבוּלֹן. Jg. 4:6, and 10.

²¹⁶ Jg. 5:14-18. This would require raising (*Mākîr*) מַכִּיר Machir up to a tribal level in order to give them equal status with Ephraim, Benjamin, Issachar, Zebulun, and Naphtali. Cf. B. Halpern, *The First Historians: The Hebrew Bible and History* (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1988), 78.

two accounts refer to different stages in the battle, with the narrative being battle oriented and the Song of Deborah being pursuit oriented.²¹⁷

The third problem is the inconsistency regarding the curse of Meroz.²¹⁸ This location and its inhabitants were cursed because they did not come to the help of YHWH in the battle. However, if one only takes notice of the text of the Song of Deborah, then there was also the non-involvement of (*R^a'ûbēn*) Reuben, Gilead, and Dan; not to mention the unnamed tribes of Judah, (*Šim'ôn*) Simeon, and Levi.²¹⁹ Yet, only Meroz was cursed for its "breach of loyalty."²²⁰

The fourth problem is geographical in nature. The narrative places the battle between Mount Tabor and the Kishon River, of which the mountain is approximately sixteen km east of closest point to the river.²²¹ However, the Song contradicts the prose account by placing the battle at Taanach near the waters of Megiddo.²²² These locations are reflected in Map 1.²²³ Although not shown on the map, Taanach is located eight km SSE of Megiddo and clearly away from the Kishon River proper; however, within the vicinity of one of its tributaries.²²⁴ The other problem is the battle of Jabin against Israel at the (*mê Mêrôm*) "waters of Merom," during the time of Joshua.²²⁵ This is problematic in that there were no survivors left from that battle, which would include Jabin, unless there were two men named Jabin, king of (*Hāšôr*) Hazor.²²⁶ However, this line of reasoning is discounted by most scholars, as they view the Joshua and Judges accounts to be the kings of Hazor, which would invalidate the other argument.²²⁷ Various proposals for the location of the "waters of Merom" have been suggested; yet its location

²¹⁷ A. Malamat, "Israel in the Period of the Judges," *World History of the Jewish People, Vol. 3: Judges – 1st Series, Ancient Times*, (Ed.), B. Mazar (London: W.H. Allen, 1971), 137-140.

²¹⁸ Jg. 5:23.

²¹⁹ שְׁמֵעוֹן, and רְאוּבֵן.

²²⁰ Rowley, *From Joseph to Joshua*, 102.

²²¹ Jg. 4:12-15.

²²² Jg. 5:19.

²²³ Aharoni and Avi-Yonah, 60.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 59.

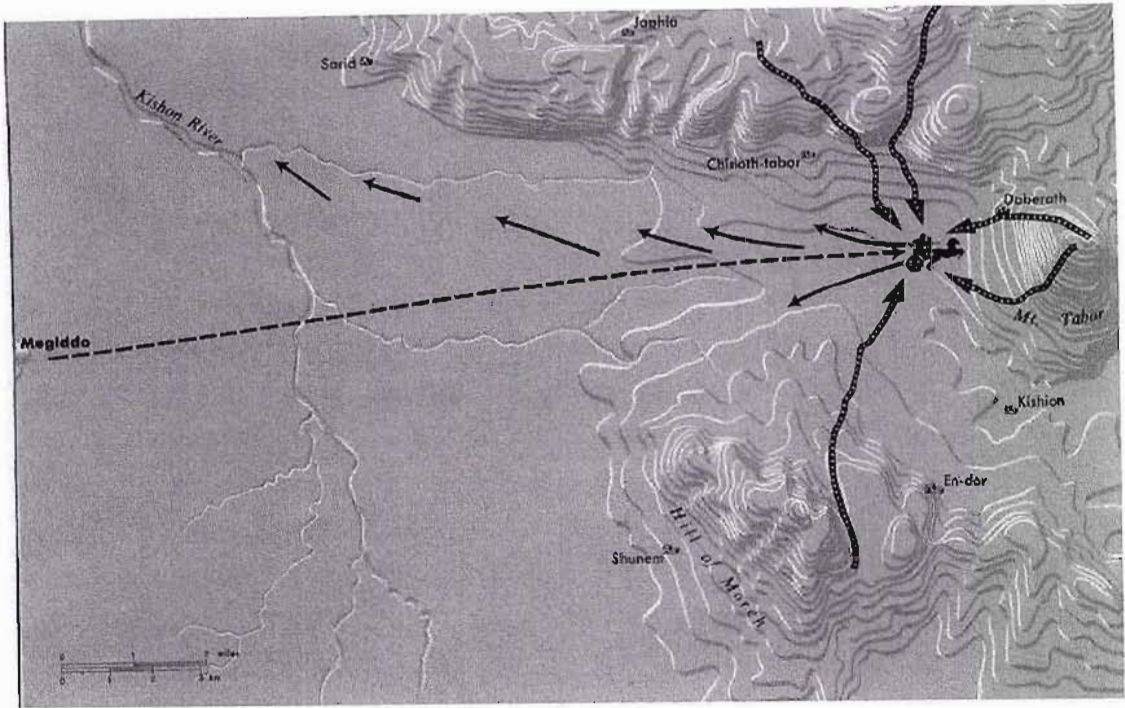
²²⁵ מֵי מְרוֹם. Josh. 11:5-8.

²²⁶ הַצֹּר.

²²⁷ Y. Yadin, *Hazor: The head of all those Kingdoms: With a Chapter on Israelite Megiddo* (London: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1972), 5-6.

MAP 1

BATTLE AGAINST SISERA



in the Galilee region is dubious.²²⁸ The accounts may be harmonized by understanding them as two separate events having a similar dynastic title for Jabin.

The other item to be harmonized is the reference in verse 5:19 that states the kings of Canaan fought at Taanach by the waters of Megiddo. Recognizing that our choices in sentence division in the poem are fallible, Rainey shows the contextual referent changes when the verse is structured as two bicola:²²⁹

The kings came, they fought,
 then fought the kings of Canaan.
 At Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo,
 they got no spoils of silver.

The final area of difference between chapters four and five are the facts related to Sisera's demise. The prose account shows Sisera entering Jael's tent, requesting water for his thirst, receiving milk in return, and falling asleep exhausted. While he is asleep Jael assassinates him. The poetic account which is briefer explains that Sisera requested water and received milk in return. Then it describes Jael piercing the head of Sisera with a tent peg. At no point in the Song of Deborah does it show him entering the tent nor

²²⁸ L.W. Batten, "The Conquest of Northern Canaan: Joshua xi 1-9; Judges iv-v," *JBL* 24 (1905), 38.

²²⁹ A.F. Rainey, "The Military Camp Ground at Taanach by the Waters of Megiddo," *Eretz-Israel* 15 (1981), 63.

does it show him asleep at the time of his murder. The discrepancy is in the mechanics of the murder and whether he was lying down or he fell down.²³⁰ This can be harmonized by having Sisera asleep from exhaustion and explaining his falling down as figurative language for his death. Prose and poetry function in different ways. Understanding it helps to explain the inconsistencies and omissions in the Song of Deborah.

Sisera's position is not really important to the poet. The point is not the *modus operandi* but the implication. Hence, the means of death is not as important as the meaning of the death. Jael's praise takes precedence over the description of the event.²³¹

GIDEON NARRATIVE. The Gideon narrative presents two inconsistencies. The formulaic statement, as earlier addressed shows the pattern of the cycle in such a way that when Israel cried unto YHWH, He raised up a deliverer. The raising up of Gideon as a deliverer fits into this formula; however, it contains an element missing from the perceived pattern. Between the crying out of Israel for a deliverer from the Midianite oppression and the raising up of the deliverer Gideon, YHWH sent a prophet.²³² The narrative is silent as to any discourse or response by Israel to this unnamed prophet. The other inconsistency is in regard to the request of the men of Israel that Gideon and his descendants would rule over them.²³³ Gideon clearly refuses this request on behalf of himself and his sons demanding that YHWH would rule over them. The inconsistency is the action of his son Abimelech reigning. However, when fully analyzed, the inconsistency vanishes because Abimelech was not reigning over Israel but the Canaanite city of Shechem.²³⁴

JEPHTHAH NARRATIVE. Within the Jephthah deliverance story, he enters into a political and diplomatic discourse with the unnamed king of Ammon. In this speech, he contradicts the known realities of national deities by asserting that *Chemosh* was the god of Ammon; whereas, the chief Ammonite deity was *Milcom*.²³⁵

SAMSON NARRATIVE. Inconsistencies abound in the Samson narrative with itself and the whole counsel of scripture. The angelic epiphany to the wife of Manoah is anomalous

²³⁰ Halpern, *The First Historians*, 81-87.

²³¹ K.L. Younger, Jr., "Heads! Tails! Or the Whole Coin?! Contextual Method & Intertextual Analysis: Judges 4 and 5," *The Biblical Canon in Comparative Perspective: Scripture in Context IV*, (Eds.), K.L. Younger, Jr., W.W. Hallo, and B.F. Batto (*ANETS 11*: Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1991), 132.

²³² Jg. 6:7-8.

²³³ Jg. 8:22-23.

²³⁴ Jg. 9:1-3.

²³⁵ Jg. 11:24. R.G. Boling, *The Early Biblical Community in Transjordan*, Social World of Biblical Antiquity Series (Sheffield, England: Almond Press, 1988), 52.

to other narratives about barren women.²³⁶ The narrator gives no indication that neither Manoah nor his wife had petitioned YHWH regarding a child, although that would be the expected desire of the couple. Another problem area in the birth announcement regards the pronouncement that Samson would be a Nazirite. The *Torah* describes certain prohibitions for the *Nazir*; however the angelic commands were given to the mother regarding the son; however, there is no mention that she would have to submit to those same commands while Samson was *in utero*. Any infraction by his mother while he was in the womb would directly affect him. However, she was not commanded to refrain from having her hair cut. The angelic commands differ from the *Torah*, in that the dietary law is not connected to it. Another confusing matter is why the angel reappears to the woman when the husband requested his return.²³⁷ When she summons her husband and he questions the angel about the son to be born, the angel does not answer his question but talks about his pregnant wife.²³⁸

BENJAMIN NARRATIVE. The last area of contradiction is in the mortality records and military census of the tribe of Benjamin. At the onset of the battle, Benjamin numbered 26,000 men plus 700 men from Gibeah, totaling 26,700.²³⁹ At the conclusion of the battle, 18,000 were killed after the ambush, 5000 were killed near the wilderness of the rock of (*hāRimmōn*) Rimmon, and 2000 were killed at (*Gid'ōm*) Gidom, totaling 25,000 deaths.²⁴⁰ However, an earlier verse ascribed the Benjaminite death toll at 25,100.²⁴¹ Only 600 men were survivors.²⁴² Thus, there are two different numerical discrepancies. The first is the obvious death toll reported at 25,000 and 25,100 men, of which one must be incorrect. Secondly, if the mortality figure of 25,000 is considered there is a discrepancy of 1,100 men unaccounted from the census of 26,700 men. However, if the figure of 25,100 is considered, the discrepancy is reduced to 1000 men. It is difficult to bring harmony to these different casualty accounts.

²³⁶ Jg. 13:3. Other barren couples who had children included Abraham and (*Šārāh*) שָׂרָה Sarah; Isaac and (*Ribqāh*) רִבְקָה Rebekah; Jacob and (*Rāḥēl*) רָחֵל Rachel; (*'elqānāh*) אֵלְקָנָה Elkanah and Hannah. Of course Jacob and Elkanah had children through their other wives, but the biblical texts focus on the barrenness and pregnancies of Rachel and Hannah.

²³⁷ Jg. 13:9.

²³⁸ Jg. 13:12-14.

²³⁹ Jg. 20:15.

²⁴⁰ וַיָּהָרְגוּ וַיִּקְרְעוּ Jg. 20:45-46.

²⁴¹ Jg. 20:35.

²⁴² Jg. 20:47.

REPETITIONS/DUPLICATIONS

There is another stylistic issue of which there is general consensus that the parallel prose and poetic accounts of the stories of Deborah, Barak, and Jael come from different sources. There is difference of opinion as to which source is the oldest and whether there was any conflation of the narratives.

The battle narrative in chapter twenty, specifically the third campaign of Israel against Benjamin is a source of repetition. Older scholarship views this material as two different source narratives that are combined together describing the same event.²⁴³ Using rhetorical critical methods, the narrative contains an authorial use of resumptive repetition, whereby the focus should be seen as the activity of three separate groups: the two main armies of Israel and Benjamin and the Israelite ambush.²⁴⁴

PURPOSE

As with the question of authorship, the internal evidence does not tacitly identify the author's purpose. If the phraseology of the appendix regarding no king in Israel is taken as a predominant focal point, then the author may be providing a theological interpretation for the history of Israel during the amphictyony.²⁴⁵ The issues surrounding the various genres which the author employs is discussed later. Nonetheless, the book serves as an historical record of the spiritual and moral character of Israel.²⁴⁶ Even though a complete historical accounting is not present, certain elements from the text provide internal evidence. Israel failed to experience the blessings of God. Their blessings were forfeited due to covenantal disobedience.²⁴⁷ The danger of assimilation into foreign

²⁴³ Soggin suggests a source division of A = vv. 29, 36b-37a, 38-42a, 45-46 and B = vv. 30-36a, 37b, 42b, and 47. See his *Judges: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1981), 294. Moore suggests a similar source division, identifying source A as a later amplification of B. His division is A = vv. 29, 36b-37a, 38-42a, 47 and B = 30-36a, 37b, 42b-46. See his *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Judges*, 435.

²⁴⁴ E.J. Revell, "The Battle with Benjamin (Judges XX 29-48) and Hebrew Narrative Techniques," *VT* 35 (1985), 430-433.

²⁴⁵ Flanders, Crapps, and Smith, 211. Another similar view supports the foundation of the monarchy with the concept of a united Israelite confederacy (Dumbrell, 25-26).

²⁴⁶ This does not mean this is a comprehensive or chronological history; but, rather a series of "savior" narratives that serve a Deuteronomistic purpose of admonition regarding "the cult of foreign gods." N.P. Lemche, "The Judges—Once More," *BN* 20 (1983), 50.

²⁴⁷ The nations were left to test Israel regarding their obedience to the commandments (3:4). The disobedience is reflected through apostasy and the raising up of oppressive forces. Cf. P.P. Enns, *Bible Study Commentary: Judges* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), 10. I disagree with Enns' position that this was the primary purpose of the author.

cultures and idolatry contribute to the purpose.²⁴⁸ For those in support of a non-Samuel authorship during the later Davidic reign or early Solomonic reign, the author's purpose is more than an illustration of the evil effect of apostasy; but an apologetic for the monarchy. The monarchy needed support due to public opposition instigated by the initial opposition by Samuel and then propagated by his disciples.²⁴⁹

Although there is much evidence to question a late date authorship, the theory put forth by those who espouse this is as a treatise stressing "the faithfulness and purity of Judah in contrast to the degeneracy of the northern kingdom."²⁵⁰ Another late date redaction supports this as an active involvement by the Lord in all of the tribal activities but with Judean supremacy against Samaritan idolatrous kingship and worship practices.²⁵¹

The aim of the book has each of these elements. Nonetheless, the focus is not on the human element but "the divine principle of dealing with Israel."²⁵² It is YHWH who raises up both oppressor and deliverer. It is YHWH who notices the sin and hears the cry of repentance. Through extraordinary events divine agency is witnessed through the human mediators.²⁵³ Without question, there is a cause and effect relationship between the spiritual condition of Israel and its political and material situation.²⁵⁴ There remains an unseen cosmic dimension within each apostate and redemptive element in the cycle.

Behind the local battles lies a remorseless enemy who is implacably opposed to the purposes of God. The devil would stop at nothing to destroy the seed of Abraham because he knew that from that seed would come the Deliverer, who would create the new Israel and write his own eternal doom. So there is unrelenting hostility, but often disguised with incredible subtlety.²⁵⁵

²⁴⁸ Guest, "Dangerous Liaisons in the Book of Judges," 266. Jg. 3:5-7.

²⁴⁹ Cundall, "Judges—An Apology for the Monarchy," 178.

²⁵⁰ Tollington, "The Book of Judges," 190-191.

²⁵¹ E. Robertson, "The Period of the Judges: A Mystery Period in the History of Israel," *BJRL* 30 (1946), 112. His theme places a dichotomous relationship between Samaria and Israel and focuses on how the Samaritans have their foundations in Israel.

²⁵² Jg. 2:16-19. Fausset, 3.

²⁵³ Bush, vii.

²⁵⁴ Cf. Wolf, 378-379. He sees Israel's spiritual condition as the determining factor in God's response, and thus, the primary purpose of the book is to show the consequences and blessings depending upon their spiritual condition. This element is present and has strong theological didactic material for present day application for the believer; yet, it does not speak to the issue of sovereignty. Wolf carries this thought forward that a king was necessary because of pre-monarchic Israel's inability of submission to divine government without a human king.

²⁵⁵ Jackman, 29. There is no nominal reference to Satan in Judges, although his agency may be implied through the various historical oppressive nations, kings, and peoples. This is consistent with other biblical books.

With the awareness of this cosmic battle, Judges provides didactic material to support the need for consecrated leaders.²⁵⁶ The book showcases elements of personal faithfulness to Yahweh amid the deep apostasy.²⁵⁷ It also reveals the long-suffering nature of God, who through pure grace “is of unremitting faithfulness and infinite patience who gladly answers our self-centered cries and freely forgives all who turn to him, in true repentance.”²⁵⁸

There is no need to glorify Israel’s ancestors; yet, the grace of the God of Israel is duly glorified.²⁵⁹ The designation embodied in שֹׁפֵט heralds the judges as “forerunners of the kings who were the supreme judges.”²⁶⁰ The monarchal absence typified in the writing is paralleled by the absence of a true priest.²⁶¹ Thus, the author demonstrates to the reader, the need not for a king or priest, but for a King-priest.²⁶² This serves to allow Judges to be part of the evidential record of God’s revelation to mankind and to show His judicial nature through humanity as directed toward His people.²⁶³

The unnamed recipients of this book have revealed “the sovereignty of God over all of Israel’s doing.”²⁶⁴ Despite pleas for the support of the monarchy, YHWH reveals the importance of His people and their preservation, despite their actions. His theocratic ideal does not erase the blatant individualism of the age; but preserves the ideal of a

²⁵⁶ Ridall, 107.

²⁵⁷ These evidences included: 1) the tabernacle was still maintained at Shiloh (Jg. 18:31); 2) at least one of the annual feasts was observed (Jg. 21:5); 3) the rite of circumcision was observed (Jg. 14:3 and 15:18); 4) sacrifices were offered (Jg. 11:31; 13:15-16, 23; 20:26; and 21:4); and 5) vows were made to the Lord (Jg. 11:30 and 13:5). Ibid., 108.

²⁵⁸ Jackman, 30.

²⁵⁹ Archer, *SOTI*, 303.

²⁶⁰ D.A. McKenzie, 118. Mic. 5:1 (ח 4:14). This verse in the context of historical, messianic, and eschatological meaning calls the reigning monarch from Jerusalem as the judge of Israel. The same שֹׁפֵט is used in the passage and is linked to the messianic ruler, although a different word (*mōšēl*) מוֹשֵׁל is used in the following verse. See J.A. Martin, “Micah,” *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, (Eds.) J.F. Walvoord and R.B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1985), 1486.

²⁶¹ Robertson, 97. Although I question his ultimate conclusions regarding the priesthood issue being the basis of Samaritan and Jewish hostility, there is relevance to his deductions regarding the absence of an organized priesthood. Robertson holds that this is the key to understanding the book.

²⁶² Though the text of Judges does not mention Melchizedek (*Malki-šēdeq*) מֶלְכִּי-שֶׁדֶק or his order, Welch looks backward through New Testament eyes to develop his purpose statement that Judges is a polemic for the need and the coming of a king-priest after the Melchizedek order, i.e. Jesus. Cf. C.H. Welch, “Fundamentals of Dispensational Truth- Judges: The Book as a Whole (i-xxi),” *The Berean Expositor* 27 (1937), 128-131.

²⁶³ Burney, cxviii-cxxi. Burney supports the religious significance of Judges as prominent showing divine relationship versus worship of strange gods by Israel.

²⁶⁴ Lewis, 16-17.

united Israel with divine intervention so that every man might aspire to do that which is right in God's eyes.²⁶⁵

Sources

The scrutiny of the text to determine the various literary sources on which the author based his editorial composition follows two different schools of thought. The point of division generally is based upon accepting either an early or late date authorship.

DOCUMENTARY HYPOTHESIS SOURCES

The anthropocentric philosophical approach to Hebrew bible scholarship in the nineteenth century provided the framework for Wellhausen to propagate his four-document theory.²⁶⁶ The popularity of the Documentarian type of approach contributed to the idea of a late date Deuteronomic recension as well as origination of Judges.

Two of the documents, J and E are of primary focus. Driver, who presented and interpreted Wellhausianism to the English audience, dates the J document about 850 BCE.²⁶⁷ Approximately a century later, another unknown writer, this time from the Kingdom of Israel wrote the E document around 750 BCE.²⁶⁸ Driver suggests that by 650 BCE, redaction has produced a combined J-E document.²⁶⁹ Burney supporting the *Hexateuch* tradition holds the J and E narratives in Judges are a continuation of where they left off in Joshua.²⁷⁰ Garstang accepts the J, E, and J-E sources as being primary for the author's homogeneous composition. He further insists on the need for a second

²⁶⁵ Dumbrell, 30-32. There is the thought that this fourfold refrain in the appendix is a commentary on Israel's rejection of theocracy. This thought is explored further in the research. Cf. Block, *NAC*, 59.

²⁶⁶ The scope of this research does not allow for a treatment of Wellhausian source criticism, which has been discussed at length and its hypothesis primarily bearing validity among Liberal scholarship in the United States.

²⁶⁷ S.R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, 12th ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), 111-123. He identifies the author of this J document being from the Kingdom of Judah and having a prophet-like interest in ethical and theological reflection with little interest in the sacrificial rituals.

²⁶⁸ This writer is more objective than his predecessor is. The concentration is not on the ethical or theological reflection but more on origins of names and customs of the nation. Cf. Archer, *SOTI*, 96.

²⁶⁹ S.R. Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, 111-123.

²⁷⁰ K. Budde, *Das Buch der Richter* (The Book of Judges) [Ger.], (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr, 1897), 17 and Burney, xxxvii-xli. Paton addresses the sources for the conquest narratives and accepts the J and E sources as being used by the later redactor. Most of his emphasis is placed on the prologue material with other commentary on chapters four to five and eighteen. See L.B. Paton, "Israel's Conquest of Canaan," *JBL* 32 (1913), 2-13.

Elohistic source to denote an even later tradition formed around 700 BCE having the siglum E₂.²⁷¹ He further clarifies both the D and P sources in his analysis.²⁷²

Simpson takes this a step further by identifying three primary sources and one subsidiary source. He suggests there are actually two J sources that he identifies as J₁ and J₂. The additional source relative to the appendix material is called C.²⁷³

Although much effort has been made to accept a final redacted J-E document, the differentiation between J and E as distinguishable sources originates with Budde in the late nineteenth century.²⁷⁴ His hypothesis found agreement with Cornill and Nowack.²⁷⁵ Kittel vocalized skeptical criticism of this approach.²⁷⁶

During the period of the Babylonian exile the J-E document was codified with the later P document. The redaction of these separate documents has been given the sigla PJE.²⁷⁷ Without completely breaking from a documentary approach, Weinfeld prefers a J-E and P tradition that is pre-Deuteronomic.²⁷⁸ Moore acknowledges a slight P influence but is more interested in the final redaction of the succession of authors that composed J and E. He notes the origins for J and E in:

The popular traditions from which the tales of the judges are drawn, naturally had a different origin and character from the legends of the patriarchs in Genesis or the narratives of the Mosaic age.²⁷⁹

²⁷¹ J. Garstang, *The Foundations of Bible History: Joshua-Judges* (London: Constable & Company, Ltd., 1931), 4.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 7-10. His initial analysis ascribes these sources throughout the book as well as mention of editorial glosses. However, the bulk of his commentary concentrates only on the J, E, E₂, and JE sources, leaving the D and P elements for other scholarly work. A review of his scheme of identifying sources, it is apparent he believes that the prologue was Deuteronomic with six passages bearing the D source. There were 40 passages with the P designation of which most were in the appendix in connection with either the J or E source.

²⁷³ C.A. Simpson, *Composition of The Book of Judges* (Oxford, England: Basil Blackwell, 1957), 2. His J₁ designation is an identification of the earliest document L (*Laienquelle*) based on Eissfeldt's nomenclature. Simpson appears to be the only one that uses this siglum C in his commentary. Cf. O. Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction*, (Trans.) P.R. Ackroyd (New York: Harper, 1965), 191-198.

²⁷⁴ Burney, xli.

²⁷⁵ Cf. C.H. Cornill, *Einleitung in die kanonischen Bücher des Alten Testaments* (Introduction to the Canonical Books of the Old Testament) [Ger.], (1905) (Trans.) G.H. Box (London: Williams and Norgate, 1907), 156-179 and W. Nowack, *Richter, Ruth u. Bücher Samuelis* (Judges, Ruth, and the Books of Samuel) [Ger.], (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1902).

²⁷⁶ R. Kittel, *Theol. Studien und Kritiken* (Theological Studies and Criticism) [Ger.], (1892), 44.

²⁷⁷ Boling, *AB*, 34.

²⁷⁸ Weinfeld, 95-97. He accepts the idea of a JEP *Tetrateuch* but does not extend himself in the ensuing books, as the corpus is pre-Deuteronomic with these early J, E, and P source documents.

²⁷⁹ Moore, xxvi-xxviii. He regards the song of Deborah to have arisen from another source that was used by J and E, possibly the Book of Jashar or the Book of the Wars of Yahweh.

Instead, the source material has its origination in a tradition coming from the same circles as J and E. The evidence is insufficient “to prove that there once existed independent and continuous J and E narratives, extending from the Pentateuch into Judges, and beyond.”²⁸⁰ The anti-theistic presuppositions which are the basis of the foundations of the Documentary Theory are the faults which lead to an unscientific subjectivism that is not helpful to Judges or the divine involvement of the Holy Spirit working through the author.²⁸¹

NON-DOCUMENTARY HYPOTHESIS SOURCES

Keil, who was living in the midst of the upswing of the Documentary movement, begins the current more traditional approach of those accepting genuine sources that may have been the essence used by the pre-Deuteronomic J and E schools. However, without classifying the oral or written sources, he contends the author used “trustworthy records or the testimony of people who were living when the events occurred.”²⁸²

Bush postulates the sources were from the personal records of Samuel and from the public registers.²⁸³ Driver notes the possibility of a “pre-Deuteronomic collection of histories of Judges” which the author used as his primary source material.²⁸⁴ Bal agrees with a composition “of a collection of various elements from different sources.”²⁸⁵ The records of ancient local tribal traditions are the sources the compiler used.²⁸⁶ O’Connell agrees with the idea of pre-existing tribal stories. He suggests there are three categories

²⁸⁰ G.W. Anderson, *Studies in Theology: A Critical Introduction to the Old Testament* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., Ltd., 1959, reprint 1972), 67.

²⁸¹ Archer, *SOTI*, 581. A further discussion of this may be found in E. Linnemann, *Historical Criticism of the Bible: Methodology or Ideal?* (Trans.) R.W. Yarbrough (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992), 23-36, and 83-113.

²⁸² Keil and Delitzsch, 182.

²⁸³ Bush, v.

²⁸⁴ S.R. Driver, “The Origin and Structure of the Book of Judges,” *JQR* 1 (1889), 262. Unfortunately, neither he nor anyone else is able to identify properly the strands that were used.

²⁸⁵ M. Bal, *Death & Dissymmetry: The Politics of Coherence in the Book of Judges* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 4-5. The approach of Bal is one of feminist criticism, which is addressed later. Her view accepts the heterogeneity of the book but is more concerned with counter coherence as it relates to gender. Therefore, the source origination is not as important as the examination of history as theology.

²⁸⁶ Guest, “Can Judges Survive without Sources,” 43. She distinguishes that the valid evidence for the source material is found in the raw, earthy and profane language that stands in contrast to the repetitive formulas found among Deuteronomic redaction.

from which the material derives: source material, material drawn from other biblical traditions and created material.²⁸⁷

The largest category of source material is the *Primary Hero-Stories*. Obviously, the traditions regarding the hero figures would necessitate them coming from separate entities from the various tribes and only later linked together.²⁸⁸ The *Secondary "Judge" List* involves a formulaic pattern of the minor Judges.²⁸⁹ This has also been called an *annalistic list*.²⁹⁰ The third category is the *Conquest Record*. The sources used demonstrate the appearance of some official or semi-official record.²⁹¹ Another category of sources found in the text is the *Prophetic Traditions*. There are three such divine communications.²⁹² One of the older recognized sources is the *Book of Victory Hymns*. This song may have links or even its origin within the collection known as "the Book of the Wars of YHWH" or "the Book of (*HâYāšār*) Jashar."²⁹³

There must have been other sources as well. The double conclusion negatively reflects both Dan and Benjamin in such a way, that it is doubtful that its origination came from these two tribes. There is no scholarly consensus on the origin of chapters 17-21,

²⁸⁷ O'Connell, 347. His purpose was to examine the rhetoric of the book; however, certain assertions are present, with the majority of his claim based on regional dialects present in the book.

²⁸⁸ Sellin, 208. The material includes Othniel (Jg. 3:7-11); Ehud (Jg. 3:12-30); Shamgar (Jg. 3:31); Deborah and Barak (Jg. 4:1-24); Gideon (Jg. 6-8); Abimelech (Jg. 9); Jephthah (Jg. 10:17-12:7); and Samson (Jg. 13-16).

²⁸⁹ The term "minor judge" does not in any way cast less light on the individuals; but is rather a designation based on the description of the judge in the text which is minor in size rather than "major" as in the case of other judges. This refers to Tola and Jair (Jg. 10:1-5) and Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon (Jg. 12:8-15). A.J. Hauser, "The 'Minor Judges' – A Re-evaluation," *JBL* 94 (1975), 190-200.

²⁹⁰ Based on his chronology, Noth asserts this list is only partial in its form, with the complete list having been either lost or not included by the editor. Cf. M. Noth, "Das Amt des 'Richters Israels,'" (The Office of "Judge in Israel.") *Festschrift Alfred Bertholet zum 80*, (Eds.) W. Baumgartner, et al. (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr, 1950), 414-415. Lemche uses this same nomenclature of an annalistic list. Cf. Lemche, "The Judges—Once More," 49.

²⁹¹ Block, *NAC*, 56. This involves the material in Jg. 1:1-36, which has parallel accounts in Josh. 15:13-14, 15:63; 16:10; 17:12-13; and 19:47. Auld argues that the author of Judges drew upon the historical accounts in Joshua to present the conquest narrative. Cf. A.G. Auld, "Judges I and History: A Reconsideration," *VT* 25 (1975), 261-285.

²⁹² The communication involves three distinct forms. The first involves (*mal'ak*) מַלְאָךְ an emissary of Yahweh (Jg. 2:1-5). The second form is through an anonymous (*nābi'*) נָבִיא prophet (Jg. 6:7-10). The final form is the direct address by Yahweh (Jg. 10:10-16). Though the identity of the prophet who maintained records of these communications is unknown, Samuel is plausible for consideration. Cf. Block, *NAC*, 56.

²⁹³ הַיָּשָׁר הַזֶּה. The source material is found in chapter 5. Reference to the first book is found in Num. 21:14. The other book has references in Josh. 10:13; and 2 Sam. 1:18. Dalglisch, 378.

although it is generally accepted that the addition to the text was part of the final post-Deuteronomic edition.²⁹⁴

The nationalization of the localized tribal heroic epics only could occur if the oral forms had been written and preserved. The Levites and the priesthood would form the basis of the cultic centers, such as (*Gilgāl*) Gilgal, Shechem, and (*Bêt- 'ēl*) Bethel, where such scribal activity would be present.²⁹⁵ Yet, H.S. Nyberg emphasizes the importance of the oral pre-history in these local sanctuaries:

Transmission in the East is seldom exclusively written; it is chiefly **oral** in character. The living speech plays in the East from ancient times to the present a greater role than the written presentation. Almost every written work in the Orient went through a longer or shorter oral transmission in its earliest history, and also even after it is written down the oral transmission remains the normal form in the preservation and use of the work.²⁹⁶

Thus, the pre-Deuteronomic material from which the sources derive naturally leads into an examination of the traditions and their oral form.

Form Criticism

Dibelius in his seminal work in the Gospels branched out into a *Formgeschichte* that redirected source critics to look at the form history.²⁹⁷ Gunkel pioneered the Hebrew bible research in this area. However, his nomenclature differed with it which he called *Gattungsgeschichte*, or type history.²⁹⁸ Tucker views this form-critical work as distinctively concerned with the oral stage or pre-literary development of the text. Thus, it becomes “a method of analyzing and interpreting the literature of the Hebrew bible through a study of its literary types or genres.”²⁹⁹ Evangelical theology views the two foci of “classification of forms” and “determination of origins” with contempt because of

²⁹⁴ One theory of origination is from a Samaritan source based on their Shechemite claims for a religious center of worship at (*Har-G'rizīm*) הַר-גְּרִיזִים Mt. Gerizim. Robertson, 95.

²⁹⁵ בֵּית-אֵל, and גִּלְגָּל. Eissfeldt, 48.

²⁹⁶ H.S. Nyberg, *Studien zum Hoseabuche* (Studies in the Book of Hosea), (Uppsala, Sweden: A.B. Lundequitska Bokhandeln, 1935), 7, (Trans.) B.K. Waltke, in B.K. Waltke, “Oral Tradition” in *A Tribute to Gleason Archer*, (Eds.) W.C. Kaiser, Jr. and R.F. Youngblood (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1986), 17. Emphasis added.

²⁹⁷ M. Dibelius, *Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums* (The Form History of the Gospels), (Tübingen, Germany: J.C.B. Mohr, 1919), Eng. Trans. of 2nd Ger. ed., *From Tradition to Gospel*, (Trans.) B.L. Woolf (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935).

²⁹⁸ H. Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis: The Biblical Saga and History*, (Trans.) W.H. Carruth (New York: Schocken Books, 1964).

²⁹⁹ G.M. Tucker, *Form Criticism of the Old Testament* (GBS, OTS: Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1971), 1. For other background material on this discipline, Cf. K. Koch, *The Growth of the Biblical Tradition: The Form-Critical Method*, (Trans.) S.M. Cupitt, 2nd Ger. ed. (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1969), 3-37.

a traditional form-critical skepticism of the supernatural elements and the desire to find ancient Near Eastern forms outside of Israel.³⁰⁰ The presence of pagan models in the region does not necessarily discount the *Sitz im Leben* with similarities in Israel's traditions.

The methodology of this approach will examine genres present in the Judges narratives and classify the types of literature used. Although tradition criticism is a discipline in itself, this examination follows as an outgrowth and element within the form-critical approach.³⁰¹ The forms are stratified as the life setting is taken into account. This analysis provides the tools to determine function and theological purpose within the redaction criticism that follows.

The oral tradition the author employed in writing the text of Judges was a part of the nationalization of a collection of local heroic epics.³⁰² The whole of the book has been called "epic" literature of a heroic kind due to the inclusion of military and romantic themes.³⁰³ Distinguishing between the historically reliable and unreliable elements in the sagas is where a careful form-critical and traditional analysis is necessary. This is because "sagas usually tell us more about the life and time of the period in which they were circulated and written down than they do about the events they mean to describe."³⁰⁴

On the other hand, the literary critics have assigned the book to have little or no historical value with their designation of "prose fiction."³⁰⁵ There is no need to remove Judges from the category of authentic historiography. Its own prophetic nature makes the composite of genres employed illustrative material for an extended sermon describing the premonarchic era.³⁰⁶ The author has crafted his homiletical presentation of Israel's historical experiences with many different genres.

³⁰⁰ These two main contentions are examined as possible stumbling points for evangelical theologians. He further seeks to give examples of how evangelicals might employ this form in their Hebrew bible exegesis. See Armerding, 48-49, 56-63.

³⁰¹ For a discussion on this discipline, Cf. W.E. Rast, *Tradition History and the Old Testament* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1972), 1-32.

³⁰² Dalglish, 378-379.

³⁰³ Wolf, 379. The epic nature and its comparison with other historical literary forms are examined later. The theme of the "epic blow" is illustrated with Ehud (3:21-22) and Jael (4:21). The "epic romance" is illustrated with Othniel and ('*aksāh*) עֲכָסָה Achsah (1:13-15) and obviously with Samson (13-16). For an examination on the luring theme see: P.G. Mosca, "Who Seduced Whom? A Note on Joshua 15:18//Judges 1:14," *CBQ* 46 (1984), 18-22.

³⁰⁴ Tucker, 20.

³⁰⁵ R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 23-46. It is further dated and classified with the idea of being "post-exilic fiction" (Tollington, "The Book of Judges," 186).

³⁰⁶ Block, *NAC*, 52-53.

Genre Classification

Throughout the composition, the author has employed eighteen different types of literary genres to form the Book of Judges. Each narrative passage is classified within the genres that follow.³⁰⁷ The order in which their classification is presented is based on the order of their appearance within the text. The traditional classification of the majority of the text has been as “hero saga” yet other literary types extend this genre into more specific categories.³⁰⁸ The genres listed avoid superimposing alien modern classifications on the ancient literature.³⁰⁹

CONQUEST ANNALS

The first literary style used are the conquest annals that make up the introduction found in chapter one.³¹⁰ Although there are war stories found throughout the text, they do not appear in this form.³¹¹ Similar forms have been discovered in Assyrian annalistic texts and historical military inscriptions.³¹² Although the unity of the passage has been under question, this form has also been called a collection of conquest fragments.³¹³

ETIOLOGY

The Bochim narrative is “an ancient etiological legend.”³¹⁴ It has been connected with the burial place of Deborah, Rebecca’s nurse at (*’allôn-bākūt*) Allon-bacuth, as well as to the (*Tōmer D^ohōrāh*) “palm of Deborah” based on cultic traditions.³¹⁵ Because of the

³⁰⁷ The genre titles used follows the scheme of Block (*NAC*, 50). However the additional categories of myth, vow, and prayer have supplanted his list. Block does not address these elements as genres but rather includes them as part of the hero narrative or short story.

³⁰⁸ Sellin, 91. He classifies the entirety of chapters three through sixteen as hero saga. Nonetheless, further distinction is made regarding significant genre elements within each narrative.

³⁰⁹ Armerding, 64-65. He succinctly makes a further point that evangelical theological bias should not preclude terms as a classification, but suggests these critics should either seek new categories or carefully redefine the existing terms.

³¹⁰ Jg. 1:1-36.

³¹¹ The literary device used in the genre is the expositional time-ratio that reduces longer historical time spans into a shorter reading time. K.L. Younger, Jr., “The Configuring of Judicial Preliminaries: Judges 1.1-2.5 and its Dependence on the Book of Joshua,” *JSOT* 68 (1995), 75-92.

³¹² Younger, “Judges 1,” 208-212.

³¹³ Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, 162. Wright is a stronger critic of the unity and the idea of miscellaneous fragments. Cf. G.E. Wright, “The Literary and Historical Problem of Joshua 10 and Judges 1,” *JNES* 5 (1946), 109.

³¹⁴ Jg. 2:1-5. Tollington, “The Book of Judges,” 190.

³¹⁵ חֲמֶר דְּבוּרָה and אֵלֶן בְּכוֹתָהּ. See Gen. 35:8; and Jg. 4:5. The issue of cultic worship and idolatry surrounding the groves of trees or *Asherah* poles are beyond the present scope. For more on this see

weeping of the people, there is a connection with God's judgment being exercised because of covenantal violation.³¹⁶ Departing from this idea, Block sees this section belonging to paraenetic narrative.³¹⁷

An additional etiological usage is present regarding Gideon.³¹⁸ The introduction of another appellation that involves a pagan god has not escaped theological review.³¹⁹ The paronomasia of the names and the origination of the new name (*Y²rubba'al*) Jerubbaal is a familiar rhetorical device employed in Midrashic homily.³²⁰

The Samson short story includes two toponymic etiologies.³²¹ Both of them are incorporated into the expression of prayer. The combat scene becomes the situation for the place name (*Rāmat Lehî*) Ramath-Lehi.³²² The next etiology uses a proper formula to introduce (*'ên haqqôre'*) En-hakkore.³²³

Albright expresses serious concerns about the imbalance of historical accuracy form critics have created through this genre.

In recent decades there has been a steady increase of the use of aetiology (the analysis of stories explaining ancient names or practices) to identify legendary accretions in orally transmitted material. The discovery and application of the method of form criticism, especially by H. Gunkel, M. Dibelius, and their followers, have given a great impetus to the utilization of aetiological method, which has now reached a point where its leading exponents are inclined to deny the historicity of nearly all early stories of both the Old and New Testaments.³²⁴

M. Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane* (New York: Harper and Row, 1961), 125-128; and R. Patai, "The Goddess Asherah," *JNES* 24 (1965), 37-52.

³¹⁶ Lindars, *Judges 1-5*, 73-77. Botanic evidence shows that this (*Bôkîm*) could be the (*b²ka'im*) of 2 Sam. 5:23 as a terebinth tree that exudes sap and gives the appearance of weeping. Cf. G. Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina*. (Working Life and Customs in Palestine.) Vol. 1, No. 2 [Ger.], (Gütersloh, Germany: Hildesheim, 1928), 541.

³¹⁷ Block, *NAC*, 50.

³¹⁸ See 6:28-32.

³¹⁹ Emerton reviews the question of whether the two names mentioned is the same person and accepts the implied etiology. Cf. J.A. Emerton, "Gideon and Jerubbaal," *JTSNS* 27 (1976), 289-292.

³²⁰ *יְרֻבְבָּאֵל*. How the pun is used in the (*midrāši-š²môṭ*) מִדְרָשִׁי שְׂמוֹת is addressed later as it applies to an element of divine judgment. The whole idea of paronomasia is addressed as a part of rhetorical criticism. Cf. M. Garsiel, "Homiletic Name-Derivations as a Literary Device in the Gideon Narrative: Judges VI-VIII," *VT* 43 (1993), 302-303.

³²¹ Jg. 15:17, and 19. For a discussion of the term, see B.O. Long, "The Problem of Etiological Narrative in the Old Testament," *BZAW* 108 (1968).

³²² *רָמַת לֵהִי*. The name means "high place of the jawbone." Jg. 15:17. J.L. Crenshaw, *Samson: A Secret Betrayed, A Vow Ignored* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1978), 35-36.

³²³ *עַיִן הַקּוֹרֵא*. The name means "the spring of him who called." Jg. 15:19. B.S. Childs, "A Study of the Formula, 'Until this Day,'" *JBL* 82 (1963), 279-292.

³²⁴ W.F. Albright, *From Stone Age to Christianity* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1957), 70.

THEOLOGICAL EXPOSITION

The second introduction forms a theological exposition.³²⁵ The prophetic etiology (2:1-5) introduces the “proper introduction” and historical background by the literary device of following general statements with particular detailed accounts of exposition.³²⁶ A situation of *Wiederaufnahme* with the Joshua death narrative sets the stage for the theological discussion that follows.³²⁷

HERO NARRATIVES

This is the predominant genre in the book.³²⁸ As one of the narrative types, this focus surrounds the “hero” in the conflict between good and evil, with the central character typifying “good” and ultimately acting as a divine anthropomorphism.³²⁹ Thus, they structurally form a lengthy and complex narrative movement, rather than being “simply an anthology of judge stories and summary notices.”³³⁰

OTHNIEL NARRATIVE. The Othniel story is a concise presentation of the hero that serves to chronologically connect this historical period with that of the conquest of Canaan.³³¹ This historical placement provides a suitable hero that belongs to the Joshua and “Judges” generation.³³² This initial pericope establishes a paradigm that the other heroes conform to in their characterization.³³³

DEBORAH, BARAK, AND Jael NARRATIVE. The historical narrative in chapter four presents three hero figures in the persons of Deborah, Barak, and Jael. The characterization of Deborah ends abruptly and the focus and honor shifts to Jael with her

³²⁵ Jg. 2:6-3:6. The structural and redaction issues of the original introduction are addressed elsewhere in the research.

³²⁶ N. Stemmer, “The Introduction to Judges, 2.1-3.4,” *JQR* 57 (1967), 239-241. He bases his research on the methodology of Umberto Cassuto.

³²⁷ Jg. 2:6-9. M.Z. Brettler, “Jud 1,1—2,10: From Appendix to Prologue,” *ZAW* 101 (1989), 433-435. The idea of a duplicated insertion and a discussion of this literary device follow later under rhetorical criticism. Cf. S. Talmon, “The Presentation of Synchronicity and Simultaneity in Biblical Narrative,” *ScrHie* 27 (1978), 12-26.

³²⁸ The Judges material that includes hero narratives are: Jg. 3:7-11; 4:1-24; 9:1-22 which includes the fable; and 10:6 – 12:7 which includes the political speech and the vow.

³²⁹ Bledstein, 52. The article is addressed from the feminine perspective highlighting the female characters yet it does speak of assuming divine authority. Negative action and other unethical behavior do not reflect on an origination from Yahweh.

³³⁰ Webb, *The Book of Judges*, 125.

³³¹ J.M. Lang, *Gideon and the Judges* (London: James Nisbet & Co., n.d.; reprint Minneapolis, MN: Klock & Klock, 1983), 34.

³³² Lindars, *Judges 1-5*, 128.

³³³ Davis, *Such a Great Salvation*, 47-55.

fatalistic hospitality. In the vein of feminist criticism, the entirety of Judges and especially this narrative is questioned as having a male author honoring heroes.³³⁴ Rather, it is proposed this is a female Israelite, possibly Deborah, who using satire “is censuring the low to which Israelite men have descended [showing her] portrayal of this woman’s abuse is severe condemnation of violent men.”³³⁵

One of the ironies of the text is the manner in which two women in their military mission of deliverance depict the normal masculine role of wartime activities.³³⁶ The prose structure of the narrative develops a plot involving a trio of protagonists and antagonists. The author ultimately valorizes each of the heroes in their own distinctive way, with the greatest honor being given to Jael. This in no way suggests that Deborah or Barak were without honor.³³⁷

JOTHAM NARRATIVE. The third hero narrative involves Jotham. It includes both fable and battle narrative in its composition. This tragic plot flows naturally as the progeny of the Gideon short story. One of the rhetorical elements that highlight the hero is the nemesis he portrays of the antagonist.³³⁸ The use of key words, such as (*melek*) found in the narrative and in the fable is the part that irony plays to dethrone the villain.³³⁹

JEPHTHAH NARRATIVE. The fourth hero narrative involves Jephthah. This composition includes the genres of political speech and a vow, which are addressed separately. The story with each of its constituent parts is part of a downward spiral reaching the climax with the sacrifice. The conclusion of the narrative is the basis for the inclusion of the “cult legend.”³⁴⁰ Most of the actions by Jephthah in this tragic narrative do not support him as a proper “hero.”³⁴¹ His life was not a success, despite realizing

³³⁴ R. Barreca, *They Used to Call Me Snow White...but I Drifted: Women's Strategic Use of Humor* (New York: Viking, 1991). The author uses a myriad of examples from television situation comedies to literary works of antiquity to express both positive and negative humor towards females and their sexuality, which is primarily the crux of the intended humor.

³³⁵ Bledstein, 34-35.

³³⁶ S. Ackerman, *Warrior, Dancer, Seductress, Queen: Women in Judges and Biblical Israel* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 7.

³³⁷ Obviously the honor descends from Jael to Deborah to Barak. Cf. A. Brenner, “A Triangle and a Rhombus in Narrative Structure: A Proposed Integrative Reading of Judges iv and v,” *VT* 40 (1990), 130-132.

³³⁸ J.G. Janzen, “A Certain Woman in the Rhetoric of Judges 9,” *JSOT* 38 (1987), 35.

³³⁹ חַיִּים. G.S. Ogden, “Jotham’s Fable: Its Structure and Function in Judges 9,” *BibTran.* 46 (1995), 302-304.

³⁴⁰ Sellin, 91.

³⁴¹ L. Bodoff, “The Tragedy of Jephthah,” *JBQ* 28 (2000), 251-255. This concise article reviews some of the Midrashic commentary on the vow and sacrifice.

some of his ambitions.³⁴² The obstacles of his family life and his success as a general, a statesman, and a negotiator qualify him as an epic hero that prevails over an ignominious beginning.³⁴³

An examination of the theme as Jephthah sits as a major judge between the annalistic lists of minor judges gives it a didactic “propaganda” value as an anti-monarchic criticism.³⁴⁴ The narrative maintains a plot with five episodes, each with its protagonist-antagonist theme.³⁴⁵

ETHNIC HUMOR

The Ehud vignette is another tragicomic form removing the enemy of Moab.³⁴⁶ Within the context of the narrative the writer employs “ethnic humor.”³⁴⁷ This form in scripture is a Moabite joke, which is a subset of the ethnic humor genre that is central to the narrative.³⁴⁸ This follows the same line of thought with Halpern whose understanding of humor also designates the story as a “murder mystery.”³⁴⁹ Alter argues for accepting this as “prose fiction.”³⁵⁰ The opposite approach is to see this as an historical event.³⁵¹ Then there is also the synchronic approach of “historicized prose fiction.”³⁵² Despite the scatological nature of the story and its bizarre royal murder, these elements do not remove

³⁴² Klein, *The Triumph of Irony in the Book of Judges*, 98.

³⁴³ D. Marcus, “The legal dispute between Jephthah and the elders,” *HAR* 12 (1990), 105.

³⁴⁴ L.J.M. Claassens, “Theme and Function in the Jephthah Narrative,” *JNSL* 23 (1997), 216-217.

³⁴⁵ B.G. Webb, “The Theme of the Jephthah Story,” *RTR* 45 (1986), 34-43. His structure is Israel vs. Yahweh (Jg. 10:6-16), Elders vs. Jephthah (Jg. 10:17-11:11), Jephthah vs. the Ammonite King (Jg. 11:12-28), Jephthah vs. his daughter (Jg. 11:29-40), and Jephthah vs. the Ephraimites (Jg. 12:1-7).

³⁴⁶ Jg. 3:12-30. M.L. Barré, “The meaning of *pršdn* in Judges III 22,” *VT* 41 (1991), 1-11. The author’s primary focus is on the three instances of (*hapax legomenon*) ἄπαξ λεγόμενον in the narrative.

³⁴⁷ L.K. Handy, “Uneasy Laughter: Ehud and Eglon as Ethnic Humor,” *SJOT* 6 (1992), 233. This is genre description is not maintained by Block, who contends this is one of the hero narratives. For an examination of ethnic humor that shows the person in a disparaging light, see C. Davies, *Ethnic Humor around the World: A Comparative Analysis* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990), 7 and R.A. Haig, *The Anatomy of Humor: Biopsychosocial and Therapeutical Perspectives* (Springfield, IL: Charles S. Thomas Publisher, 1988), 93.

³⁴⁸ Handy, 233. He opposes the idea of a comic or tragic nature to the text and further sees the humor motif as being fictional in nature.

³⁴⁹ Simple forensic evidence and examination of the facts surrounding the murder would quickly list Ehud among the likely suspects. Cf. B. Halpern, “The Assassination of Eglon: The First Locked-Room Murder Mystery,” *BibRev* 4 (1988), 33-34.

³⁵⁰ Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 37-41.

³⁵¹ Halpern, *The First Historians*, 39-75.

³⁵² H.N. Schneidau, *Sacred Discontent: The Bible and Western Tradition* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1977), 215.

the story from the realm of non-fiction historiography, as some of the literary critics would presuppose. This view is acceptable because of internal evidence showing this salvation was the result of divine direction of human action.³⁵³ A slightly less conservative approach understands the pericope “as a literary creation, reflecting a real historical context and real cultural attitudes, but not necessarily a real historical event.”³⁵⁴

HISTORICAL NOTE

With the Deuteronomistic insertion of a single verse between the Ehud and Deborah narratives, the concise (*Šamgar*) Shamgar historical note is included.³⁵⁵ This appendage to the hero narratives of Othniel and Ehud has engendered much speculation. It is viewed as a short note perhaps inserted from the tradition of the Song of Deborah.³⁵⁶

HYMNIC POETRY

This is viewed as the oldest form in the book and one of the oldest in the Hebrew Bible dating back to 1100 BCE.³⁵⁷ The more general classification is known as “the song of Deborah.”³⁵⁸ In addition, this poem has been classified as an “epinikian triumphal ode.”³⁵⁹ This style of poetry through song gives expression of those submitted and under the control of the “Divine Warrior.”³⁶⁰ As a “victory song” it has been interpreted as a covenant renewal festival hymn.³⁶¹ Among Semitic literature, the “‘victory poem’ was a recognizable genre, probably with an early origin.”³⁶²

³⁵³ Y. Amit, “The Story of Ehud (Judges 3:12-30): The Form and the Message,” *Signs and Wonders: Biblical Texts in Literary Focus*. (Ed.) J.C. Exum (Philadelphia, PA: Society of Biblical Literature, 1989), 120-121.

³⁵⁴ T.A. Jull, “מקרה in Judges 3: A Scatological Reading,” *JSOT* 81 (1998), 64.

³⁵⁵ שְׁמֹגָר. Jg. 3:31.

³⁵⁶ Jg. 5:6. F.C. Feensham, “Shamgar Ben ‘Anath,” *JNES* 20 (1961), 197. Of course there is a host of scholars who see this insertion as a late addition of a fictitious episode. Cf. N. Shupak, “New Light on Shamgar ben ‘Anath,” *Biblica* 70 (1989), 517.

³⁵⁷ Jg. 5:1-31. W.F. Albright, “The Song of Deborah in the Light of Archaeology,” *BASOR* 62 (1936), 26-31.

³⁵⁸ A. Globe, “The Literary Unity and Structure of the Song of Deborah,” *JBL* 93 (1974), 493-512.

³⁵⁹ Moore, 127-132.

³⁶⁰ M.D. Coogan, “A Structural and Literary Analysis of the Song of Deborah,” *CBQ* 40 (1978), 165-166.

³⁶¹ A. Weiser, “Das Deborahlied—eine gattungs- und traditions-geschichtliche Studie,” (The Song of Deborah—a type and tradition historical study.) *ZAW* 71 (1959), 67-97.

³⁶² Evidence of this type is found among Egyptian, Arabic, and Ugaritic literature. Specific similarities and dissimilarities are presented by P.C. Craigie, “The Song of Deborah and the Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta,” *JBL* 88 (1969), 264-265.

MYTH

This single verse illustrates the myth through an astronomical miracle. Some natural phenomena occurred that caused the author to employ this literary device.³⁶³ The use of this mythological motif illustrates divine judgment with the battle participation of the stellar bodies “fighting as Yahweh’s [(š²bā’ôṭ)] armies.”³⁶⁴ This genre classification carries with it certain unconscious assumptions as to the meaning of myth.³⁶⁵ Burrows summarized the new view of myth as:

A symbolic approximate expression of truth which the human mind cannot perceive sharply and completely but can only glimpse vaguely, and therefore cannot adequately or accurately express. It implies, not falsehood, but truth; not primitive, naïve misunderstanding, but an insight more profound than scientific description and logical analysis can achieve. The language of myth in this sense is consciously inadequate, being simply the nearest we can come to a formulation of what we see very darkly.³⁶⁶

SHORT STORY

This is the second largest of the genre types employed with the pericopes of Gideon, Samson, the Danite Migration, and the Levitical concubine.³⁶⁷ The four narratives within this genre compose more than half of the verses throughout the book.

GIDEON NARRATIVE. The first of these stories is as an extended hero narrative that includes several of Gideon’s biographical achievements.³⁶⁸ The essence that makes this a short story is the combination of ancient narratives.³⁶⁹ One of literary devices used is the “dream-narrative.”³⁷⁰ The genre is substantiated by a thematic literary structure.³⁷¹

³⁶³ Jg. 5:20. One of the theories includes a solar eclipse making the stars visible. F.R. Stephenson, “Astronomical verification and dating of Old Testament passages referring to solar eclipses,” *PEQ* 107 (1975), 107-109. This could even be a celestial ascription to a meteorological storm. Cf. J.F.A. Sawyer, “From Heaven Fought the Stars: (Judges V 20),” *VT* 31 (1981), 88.

³⁶⁴ זָבָחַי. G.W. Ahlström, “Judges 5:20 f. and History,” *JNES* 36 (1977), 287.

³⁶⁵ S. Niditch explores and calls for a reappraisal of assumptions in *Oral World and Written Word: Ancient Israelite Literature* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 8-24.

³⁶⁶ M. Burrows, *An Outline of Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1946), 115-116.

³⁶⁷ Jg. 6:1-8:35; 13:1-16:31; 17:1-18:31; and 19:1-21:25.

³⁶⁸ Lang, 83.

³⁶⁹ Hamlin, 90. He includes the Abimelech narratives in the Gideon story, based on lineage.

³⁷⁰ See Jg. 7:13-14 for how this dream had its effect on the outcome of the narrative. Sellin, 99.

³⁷¹ A pattern of words (trees, towers, and flames) along with ironic symmetries unify the short story (Hamlin, 90-105). Taken from a philosophical approach, the unifying structural element is the theme of Baalism against statism (Jordan, 111-113).

SAMSON NARRATIVE. The second short story involves Samson.³⁷² This composition uses etiology, prayer, riddle, and poetry as different internal genres. The narrative section where Samson ties the torches to the tails of the foxes has been considered as an internal anecdote.³⁷³ The elements of tragedy and comedy are found within the saga.³⁷⁴ Crenshaw moves from the alternation of the two and calls it a “tragi-comedy” because within the saga “neither tragedy nor comedy becomes sufficiently pronounced to drown out faint echoes of its opposite.”³⁷⁵ The Hebraic understanding of divine involvement makes this form “tragic” rather than the Hellenistic conception of “tragedy” where fate is the controlling factor of the human destiny.³⁷⁶ These two dominant tragic and comic features are part of a plot that has three distinct movements and a climax.³⁷⁷ This narrative artistry as a story fulfills the genre because of its multi-level appeal.³⁷⁸

LEVITE AND SONS OF DAN NARRATIVE. The third of the short stories is the migration of Dan and their relation to the Levite.³⁷⁹ There are certain parallels with this and the Samson short story. Apart from the sin motif that begins the narrative through theft and idolatry that is subsequently repeated, there is a comic dimension.³⁸⁰ Like the tripartite nature of its predecessor, this structural division is present.³⁸¹ Arbeitman argues for a bipartite narrative.³⁸² The other characteristic element of this genre is the plot

³⁷² Jg. 13:1 – 16:31. The story also involves certain verses that fall under the genre of prayer and riddle, which are addressed separately.

³⁷³ Jg. 15:1-16:3. Sellin, 90.

³⁷⁴ J.C. Exum and J.W. Whedbee, “Isaac, Samson, and Saul: Reflections on the Comic and Tragic Visions,” *Semeia* 32 (1985), 21-22. Their combined criticism of the saga that explores both of these elements favors the comic context with its characteristic comic “U” shaped plot.

³⁷⁵ Crenshaw, *Samson*, 129.

³⁷⁶ J.L. Crenshaw, “The Samson Saga: Filial Devotion or Erotic Attachment,” *ZAW* 86 (1974), 502. He emphasizes the unredeemable human state in Greek literature that connotes a diametrical opposition to Hebrew literature and Divine action.

³⁷⁷ B.G. Webb, “A Serious Reading of the Samson Story (Judges 13-16),” *RTR* 54 (1995), 113.

³⁷⁸ M. Greene, “Enigma Variations: Aspects of the Samson Story (Judges 13-16),” *Vox Evangelica* 21 (1991), 53. He cites examples of appeal among children, adults, and philosophers.

³⁷⁹ Jg. 17:1 – 18:31.

³⁸⁰ D.R. Davis, “Comic Literature – Tragic Theology: A Study of Judges 17-18,” *WTJ* 46 (1984), 158-161. He reveals the comic nature through the literary devices of contrast, contempt, irony, and sarcasm.

³⁸¹ Y. Amit, “Hidden Polemic in the Conquest of Dan: Judges XVII-XVIII,” *VT* 40 (1990), 5. Her structural design includes three episodes: Establishment of the sanctuary of Micah (Jg. 17:1-5), Appointment of the Levite as priest in Micah’s sanctuary (Jg. 17:7-13), and Conquest of Dan and the Establishment of its shrine (Jg. 18:1b-30). Note that certain verses are not included as they are considered transitional (*i.e.* Jg. 17:6; 18:1a, and 18:31).

³⁸² Y.L. Arbeitman, “Detecting the God who remained in Dan,” *Hen* 16 (1994), 10.

development and the presence of sub-plots.³⁸³ Because of the worship element present in the narrative, the saga can be further defined as a “sanctuary legend,” in that it deals with specific sacred sites.³⁸⁴ Bauer proposes that the author created a new genre that used the existing literary genre of “the spy story” by inversion. As a third level subordinate category of the “Conquest Story” and “YHWH-War Story,” he classifies it as “anti-spy story.”³⁸⁵

LEVITE AND SONS OF BENJAMIN NARRATIVE. The final short story involves the traveling Levite and his concubine and the resultant consequences of this trek.³⁸⁶ The theme of this story is problematic and distasteful for the reader. It is this type of element that classifies the work with a high aesthetic value because of the manner in which the work frustrates and disappoints the reader.³⁸⁷ As before, the tragic dimensions are present, this time in a more bizarre manner with the sexual perversion and disposal of the corpse.³⁸⁸ Boling contends this too should be classified in a tragicomic genre.³⁸⁹ Lasine is unwilling to be that generous and simply labels the elements as “absurdity of the ‘inverted world’ which characterizes this period of biblical history.”³⁹⁰ Another element that is repeated is the presence of a sub-plot within the main story.³⁹¹ The examination of this story has a parallel with the other concluding story based on hidden polemic.³⁹²

³⁸³ Amit, “Hidden Polemic in the Conquest of Dan,” 7. She identifies the stories of Micah and the Levite as sub-plots that are within the central plot axis of the tribal conquest and sanctuary establishment which form a hidden censure of idolatry.

³⁸⁴ Sellin, 90. He subdivides the saga and legend genre into the elements of geographical sagas, sanctuary legends, cult legends, tribal and national saga, hero saga, and personal legends.

³⁸⁵ U.F.W. Bauer, “Judges 18 as an Anti-Spy Story in the Context of an Anti-Conquest Story: The Creative Usage of Literary Genres,” *JSOT* 88 (2000), 38-40. Bauer refers to S. Wagner’s earlier research for descriptive elements of this genre type. Cf. “Die Kundschaftergeschichten im Alten Testament (The Historic Knowledge in the Old Testament),” *ZAW* 76 (1964), 255-269.

³⁸⁶ Jg. 19:1 – 21:25. Note the story also contains an element of battle narrative.

³⁸⁷ H.R. Jauss, “Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory,” *NLH* 2 (1970-1971), 14-15.

³⁸⁸ K.G. Bohmbach, “Conventions/Contraventions: The Meanings of Public and Private for the Judges 19 Concubine,” *JSOT* 83 (1999), 96.

³⁸⁹ Boling, *AB*, 277.

³⁹⁰ S. Lasine, “Guest and Host in Judges 19: Lot’s Hospitality in an Inverted World,” *JSOT* 29 (1984), 43-44.

³⁹¹ V.H. Matthews, “Hospitality and Hostility in Genesis 19 and Judges 19,” *BTB* 22 (1992), 3. He draws a distinction of the Levite being a righteous man who is saved. Against the main plot and the anonymous characters, perhaps he can be seen as righteous; however, against the standards of the *Torah* his vindication and righteousness might not be so clear cut.

³⁹² Y. Amit, “Literature in the Service of Politics: Studies in Judges 19-21,” *Politics and Theopolitics in the Bible and Postbiblical Literature* (Eds.) H.G. Reventlow, Y. Hoffman, and B. Uffenheimer (*JSOT Supp.* 171: Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 28-40. She examines

PARAENETIC NARRATIVE

This genre details two instances where the people cried out unto Yahweh and reveals His response.³⁹³ In the first paraenesis, an unidentified prophet brings forth the prophetic proclamation. The threefold indictment doesn't offer the hope of deliverance.³⁹⁴ However, the prophetic nature of this encounter becomes a historical judgment embodying grace giving an opportunity for repentance and the onset of Gideon as a deliverer.³⁹⁵

The second paraenesis is a combined prayer and divine exhortative rebuke that precedes the raising up of Jephthah. The irony of the rebuke serves to move Israel into the next cyclical pattern of true repentance.³⁹⁶ The hortatory in this narrative supports the didactic theme that is present in this sixth cycle of oppression.³⁹⁷

FABLE

There is only one use of the fable in the book.³⁹⁸ Generally, this literary device is didactic in nature.³⁹⁹ The prophetic element serves as a script for application and activity that follows to execute justice. The usage by Jotham suggests that he has borrowed an earlier form of this fable and adapted it for his personal circumstances.⁴⁰⁰

BATTLE NARRATIVE

Despite a number of warfare activities throughout the book, only two passages are classified as battle narrative.⁴⁰¹ The first of these is the continuation of Jotham's fable giving it application through battle. This narrative carries with it a doctrinal burden of

how the author used an indirect method to discredit and prophetically disavow the Benjamite monarchy that would follow.

³⁹³ Jg. 6:7-10; and 10:10-16.

³⁹⁴ Jackman, 104-106. The three indictments against them are ingratitude, idolatry, and impenitence.

³⁹⁵ Jordan, 115-116. For him, grace is the pejorative function of the prophet, as he is an intermediary that relieves the sinner from standing face to face with God and receiving ultimate judgment.

³⁹⁶ Fausset, 183-185.

³⁹⁷ Enns, 87-89.

³⁹⁸ Jg. 9:7-15.

³⁹⁹ Anderson, 226.

⁴⁰⁰ Ogden, 308.

⁴⁰¹ Jg. 9:23-57; and 20:1-48.

retribution in its plot.⁴⁰² The overall pericope has a unique and unified plot in a three-section presentation.⁴⁰³ As with several of the other genres, a subplot is underlying the central narration.⁴⁰⁴ The subplot forms the first of five episodes leading to the conclusion and end of the battle.⁴⁰⁵

The second passage is within the short story about the Levite and his ill-fated concubine. As narrative art, the battle is presented in a three-section movement based upon each successive date of war that forms a cohesive logical account.⁴⁰⁶ The tragic nature is seen in the narrative with its shift between the two warring groups.⁴⁰⁷

ANNALISTIC RULER LISTS

The text includes two sets of ruler lists.⁴⁰⁸ Exum finds instability in this annalistic source because the list is divided with the Jephthah narrative inserted between it. She qualifies him as a “major judge” rather than a minor one.⁴⁰⁹ Being a list, this form is straightforward identifying the judge, his tribe, his length of reign, and his burial.⁴¹⁰ The designation of “judge” and “deliverer” derives from the “official list of Israelite magistrates.”⁴¹¹

⁴⁰² Janzen, 33-37.

⁴⁰³ V. Fritz, “Abimelech und Sichem in Jdc. IX,” (Abimelech and Shechem in Judges 9), *VT* 32 (1982), 129-144.

⁴⁰⁴ The subplot is identified as the fight between (*Ga'al*) גַּא'ל Gaal and (*Z'bul*) זְבּוּל Zebul (Jg. 9:25-41). J.P. Fokkelman, “Structural Remarks on Judges 9 and 19,” *Sha'arei Talmon: Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon*, (Eds.) M. Fishbane and E. Tov (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 36.

⁴⁰⁵ The five fold episode division is the conspiracy against Abimelech (Jg. 9:25-41), fratricide of Shechem (Jg. 9:42-45), fratricide of Migdal-Shechem (Jg. 9:46-49), killing upon a stone (Jg. 9:50-54), and peace (Jg. 9:55). T.A. Boogaart, “Stone for Stone: Retribution in the Story of Abimelech and Shechem,” *JSOT* 32 (1985), 52-53.

⁴⁰⁶ Revell, 417. His literary analysis reflects the function of the clause in relation to the narrative, the temporal framework, and the techniques that are not typical in English narrative.

⁴⁰⁷ P.E. Satterthwaite, “Narrative Artistry in the Composition of Judges XX 29ff,” *VT* 42 (1992), 81. For a discussion regarding the technique of narrative shift, see S. Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible* (*JSOT Supp.* 70: Sheffield, England: Almond Press, 1989), 13-16, and 36-39.

⁴⁰⁸ Jg. 10:1-5; and 12:8-15.

⁴⁰⁹ Exum, “The Centre Cannot Hold,” 421. The question of the term minor and major judge is addressed later, as is the classification of Jephthah.

⁴¹⁰ Hauser, 190.

⁴¹¹ E.T. Mullen, Jr., “The ‘Minor Judges’: Some Literary and Historical Considerations,” *CBQ* 44 (1982), 186.

POLITICAL SPEECH

Though individuals are addressed in other places, this is the only presence of this political genre.⁴¹² It could be argued that the diplomatic function was present with Ehud and Eglon; however, this was no monarchical negotiation, although the confrontational side became self-evident.⁴¹³ The paronomasia in Jephthah's name suggests he is a master of words.⁴¹⁴ This usage of him "opening his mouth" gives a prophetic value to the high level political meeting.⁴¹⁵

Vow

Perhaps one of the most troublesome passages of the book is in the fulfillment of this rash vow.⁴¹⁶ This form is more than a prayer. It is a form of worship, which is not prohibited or spoken of negatively. The negative emphasis is on the failure to keep a vow.⁴¹⁷ Jephthah's rashness in divine discourse has been called a "text of terror."⁴¹⁸ Regardless of what or whom he intended on being the object of sacrifice, this vow conforms to other biblical usage with its introduction, protasis, and apodosis.⁴¹⁹

Although there is no explicit recitation of a vow elsewhere, it is implicitly present with the annunciation narrative of Samson.⁴²⁰ Reference is made to him being a *Nazirite* from birth.⁴²¹ At some point this implies he submitted to this *Torah* position of separation, based on the ensuing narratives that show his moral failure and violation of the vow that leads to his tragic end.⁴²²

⁴¹² Jg. 11:15-27.

⁴¹³ Webb, "The Theme of the Jephthah Story," 38.

⁴¹⁴ The parsing of the name (*Qal* Imperfect 3MS of פתח) translated "he will open" suggests his prophetic speaking ability. Webb, *The Book of Judges*, 57-69.

⁴¹⁵ Claassens, "Theme and Function in the Jephthah Narrative," 208.

⁴¹⁶ Jg. 11:30-31.

⁴¹⁷ S. Langston, "Vows," *HBD*: 1396.

⁴¹⁸ S. Landers, "Did Jephthah kill his daughter?" *BibRev* 7 (1991), 28.

⁴¹⁹ D. Marcus, *Jephthah and his vow* (Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech Press, 1986), 18-25. He cites other examples of vow's made by: Jacob (Gen. 28:20-22), Israel (Num. 21:2), Hannah (1 Sam. 1:11), and Absalom (2 Sam. 15:7-18).

⁴²⁰ J.C. Exum, "Promise and Fulfillment: Narrative Art in Judges 13," *JBL* 99 (1980), 43-44.

⁴²¹ Jg. 13:5.

⁴²² Num. 6:2-8. J.C. Exum, "The Theological Dimension of the Samson Saga," *VT* 33 (1983), 30-45.

PRAYER

Most scholars ascribe the references to the intercessory elements within the Samson narratives as part of the short story genre.⁴²³ Each forms an integral transition to the preceding and following narrative. Only the human side of the dialogue is mentioned in the three recorded prayers; although the non-vocalized answer is present.⁴²⁴

The first prayer is by Manoah.⁴²⁵ He uses cultic language of supplication rather than the style employed by his son of “calling.”⁴²⁶ The response is prophetic in nature with the angelic proclamation, yet the unnamed messenger appears to only tolerate the petitioner and relate to the unnamed wife of Manoah.⁴²⁷

Samson’s prayer of thirst was not a hastily uttered ritualistic form. The obvious paronomasia suggests his special crafting, especially with him making his entreaty using the Tetragrammaton.⁴²⁸

His final intercession was a petition of vengeance steeped in violence. However, at no point does the author comment negatively because of this theologically inappropriate request.⁴²⁹

RIDDLE

This involved one of the subdivisions of short proverbial statements that often were used as an instructive medium.⁴³⁰ The riddle is found with its challenge and answer in the Samson narrative.⁴³¹ Greenstein goes a step further suggesting that the Samson story is “a riddle-like text.”⁴³² The riddle may be classified within the structural context of

⁴²³ Jg. 13:8-9; 15:18-19; 16:28, and 30.

⁴²⁴ Exum, “The Theological Dimension of the Samson Saga,” 30-45.

⁴²⁵ Jg. 13:8.

⁴²⁶ Crenshaw, *Samson*, 34-35.

⁴²⁷ A. Reinhartz, “Samson’s Mother: An Unnamed Protagonist,” *JSOT* 55 (1992), 28-30.

⁴²⁸ Crenshaw, *Samson*, 30-31.

⁴²⁹ Jg. 16:28, and 30. Cf. R.G. Bowman and R.W. Swanson, “Samson and the Son of God or Dead Heroes and Dead Goats: Ethical Readings of Narrative Violence in Judges and Matthew,” *Semeia* 77 (1997), 68-72.

⁴³⁰ Anderson, 226. For a full discussion of the elements of the riddle and as it relates to Samson, see C.V. Camp and C.R. Fontaine, “The Words of the Wise and Their Riddles,” *Text and Tradition: The Hebrew Bible and Folklore* (Ed.) S. Niditch. (*Semeia Studies*: Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1990), 127-151.

⁴³¹ Jg. 14:14, and 18.

⁴³² E.L. Greenstein, “The Riddle of Samson,” *Prooftexts* 1 (1981), 239.

a *Chiffrierung der Wirklichkeit*.⁴³³ It has been suggested that YHWH is the divine trickster or propounder of riddles and uses this riddle as a means to execute judgment through Samson.⁴³⁴

POETRY

The last genre found in the narrative is poetic fragments.⁴³⁵ Both of these are in the Samson narrative. Crenshaw prefers to raise these fragments from the realm of poetry to victory songs. He acknowledges the verbiage does not support singing.⁴³⁶ In both cases the essence of victory and triumph underscore the fragments.⁴³⁷

Stratification

The arrangement of the various units into their relative ages helps to understand the *Sitz im Leben*. The *formgeschichte* concern of the writer for a reliable and historical account is based on the premise of “a uniform evolution from smaller so-called primitive literary units to larger, more complex entities in the course of the development of the [Judges] literature.”⁴³⁸ In his critique of the form critical school, Kitchen does not see justification of Sigmund Mowinckel, *et.al.* to mold the literature into a cultic *Sitz im Leben*. Rather, his research of ancient Oriental literature reflects the life situation which influenced the author who continued to report the oral narrative and transform it into its written form.⁴³⁹ Caution must be exercised in the search for the life situation that “the institutions clearly pictured in Israel’s own tradition must provide the basis for objective study.”⁴⁴⁰

⁴³³ H.P. Müller, “Der Begriff ‘Rätsel’ im Alten Testament, (The word ‘riddle’ in Old Testament),” *VT* 20 (1970), 467-468. His classification is a “codifying of reality” due to the elements present in the preceding narrative.

⁴³⁴ B. Babcock-Abrahams, “‘A Tolerated Margin of Mess’: The Trickster and his Tales Reconsidered,” *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 11 (1975), 153-165. At points, she crosses conservative lines by anthropomorphic representation of God in Samson revealing creative and destructive elements.

⁴³⁵ Jg. 15:16; and 16:23-24.

⁴³⁶ Crenshaw, *Samson*, 36-37.

⁴³⁷ Wolf, 479. For the Philistine’s final triumph, the rejoicing became a national festival for the honor of their god.

⁴³⁸ G.L. Archer, “Old Testament History and Recent Archeology—from Moses to David,” *BSac* 127 (1970), 100.

⁴³⁹ K.A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (London: Tyndale, 1966), 131-137.

⁴⁴⁰ Armerding, 65.

An examination of the oral traditions reveals Hebraic literature and culture maintain these oral storytelling formulas. The most obvious example is clarification of the *Torah* given to Moses at Mt. Sinai. In Judaism, Moses received the *Torah*, which is composed of not only the Pentateuch but also the oral teaching, which only much later was codified into the *Talmud*. This oral tradition is readily accepted in Judaism because the narratives of Genesis were passed down through the tribes until compiled and written by Moses.⁴⁴¹

With Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, the Levitical role of his ancestors as record keepers and professional storytellers figures prominently.⁴⁴² The teaching responsibility regarding that which is clean and unclean, holy and profane, and about the holy days was a command for the Levites to perform.⁴⁴³ They have been identified as a premonarchic guild of professional storytellers and the oral source the author used. It would be such times as the seven annual festivals where these snippets of Israel's history could be told and passed down within the cultus.⁴⁴⁴ Conventional presuppositions about masculine oration in this tradition negate internal evidence of a feminine tradition.⁴⁴⁵ One such subcategory of female storytellers is through the convention of temple singers.⁴⁴⁶ Thus, it is plausible in the era of the Judges that the prototype for the temple singer "existed elsewhere in Israelite society," as evidenced from Judges 5:10-11.⁴⁴⁷

Gray favors the oral tradition because of the manner in which the sagas originate and the earlier writing conventions in Israel's history.⁴⁴⁸ Whether all of the stories have an oral tradition is unknown; however the tradition suggests it is possible they each do.⁴⁴⁹ The exigencies of oral tradition narration allow the storyteller to stereotype the material

⁴⁴¹ The authorship question of the Pentateuch is well beyond the scope of this research. The writer is referring to the general conservative tradition ascribing Mosaic authorship. A. Berkowitz, *Torah Rediscovered* (Lakewood, CO: First Fruits of Zion, 1996), 93-137.

⁴⁴² G.E. Wright, "The Levites in Deuteronomy," *VT* 4 (1954), 325-330.

⁴⁴³ Lev. 10:10-11; and Ezek. 22:26.

⁴⁴⁴ Boling, *AB*, 32. For a discussion on oral storytelling as a narrative pattern, see A.B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), 78-81.

⁴⁴⁵ A.F. Campbell, "Women Storytellers in Ancient Israel," *ABR* 48 (2000), 72-73. For a survey about women in the ancient Near East, Cf. C.R. Fontaine, "The Sage in Family and Tribe" in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, (Eds.) J.G. Gammie and L.G. Perdue (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 155-164.

⁴⁴⁶ Examples include: 2 Sam. 19:35; 2 Chr. 35:25; and Ecc. 2:8.

⁴⁴⁷ Campbell, 73.

⁴⁴⁸ Gray, 222-230.

⁴⁴⁹ D.M. Gunn, "Narrative Patterns and Oral Tradition in Judges and Samuel," *VT* 24 (1974), 312.

received from the various sources in their most fundamental form.⁴⁵⁰ Structural patterns and themes from the oral material do not constitute a direct proof for the oral tradition being the sources that the author used.⁴⁵¹ The story is the narrative oral pattern. It should be noted:

No theme has an "original"; yet each instance of a pattern is likely to have been influenced by many others which its author has heard from other traditionists or composed and narrated himself.⁴⁵²

Steeped in the Documentary school, Moore soundly criticizes the *formgeschichte* approach for Judges. His criticism is against oral source material in both the body of Judges and in the redacted introduction and appendix. He cites that older sources were used, such that

These sources cannot have been oral tradition, or unwritten popular legends, for, apart from the difficulty of supposing that oral tradition had transmitted to so late a time such lifelike and truthful pictures of a state society that had passed away centuries before, in reducing oral tradition to writing, the author would inevitably have left the impress of his own style upon the stories far more deeply than is the case.⁴⁵³

Within this century, Moore would find agreement with Lemche and Guest who each stress the lack of sources. Challenging the "earthy language," Guest maintains this language style of "an early profane layer of tradition is not necessarily [one of the] indicators of early date or tribal origins."⁴⁵⁴ Lemche questions the other source traditions as being historical and originating in an oral form.⁴⁵⁵

Cundall takes a more conservative approach with the events representing history and having been told "closely following the events themselves, the traditions being transmitted amongst those tribes affected by the events described."⁴⁵⁶ In an examination

⁴⁵⁰ Lord, 17. For a discussion on oral composition technique, see R.C. Culley, "An Approach to the Problem of Oral Tradition," *VT* 13 (1963), 114-125.

⁴⁵¹ Gunn, 317.

⁴⁵² Gunn, 315. The term "theme" has many literary definitions. To address the more specific technical meaning, an alternative term "*topos*" is suggested as an indication of the presence of a patterned sequence of events or descriptive elements. Cf. R. Scholes and R. Kellogg, *The Nature of Narrative* (New York: Oxford, 1966), 26.

⁴⁵³ Moore, xix-xx. One wonders if Moore would contend so strongly for J and E sources and deny oral tradition had his criticism been birthed even half a century later as the Documentary Hypothesis theory had lost its momentum.

⁴⁵⁴ Guest, "Can Judges Survive Without Sources," 49-53.

⁴⁵⁵ Lemche, *Early Israel*, 383.

⁴⁵⁶ Cundall, *TOTC*, 26.

of rhetoric, O'Connell strongly supports the oral tradition originated from heroic tribal lore, in which regional tribal dialects are identifiable with the folk material.⁴⁵⁷

OTHNIEL TRADITION

The tradition from which the Othniel narrative stems is the oppressive reign of (*Kūšan Riš 'āṭayim*) Cushan-Rishathaim.⁴⁵⁸ The question of the geographic identity of the reign of this doubly wicked monarch is beyond our scope.⁴⁵⁹ The narrative is brief and would suggest from its earlier enigmatic passage that it would have been told orally among those in Kirath-sepher (*Qiryat-Sēper*) and in the tribe of Judah.⁴⁶⁰

EHUD TRADITION

The oral section of the narrative would have originated within the tribe of Benjamin to honor their native son, Ehud.⁴⁶¹ The present account is an "oral recension" in which the author extracted a reconstruction of a condensed long transmitted escapade.⁴⁶² It is proposed that the Benjaminite legend was enlarged by the Deuteronomist to allow a larger national appeal with the involvement of Ephraim in the ensuing battle as an integral part of the national religious and political history. As one of the oldest folk stories in the book, it most likely was retold and kept alive at the prescribed *Torah* holiday functions in Gilgal.⁴⁶³ Normally focusing on the historical elements, Halpern's evaluation of the pericope highlights a focus on mystery and scatology, such that "the oral version of the Ehud episode, then, has its home probably in the premonarchic or early monarchic era of Israel's history."⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁵⁷ O'Connell, 347.

⁴⁵⁸ כוּשָׁן רִישָׁתַיִם.

⁴⁵⁹ Theories have been postulated that the oppressive nation was Edom rather than (*'ram*) אֲרָם Aram. Cf. A. Malamat, "Cushan Rishathaim and the Decline of the Near East around 1200 B.C.," *JNES* 13 (1954), 231-242.

⁴⁶⁰ קִרְיַת-סֶפֶר. See Jg. 1:9-15 and 3:7-11, especially 1:11. E. Taeubler, "Cushan-Rishathaim," *HUCA* 20 (1947), 137-142.

⁴⁶¹ Jg. 3:15-26. Cf. E.G.H. Kraeling, "Difficulties in the Story of Ehud," *JBL* 54 (1935), 205-210. His primary focus is on four difficulties within the text: the departure after the tribute, the audience with the king, the upper chamber, and his escape. He discusses these elements as part of the nucleus of the Benjamite legend. The problem of whether Ehud was an individual or actually a clan is beyond our focus. For this discussion see, E.A. Knauf, "Eglon and Ophrah: Two Toponymic Notes on the Book of Judges," *JSOT* 51 (1991), 29-31.

⁴⁶² Halpern, *The First Historians*, 61.

⁴⁶³ Moore, 90.

⁴⁶⁴ Halpern, *The First Historians*, 65.

SHAMGAR TRADITION

The problem concerning a non-Hebrew name for this deliverer complicates the question of oral tradition.⁴⁶⁵ The town (*Bêt-^anāt*) Beth-anath was part of the Naphtali confederation; yet, it was never under subjugation by the (*P²lištīm*) Philistines.⁴⁶⁶ The Benjaminite town (*Bêt-^anôt*) Beth-anoth, also called (*^anātôt*) Anathoth is plausible, especially as a literary link to Ehud, from the tribe of Benjamin.⁴⁶⁷ These two tribal towns are contested based on a regional “ben ‘anath” appellation referring to a man of war, which Shamgar could have been dubbed as an ‘*Apiru* mercenary warrior for Egypt.⁴⁶⁸ There is no Shamgar tradition ascribed in the *Talmud*, yet it does insist that every tribe raised a judge in its time. Rashi leads to deduce a Benjamite tribal designation.⁴⁶⁹ The background of the *Sitz im Leben* to recount this first victory over the Philistines is tenable at best, based on the text.

BARAK AND DEBORAH TRADITION

The narrative in chapter four has two independent traditions that have been fused together. The first of those traditions involves Barak and the charismatic prophetess Deborah.⁴⁷⁰ Geographically, much territory and tribal involvement is present within the text. Clearly, Barak represented Naphtali from (*Qedeš Naphtālī*) Kedesh-naphtali.⁴⁷¹ Other than this toponymic note, and the negative light in which he is described, little may be understood of how a separate oral tradition could exist regarding him. This forces the critic to examine either the tradition of Deborah or Jael for the prose account. Deborah judged from Ephraim between Bethel and (*Rāmāh*) Ramah.⁴⁷² Warriors were secured from Naphtali and Zebulun, of which (*Har Tābôr*) Mt. Tabor was on the border of

⁴⁶⁵ The theories have been put forth regarding him being a non-Israelite from Galilee (Cf. 1:33) as well as him having Egyptian heritage or being of Hurrian origin. Those questions are addressed later. P.C. Craigie, “A Reconsideration of Shamgar ben Anath (Judg 3:31; and 5:6),” *JBL* 91 (1972), 239-240.

⁴⁶⁶ *פְּלִשְׁתִּים* and *בֵּית-עֲנַת*. Fensham, 197-198.

⁴⁶⁷ *עֲנַתוֹת* and *בֵּית-עֲנַת*. See Josh. 15:59; and 21:18. B. Zion Luria, “Who was Shamgar ben Anath?” *DD* 14 (1985), 105-107.

⁴⁶⁸ Shupak, 523-524.

⁴⁶⁹ Zion Luria, 106.

⁴⁷⁰ Jg. 4:4-10, and 12-16.

⁴⁷¹ *קִדְשׁ נַפְתָּלִי*. Jg. 4:6.

⁴⁷² *רָמָה*. Jg. 4:5.

Zebulun and (*Yiśśākār*) Issachar.⁴⁷³ The tradition of the oral hero saga that underlies the story may possibly be more than one.⁴⁷⁴ The literary unity is a point to consider that only a single strand was used.⁴⁷⁵

The disappearance of Deborah from the text at the onset of the battle is problematic, as there is no logical conclusion regarding her. It has been proposed an unsympathetic redactor to vilify polytheistic religion and partially valorize Barak changed the battle narrative. As a result:

[This] is the existence of an earlier story in which Deborah herself is the main warrior. Most likely this story would have circulated in a women's oral tradition, functioning in cults of the goddesses Asherah and [*nāl*] Anath for the commemoration and empowerment of women in a male-dominated culture.⁴⁷⁶

The presentation of both Deborah and Jael, in contradistinction to the idolatrous imagery of *Anath* and *Ashtarte*, presuppose an oral tradition of mockery against the Canaanite goddesses which the author used.⁴⁷⁷ The dualistic partnership of the goddesses in Ugarit history parallels the Hebrew heroines.⁴⁷⁸

Jael Tradition

The second tradition within the Canaanite oppression saga is the anecdote of the nomadic heroine Jael.⁴⁷⁹ As a religious functionary, she maintains a Kenite cultic authority that would cause Sisera to acknowledge the sanctity of her tent.⁴⁸⁰ Her marriage to (*Heber*) Heber places her in the hereditary priestly aristocracy.⁴⁸¹ The second support

⁴⁷³ הָרָר חֲבוֹרָה, and יִשָּׁשְׂכָר. Jg. 4:6, 12, and 14. Aharoni and Avi-Yonah, 46.

⁴⁷⁴ J.A. Fager, "Chaos and the Deborah Tradition," *QR* 13 (1993), 21.

⁴⁷⁵ D.F. Murray, "Narrative structure and technique in the Deborah-Barak story, Judges iv 4-22," *Studies in the Historical Books of the Old Testament*, (Ed.) J.A. Emerton (*VT Supp.* 30: Leiden, the Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1979), 186. At the same time, Murray notes the difficulty of finding clear evidence that the present text was essentially an oral, as against an *ab initio* written text.

⁴⁷⁶ עֲנָתָה. R.C. Rasmussen, "Deborah the Woman Warrior," *Anti-Covenant: Counter-Reading Women's Lives in the Hebrew Bible*, (Ed.) M. Bal (Decatur, GA: The Almond Press, 1989), 79.

⁴⁷⁷ Five parallels are drawn of Anat that have expression with Deborah: male warrior assistant, leader of warriors, mistress of dominion, maiden, and mistress of the stars. Craigie, *ZAW* 90, 376-380. See also, P.C. Craigie, "Three Ugaritic notes on the Song of Deborah," *JSOT* 2 (1977), 34-35.

⁴⁷⁸ Deborah is paired with Anat and Jael is paired and compared with Ashtarte. He lists four parallels: crushing of the skull, challenge of dominion, huntress, and association with the "wild goat." J.G. Taylor, "The Song of Deborah and Two Canaanite Goddesses," *JSOT* 23 (1982), 99-101.

⁴⁷⁹ Jg. 4:11, and 17-22.

⁴⁸⁰ Ackerman, 92-93.

⁴⁸¹ חֲבֵרָה. B. Mazar, "The Sanctuary of Arad and the Family of Hobab the Kenite," *JNES* 24 (1965), 301.

of this oral tradition where the story could be told is the encampment at (*'ēlōn B²ša^annaim*) “the oak in Zaanannim.”⁴⁸² Aside from the cultic teaching that was present at the holy “tree” site, another geographic location of importance is within the same verse. The northern Galilee town of (*Qedeš*) Kedesh was pre-eminent as one of the six Levitical cities of refuge.⁴⁸³ It would have served the purpose for those seeking asylum and those desiring divine teaching at the regional center.⁴⁸⁴

SONG OF DEBORAH TRADITION

With the antiquity of the poetic narrative, the age old question remains unresolved as to whether the prose or the poem was the original source material used. In defense of the song, “it is a poetic expression which burst forth from the heart of a person, who took part in this mighty event.”⁴⁸⁵ Halpern’s examination of the two texts places supremacy with the song and thus the prose account based on the poem.⁴⁸⁶ The opposing view elevating the prose account suggests that a poem would not have been source material for a narrative account.⁴⁸⁷ Obviously there are irreconcilable issues between the accounts regarding the location of (*Ta’nak*) Taanach as well as tribal inconsistency.⁴⁸⁸ Yet, a historiographical approach to the redacted form supports the tradition of the song being the source used to construct the prose account.⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸² אֵלֹן בְּצַנַּנִּים. Jg. 4:11. This is based on the position that other sacred trees played such as in Hebron (Gen. 13:18) and Bethel (Gen. 35:8). Judges also has its sacred sites (Jg. 4:5; 9:6, and 37). Ackerman, 96-97.

⁴⁸³ קֶדֶשׁ. Ex. 21:12-14; Num. 35:1-34; and Josh. 20:1-9.

⁴⁸⁴ B.R. Hockenhull, “Cities of Refuge,” *HBD*: 266-267. This discussion involves a listing of the six cities as well as the function within the cult.

⁴⁸⁵ Martin Buber is quoted without reference by H. Gevanyahu, “Deborah, the wife of Lapidot,” *JBQ* 18 (1990), 139. He further relates a recent application story by David Ben Gurion during Israel’s War of Independence, identifying the relevance of immediacy when Natan Alterman penned a mighty poem regarding a significant mission they participated.

⁴⁸⁶ B. Halpern, “The Resourceful Israelite Historian: The Song of Deborah and Israelite Historiography,” *HTR* 76 (1983), 392. He is joined in this view by Ackroyd, Garbini, Na’aman, McDaniel, and Webb.

⁴⁸⁷ H.W. Richter, *Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Richterbuch*, (Tradition Historical Examination of the Book of Judges) [Ger.], (*BBB* 18: Bonn, Germany: Peter Hanstein, 1963; 2nd ed. 1966), 111.

⁴⁸⁸ תַּנַּח.

⁴⁸⁹ N. Na’aman, “Literary and topographical notes on the battle of Kishon,” *VT* 40 (1990), 433.

The song is important as an oral form to celebrate an important victory that involved tribal cooperation.⁴⁹⁰ The choral elements in this five-movement ballad could be used in a cultic setting.⁴⁹¹ The *Sitz im Leben* would suggest the traditional victory reception, in which victorious warriors laden with booty would be greeted and received with dancing, singing, and eulogizing by the women, as they were in the early monarchy.⁴⁹² With a liturgical background in which Israel is called upon to sing and to praise Yahweh for His salvation and deliverance the covenant renewal ceremony would be an occasion for the retelling and re-singing of this song where

The tribal representatives all meet at the central shrine. Yahweh's claim upon the people's allegiance is solemnly rehearsed, as the people renew their pledge to remain loyal to Yahweh on their part and to observe his law [*Torah*]. The Song of Deborah obviously makes a splendid statement of Yahweh's claim on the people, because it describes a resounding victory in which his power was shown. So it can be regarded as intended for use in the liturgy at this point.⁴⁹³

Weiser takes this similar approach but asserts the song was accompanied by a cultic drama celebrating the amphictyony.⁴⁹⁴

GIDEON TRADITION

There is a collection of hero, etiological, and anecdotal traditions that constitute the record of Gideon.⁴⁹⁵ As the etiologies are examined elsewhere, our attention is drawn first to the hero sagas that expose him as the hero of (*M^anaššeh*) Manasseh.⁴⁹⁶ One of the problems is distinguishing whether Gideon and Jerubbaal is the same individual. A distinction has been drawn between the two characters incorporated in separate traditions.⁴⁹⁷ This division equates the Jerubbaal tradition as being more ancient with the Gideon elements inserted as an exilic redaction.⁴⁹⁸ Older scholarship insisted on two

⁴⁹⁰ B. Lindars, "Deborah's Song: Women in the Old Testament," *BJRL* 65 (1983), 159.

⁴⁹¹ J. Blenkinsopp, "Ballad Style and Psalm Style in the Song of Deborah," *Bib* 42 (1961), 61-76.

⁴⁹² 1 Sam. 18:6-7; 21:11; and 29:5. Z. Weisman, "שיריה (Jud. V 29)," *VT* 26 (1976), 118-119.

⁴⁹³ Lindars, "Deborah's Song," 165.

⁴⁹⁴ Weiser, 67-97.

⁴⁹⁵ Block does not follow this scheme of subdividing the traditions into hero sagas, legends, and anecdotes. Rather he suggests a pre-literary local tradition that involved the first and third saga and the first legend (Jg. 6:11-24; 7:11-15, 16-22; and 8:5-21). Block, *NAC*, 248.

⁴⁹⁶ מְנַשֶּׁה. Lang, 92.

⁴⁹⁷ U. Becker, *Richterzeit und Königtum: Redaktionsgeschichtliche Studien zum Richterbuch* (The time of the Judges and the Kingdom: Redaction historical studies in the book of Judges) [Ger.], (BZAW 192; Berlin, Germany: Walter de Gruyter, 1990), 152.

⁴⁹⁸ A.G. Auld, "Gideon: Hacking at the Heart of the Old Testament," *VT* 39 (1989), 263-267.

separate traditions edited by a JE redactor.⁴⁹⁹ Cundall agrees that two strands are present in the ninety-six verses but concedes that “it is impossible to distinguish them.”⁵⁰⁰ Evangelical scholarship does not discount the inconsistencies or the uncertainties present; yet views the text as a positive coherent unity of sources that the author used.⁵⁰¹ The text is linked with many other biblical traditions and bears the mark that “the narration is largely free from the trademarks of the late Deuteronomistic and Priestly editors.”⁵⁰²

The first saga involves the surprise attack on the Midianite camp.⁵⁰³ The next saga describes the conquest and death of two Midianite chiefs with their etiological references.⁵⁰⁴ The third tradition is the conquest east of the Jordan River.⁵⁰⁵ In addition to the three hero sagas there are three additional cult legends. The first legend is a legitimization of the altar at (*‘oprāh*) Ophrah.⁵⁰⁶ The second legend describes the razing of the altar of *Baal*.⁵⁰⁷ The last legend describes the origin and making of the ephod at Ophrah.⁵⁰⁸ The last category of traditions involves anecdotes that have been crafted into the narrative. The familiar “fleece oracle” told in its doublet form as a divine sign is the first anecdote.⁵⁰⁹ The other of the familiar oracles is the selection of the three hundred warriors.⁵¹⁰

⁴⁹⁹ Moore, 175-177.

⁵⁰⁰ Cundall, *TOTC*, 102.

⁵⁰¹ D.I. Block, “Will the real Gideon please stand up? Narrative style and intention in Judges 6-9,” *JETS* 40 (1997), 356-366.

⁵⁰² Auld, “Judges I and History,” 258, 267. He cites the tradition pre-dating the ideas of Noth [*Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien I* (The study of the oral tradition history). (Halle, Germany: M. Niemeyer, 1943), (Trans.) *The Deuteronomistic History* (Sheffield, England: University of Sheffield, Department of Biblical Studies, 1981), 42] and Richter (*Redaktionsgeschichtliche*, 112-246). However, not wanting to make these narratives Deuteronomistic, he suggests they were later supplements as were the final narratives (Jg. 17-18 and 19-21).

⁵⁰³ See Jg. 7:13-21 for the main body of the tradition. It was later expanded including Jg. 7:9-11, 12, and 22.

⁵⁰⁴ Jg. 7:25-8:3.

⁵⁰⁵ Jg. 8:5-9, and 13-21. The expanded addition includes verses 8:4, and 10-12.

⁵⁰⁶ **ח** עֶפְרָה. Jg. 6:11-24.

⁵⁰⁷ Jg. 6:25-31. H. Haag, “Gideon—Jerubbaal—Abimelek,” *ZAW* 79 (1967), 310-311. He suggests this is the legend of an anonymous sanctuary.

⁵⁰⁸ Jg. 8:21b, and 24-27.

⁵⁰⁹ Jg. 6:33-34, and 36-40.

⁵¹⁰ Jg. 7:2-8.

ABIMELECH TRADITION

Many of the structural schemes include Abimelech as the second strand of the Gideon tradition, thus Abimelech has been preserved because of his relationship to Jerubbaal.⁵¹¹ The oral tradition involves his kingship, the attack by (*Ga'al*) Gaal, the parallel accounts of his Shechemite vengeance, and his death.⁵¹² The composite narrative includes the fable of Jotham.⁵¹³ The Documentarian approach argues for the J and E traditions.⁵¹⁴ Modern scholarship suggests three separate traditions (Gaal, being the oldest; a fictive kingship of Abimelech, and Jotham's address).⁵¹⁵ Nothing extant has been preserved regarding the capture of Shechem by Israel during this era. Archaeological evidence suggests Shechem had entered the premonarchic alliance.⁵¹⁶

JEPHTHAH TRADITION

The basic stratum of the Jephthah tradition encompasses the narrative of his war against (*b⁹nê 'ammôn*) the Ammonites.⁵¹⁷ The historicity of Jephthah has been questioned making him a mythological and legendary symbol, especially where it concerns his daughter.⁵¹⁸

Following a historiographical approach, the passage is integral to the Gideon and Abimelech narratives, which are the thesis and antithesis, respectively. That places this narrative tradition as a synthesis to the question of monarchy.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹¹ Sellin, 210.

⁵¹² חַגְלָל. See (Jg. 9:1-6, 16a, 19b-21, and 23-24 regarding kingship), (Jg. 9:26-40 regarding Gaal), (Jg. 9:41-45 and 46-49 regarding the parallel accounts about Shechem), and (Jg. 9:50-54 regarding his death).

⁵¹³ Jg. 9:7-15.

⁵¹⁴ Nonetheless there is some disagreement as to the strand's character. Moore suggests a J source. Cf. Moore, 237. Budde suggests the E source. Cf. Budde, 118.

⁵¹⁵ Fritz, 129-144. The Gaal narrative was Jg. 9:26-40. The second tradition included Jg. 9:1a, 6, 23, 25, 42-45, 50-54, and 56 which was later combined with the Gaal tradition. He holds the Deuteronomistic historian invented Jotham and the old fable (Jg. 9:5b and 7-16a).

⁵¹⁶ G.E. Wright, "Shechem," *Archaeology and Old Testament Study: Jubilee Volume of the Society for Old Testament Study*, (Ed.) D.W. Thomas (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1967), 364. See also E.F. Campbell, Jr., "Excavation at Shechem, 1960," *BA* 23 (1960), 102-110.

⁵¹⁷ חַבְנֵי עַמּוֹן. Literally, the Ammonites are the "sons of Ammon." Jg. 10:17-18; 11:1-29, 32b-33a; and 12:7. Boling classifies this narrative as having a high degree of historicity but notes that the questions regarding Ammonite opposition are being brought to bear by archeological discoveries. See his *AB*, 205.

⁵¹⁸ T.C. Römer, "Why would the Deuteronomists tell about the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter?" *JSOT* 77 (1998), 29. He argues that the story of the daughter never existed independently because a redactor composed it in order to complete the story.

⁵¹⁹ I. Mehlman, "Jephthah," *JBQ* 23 (1995), 74.

The editor was actually an historian with a keen sense of history who, from the wealth of popular traditions and stories, chose personalities and events which served as milestones of ancient Israel. Obviously, like all ancient story-tellers, he was attracted to the piquant, the bizarre, to the miraculous and the exciting. Nonetheless, he tried in his choice to trace the over-all pattern of history.⁵²⁰

This tradition was enlarged to include the historical wilderness section regarding ancient Israel passing through Moabite territory.⁵²¹ The problematic etiological cultic passage concerning Jephthah's daughter followed.⁵²² The legendary basis suggested for its inclusion into the tradition has been attributed to the Greek legend of *Iphigenia*.⁵²³ Also problematic with that passage is the inauguration of a cultic tradition where there is no historical evidence of the festival having existed.⁵²⁴ The third element incorporated in the tradition was the enmity between the Gileadites and Ephraimites and the speech test.⁵²⁵

SAMSON TRADITION

The Samson tradition utilizes the largest number of genres within its saga that consists of four distinct episodes.⁵²⁶ Each of these chapters in Judges 13-16 may represent

⁵²⁰ Mehlman, "Jephthah," 73.

⁵²¹ Jg. 11:12-28; and Num. 20-21. This is not without problems because of the question of where the conquest occurred or with whom, as the context of the Num. 20-21 passage is clearly related to Moab, the kingdom south of Ammon. Moore sees this as a late edition, rather than the foundation of the tradition. Moore, 283. See also, O. Eissfeldt, *Die Quellen des Richterbuches: In Synoptischer Anordnung ins Deutsche Übersetzt samt einer in Einleitung und noten Gegebenen Begründung* (The Sources of the Book of Judges) [Ger.], (Leipzig, Germany: J.C. Hinrichs, 1925), 76. In rebuttal to Moore, Burney agrees with the reading of the Ammonites. Cf. Burney, 298-305.

⁵²² Jg. 11:30-31, 32a, and 34-40. The idea of an ancient myth has attached itself to this narrative and perpetuated it in the oral tradition. I. Mehlman, "Jephthah's Daughter," *JBQ* 25 (1997), 77. The obvious question surrounding the fulfillment of the vow and sacrifice are addressed later.

⁵²³ Parallels of the story related by Euripides of the sacrifice of Iphigenia are present; yet, they do not contain all three of the principal motifs. Marcus, *Jephthah and his vow*, 42.

⁵²⁴ The closest parallel would be the monthly (*rō'š hōdeš*) ראש חודש, which involved heathen worship and was sanctified by the Jews. P.T. Reis, "Spoiled Child: A Fresh Look at Jephthah's Daughter," *Prooftexts* 17 (1997), 287. Mehlman notes the ancient fertility rites were preserved in Baal and Ashtaroth in the surrounding mountains, and could be source material. Mehlman, "Jephthah's Daughter," 76-77. Vaguely, this could represent a female holiday as the cycle of moon is related to the menstrual cycle. Cf. T.C.G. Thornton, "Jewish New Moon Festivals, Galatians 4:3-11 and Colossians 2:16," *JTS* 40 (1989), 97-100. See also, A. Agus, "This Month is for You: Observing Rosh Hodesh As a Woman's Holiday," *The Jewish Woman: New Perspectives*, (Ed.), E. Koltun (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), 84-93.

⁵²⁵ Jg. 12:1-6. Most research involves the test question pronunciation. This is the only biblical text that addresses tribal dialect. Archeological evidence on an Ammonite seal impression supports the evidence of different vocalization within the region. R.S. Hendel, "Sibilants and *šibbōlet* (Judges 12:6)," *BASOR* 301 (1996), 69-75. See also, D. Marcus, "Ridiculing the Ephraimites: The Shibboleth Incident (Judg 12:6)," *Maarav* 8 (1992), 95-105.

⁵²⁶ Crenshaw identifies prayers, victory songs, etiologies, riddles, heroic deeds, birth story and recognition story as the basic traditions that form the four episodes: 1) birth story and a recognition scene; 2) marriage to a Timnite woman; 3) a visit to a harlot at Gaza; and 4) the דלילה (*D'lilāh*) Delilah incident and its sequel. Cf. Crenshaw, *Samson*, 40.

an individual oral tradition unified by the characterization of the hero.⁵²⁷ The polar approach reduces the idea of a tradition to a thematic literary organization highlighting the sexual element, violation of the *Nazirite* vows, or the hero as a national symbol.⁵²⁸ Wharton assumes two distinct traditions in the saga.⁵²⁹ None of these approaches are mutually exclusive.⁵³⁰

The thirteenth chapter is taken as a later accretion, even though a unity of composition is present on literary grounds.⁵³¹ As an individual hero, the question is whether he was a real person or this is a representation of a mythical person.

The grounds on which this mythical theory is based are the following: (1) the fact of sun worship amongst the Canaanitish tribes, which is proved by the name Bethshemesh (House of the Sun), the name of a town in the neighbourhood of Zorah, the birthplace of Samson; (2) the fact that the objects in nature, which were worshipped, were commonly, if not universally personified—The mythologies of Greece and Rome furnish striking illustrations; (3) the resemblance between Samson and the Grecian Hercules, who is generally regarded as to some extent a sun-myth; and (4) the name Samson, as coming from the Hebrew word *Shemesh*, which means the sun.⁵³²

The idea of Samson as a solar myth is an extreme conclusion if based clearly on paronomasia and the diminutive ending of his name, meaning “little sun.”⁵³³ However, past zealous scholars noted the parallelism.⁵³⁴ Even though solar features are present in the text, it does not constitute a proof for the myth.

⁵²⁷ This is the approach of Eissfeldt (*Die Quellen des Richterbuches*, 81-87) and J.A. Wharton “The Secret of Yahweh: Story and Affirmation in Judges 13—16,” *Int* 27 (1973), 48-66.

⁵²⁸ Matthews exposes the shortcomings of the various approaches in his analysis. Cf. V.H. Matthews, “Freedom and Entrapment in the Samson Narrative: A Literary Analysis,” *PRS* 16 (1989), 245. Crenshaw addresses the sexual element counterbalancing filial devotion against sexual desire. Cf. Crenshaw, *ZAW* 86, 470-504. Blenkinsopp and Greenstein each examine whether the Nazirite vow has been violated in whole or in part. Cf. J. Blenkinsopp, “Structure and Style in Judges 13—16,” *JBL* 82 (1963), 65-76; Greenstein, “The Riddle of Samson,” 237-260. The thematic approach of Deuteronomistic theology places Samson as a national symbol. Cf. J. Vickery, “In Strange Ways: The Story of Samson,” *Images of Man and God, Old Testament Short Stories in Literary Focus*, (Ed.) B.O. Long (Sheffield, England: The Almond Press, 1981), 58-73; J.C. Exum, “Aspects of Symmetry and Balance in the Samson Saga,” *JSOT* 19 (1981), 3-29.

⁵²⁹ His first tradition testifies to the secret purpose of YHWH with Samson and the mysterious effects of the spirit, whereas his second tradition demonstrates the importance of fidelity to the vow. Wharton, 60.

⁵³⁰ She ascribes that the source and form issues of transmission of the saga are important, but not as important as the theological dimension. Exum, “The Theological Dimension of the Samson Saga,” 33.

⁵³¹ Simpson, 53-54.

⁵³² T. Kirk, *Samson: His Life and Work* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Andrew Elliot, 1891; reprint Minneapolis, MN: Klock & Klock, 1983), 232.

⁵³³ *š* (*šemeš*) שמש, and (*šimšôn*) שמשון. Crenshaw, *Samson*, 15.

⁵³⁴ The parallels included the seven locks of hair representing the rays of the sun. The death motif is characterized by the setting of the sun. The hiding of Samson behind a rocky crag is viewed as the sun retreating behind the clouds. Samson bursting forth against his enemies has been typified with the

The more familiar similarity is made between Samson and Hercules. Both of them are to have performed a dozen different feats.⁵³⁵ Great effort is made to base the original *Sitz im Leben* to the Aegean world in which the Philistines as Sea People would have been aware of this legend.⁵³⁶ Of course this mythical view of Samson and Hercules has been rejected as speculation and a vague similarity.⁵³⁷ The archaeological evidence has not discovered any ruins to support the Philistine spectators or the tragic climax of the narrative with Samson's death.⁵³⁸ A non-literal interpretation allegorizes Samson as a folk legend, where he is a picture of humanity in its handicaps and weaknesses.⁵³⁹

If Samson is a historical person, then the mythological nature could be confronted in three ways. This tradition about him allows him to be characterized as a "wild man."⁵⁴⁰ The international folklore traditions, especially in the A.N.E. within:

Mesopotamia can be classified into three categories: (1) the hairy man, such as the literary character *Enkidu* or the iconographic figure, the *lahmu*; (2) the subhuman barbarians or wild races; and (3) the warrior who temporarily is transformed into a wild man while in a state of martial rage.⁵⁴¹

Without denigrating Samson, with the *lahmu* comparison, both cultural artifice and heroic potential are present.⁵⁴² The second of the two non-solar approaches is to accept him as a natural man, even with the affinities of the mythical elements. Nonetheless, the very human elements of conquest, thirst, hunger, wit, anger, and a penchant for women all

emergence of the sun following a storm. This view has been carried further into the absurd by comparing Delilah to winter's icy grip over a weakened sun. *Ibid.*, 16.

⁵³⁵ G. Roskoff, *Die Simsonssage nach ihrer Entstehung, Form und Bedeutung und der Heraclesmythus*, (The Samson story after its place of origin: Form and Meaning and the Hercules Myth) [Ger.], (Leipzig, Germany: Ernst Bredt, 1860), 22-30.

⁵³⁶ O. Margalith, "The legends of Samson/Heracles," *VT* 37 (1987), 63-70.

⁵³⁷ G.C. Cohen, "Samson and Hercules," *EvQ* 42 (1970), 131-141.

⁵³⁸ Margalith, "The legends of Samson/Heracles," 70.

⁵³⁹ E. Browne, "Samson: Riddle and Paradox," *TBT* 22 (1984), 161.

⁵⁴⁰ This tradition removed the discussion from a solar hero to an earthly hero. Cf. H. Gunkel, "Simson," *Reden und Aufsätze* (Lectures and Essays) [Ger.], (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1913), 38-64; D.E. Bynum, "Samson as a Biblical φῆρ ὁρεσκῶς," *Text and Tradition: The Hebrew Bible and Folklore*, (Ed.) S. Niditch (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1990), 57-73; and S. Niditch, "Samson as Culture Hero, Trickster, and Bandit: The Empowerment of the Weak," *CBQ* 52 (1990), 608-624.

⁵⁴¹ G. Mobley, "The Wild Man in the Bible and the Ancient Near East," *JBL* 116 (1997), 220.

⁵⁴² The traditional expression in Mesopotamian iconography features a naked, bearded human figure, whose distinguishing feature is long hair, parted down the middle and worn in six locks, three plaits to a side. Often the figure is seen in contest scenes with animals. Mobley, 223-224; F.A.M. Wiggermann, "Exit TALIM! Studies in Babylonian Demonology, I," *JEOL* 27 (1981-1982), 90.

speak of his humanity.⁵⁴³ Thirdly, the example from folk literature is the biography of a hero which characteristically includes a birth legend.⁵⁴⁴

In the riddle Samson presented, although he used autobiographical material to fashion it, the context of its use was at his wedding. The culture of the Philistines allowed Samson to enter into a “contest to prove both his physical and mental abilities.”⁵⁴⁵ The original *Sitz im Leben* for the riddle would have been at such a wedding party where this type of win-or-lose contest was an integral part.⁵⁴⁶

The story of the foxes and the firebrands is incredulous. There is strong evidence supporting the animals would have been jackals rather than foxes, because of their natural patterns.⁵⁴⁷ The miracle would have been to catch 150 pairs, tie them together, set the torches on fire, and have them all run in the same direction rather than running around in circles or in 150 different directions.⁵⁴⁸ The bushy red tail of the fox is an obvious allusion to the Greek colloquial usage.⁵⁴⁹ The Philistines entrance into Canaan brought with them Aegean legends and traditions with

[The] language of their country of origin in the Mycenaean-Minoan world would result in the fusing of the local Canaanite aetiological legends about the foxes/jackals which gave their name to *ša'al' bim* with the Greek colloquial expression meaning “foxes/torch tails.” The Philistines would call the animal by the Greek nickname and the Israelites, not understanding why the drab grey jackal should bear this colourful name, would ascribe to the local hero an aetiological story to explain this.⁵⁵⁰

MICAH, LEVITE, AND DANITE TRADITION

The design of this tradition has three separate stories that are tied together in the establishment of a cultic center.⁵⁵¹ The overall narrative parallels the exodus theme on a

⁵⁴³ Crenshaw, *Samson*, 17-19.

⁵⁴⁴ F.R.R.S. Raglan, *The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth, and Drama* (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1936), 190-192.

⁵⁴⁵ P. Nel, “The Riddle of Samson (Judg 14,14.18),” *Biblica* 66 (1985), 535.

⁵⁴⁶ L. Röhrich, “Rätsel,” (Riddle), *RGG* 5 (1961), 767.

⁵⁴⁷ F.S. Bodenheimer, *Animal and Man in Bible Lands* (Leiden, the Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1960), 44.

⁵⁴⁸ Moore, 343.

⁵⁴⁹ Ⲭ (lampouris) λάμπουρις. O. Margalith, “Samson’s foxes,” *VT* 35 (1985), 226.

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 227.

⁵⁵¹ The episodes are 1) the establishment of Micah’s sanctuary (Jg. 17:1-5); 2) the appointment of the Levite as priest in the sanctuary (Jg. 17:7-13); and 3) the conquest of Dan and the establishment of its shrine (Jg. 18:1b-30). The purpose for this story is a hidden polemic against Bethel. Amit, *VT* 40, 5, and 12.

tribal level.⁵⁵² This passage has the mark of redaction and thus it is often seen as a polemic about the monarchy.⁵⁵³ Although supporting an anti-Bethel polemic in a hidden form, Amit dates the story in a written form “in the intermediate stage after the destruction of Dan (732 BCE) and before the openly undertaken deeds of Josiah (622 BCE).”⁵⁵⁴ The mention of Dan rather than Laish suggests dating the story after the migration.⁵⁵⁵ Within the three main stories, the central “hero character” is the migratory young Levite.⁵⁵⁶

Was the oral tradition that formed the basis of the story a singular or a parallel narrative? Moore reviews Vatke’s and Bertheau’s analysis and suggests a redaction of two parallel sources.⁵⁵⁷ The essence of the text in its original form is suggested, with later redaction legitimizing the Danite cultus.⁵⁵⁸ Keil disagrees and hypothesizes that the material in chapter seventeen was a later addition to introduce “the account of the establishment of this image-worship in Laish-Dan.”⁵⁵⁹

⁵⁵² There are ten common themes: 1) direct association with Moses or his descendants; 2) dispatch of spies selected from among the tribal notables, and gathering of intelligence prior to the military campaign; 3) the spies’ report and attitude; 4) the misgivings of the people in reaction to the spies’ report; 5) the ethnic character of the campaign, specifically mentioning the non-combatants and cattle accompanying the warriors; 6) the particular number of armed warriors; 7) oracular consultation, by a Levitic priest, concerning the course of the campaign; 8) procurement of cult objects while on the move, and their eventual deposition at the final destination of the campaign; 9) permanence of priesthood secured by a third-generation priest; and 10) renaming of places conquered and resettled by the Israelites. A. Malamat, “The Danite Migration and the Pan-Israelite Exodus-Conquest: A Biblical Narrative Pattern,” *Biblica* 51 (1970), 1-16.

⁵⁵³ Noth takes a negative view of a pro-Davidic theme. M. Noth, “The Background of Judges 17—18,” *Israel’s Prophetic Heritage: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg*, (Eds.) B.W. Harrison and W. Harrelson (New York: Harper, 1962), 68-85. For an alternative view see, O’Connell, 268-304.

⁵⁵⁴ Amit, “Hidden Polemic in the Conquest of Dan,” 19.

⁵⁵⁵ It is suggested the events must have taken place after the Danites had exploited and taken the Levite to the north. This is based on the Ark being lost because an unqualified priesthood attended it. R. van der Hart, “The camp of Dan and the camp of Yahweh,” *VT* 25 (1975), 725.

⁵⁵⁶ With this categorization of “hero,” the ethical issues of the Levite’s actions do not constitute approval of these actions. Boling lifts the Levite out of the text as a central unifying element highlighting his dissatisfaction in Bethlehem and his exploitation and corruption by both Micah and the Danites. Boling, *AB*, 255.

⁵⁵⁷ Moore, 366-367. J.K.W. Vatke, *Die religion des Alten Testaments nach den kanonischen büchern entwickelt von Lic. Wilhelm Vatke*. (The religion of the Old Testament developed from the canonical books by Licentiatu Wilhelm Vatke) [Ger.], (Berlin, Germany: G. Bethge, 1835), 268; E. Bertheau, *Das Buch der Richter und Ruth*, (The Book of Judges and Ruth) [Ger.], (Leipzig, Germany: Weidmann’sche Buchhandlung, 1845), 196-212.

⁵⁵⁸ The story is contained in Jg. 17:1-5; 18:1-2, 8-14, and 27-31. A. Murtonen, “Some thoughts on Judges XVII sq,” *VT* 1 (1951), 223-224.

⁵⁵⁹ Keil and Delitzsch, 310.

LEVITE, CONCUBINE, AND BENJAMINITE TRADITION

The most tragic of the narratives in Judges is this exposition on violations of social, sexual, and anthropological norms.⁵⁶⁰ The anonymity expressed in the text further reveals the deterioration of this time.⁵⁶¹ The internal evidence of Phinehas as (*kōhēn hagādōl*) High Priest dates the story early in the period of the Judges some time after the death of Joshua.⁵⁶² The similarities to the story of (*Lôt*) Lot in Genesis 19 do not presuppose this was a reworking of an older tradition.⁵⁶³ The *Sitz im Leben* of the cult center in Dan suggests “this account serves the aetiological function of explaining [its] origins.”⁵⁶⁴

The two-source interpretation was held by Burney; however, he provides little information as to the form tradition of the passage.⁵⁶⁵ Bertheau suggests two distinct strands can be found.⁵⁶⁶ Moore refutes this explaining that

A contemporary of the Chronicler took the old story in hand, and put in place of the original account of the way in which the other Israelites punished the outrage at Gibeah his own representation of the composition, which is of the nature of Midrash, the author probably followed the order of the older narrative and in considerable part preserved its language. Traces of the later hand may perhaps be recognized in ch[apter] 19 also. It is possible that the older text was itself composite; in 19⁵⁻¹⁵ the story is redundant and confused, and more than one attempt has been made to solve the difficulties by analysis, but without conspicuous success. The oldest form of the story may perhaps be derived from J.⁵⁶⁷

Niditch acknowledges that the narrative is complicated with many discrepancies and problems, but observes thematic and literary style that unifies the complex narrative. Even so, she notes the current form tradition search by Schunk, Mayes, and Noth is a fruitless effort to find “original historical kernels in Judges 19-20.”⁵⁶⁸

⁵⁶⁰ For a discussion on the hospitality code violation see, Matthews, *BTR* 22, 3-12. Anthropological violations of homosexual and heterosexual rape are addressed in K. Stone, “Gender and Homosexuality in Judges 19: Subject—Honor, Object—Shame?” *JSOT* 67 (1995), 94-102.

⁵⁶¹ D.M. Hudson, “Living in a Land of Epithets: Anonymity in Judges 19-21,” *JSOT* 62 (1994), 49-66.

⁵⁶² כהן הגדול. Jg. 20:28. Keil and Delitzsch, 319.

⁵⁶³ לוט. He also suggests a connection to 1 Samuel 11. Lasine, 37-59.

⁵⁶⁴ Block, *NAC*, 514.

⁵⁶⁵ Burney, 442-449.

⁵⁶⁶ His first strand A is Jg. 20:1, 2b-10, 14, 18, 19, 24-28, 29-36a, 47; and 21:5-14. His second strand B is Jg. 20:2a, 11-13, 15-17, 20-23, 36b-44, 45, 46, 48; 21:1-4, and 15-23. Bertheau is quoted without reference in Moore, 407.

⁵⁶⁷ Moore, 405.

⁵⁶⁸ S. Niditch, “The ‘Sodomite’ Theme in Judges 19-20: Family, Community, and Social Disintegration,” *CBQ* 44 (1982), 374. See also, K.D. Schunck, *Benjamin: Untersuchungen zur Entstehung und Geschichte eines israelitischen Stammes* (Benjamin: Research into the Origins and History of an

CONCLUSION

The traditions that the author has incorporated into the Judges narrative may not have included all of the deliverers in the premonarchic period. For example, Joshua fulfills this role as a charismatic prophet. In the book of 1 Samuel, the juridical leadership is present through Eli, the high priest who judged Israel for 40 years.⁵⁶⁹ The Eli cycle of judgment is followed by the Samuel cycle, in which the first twelve chapters of 1 Samuel may be seen as an extended book of Judges.⁵⁷⁰ The Samuel tradition places him as both prophet and judge before the Israel monarchy.⁵⁷¹ However, included in a list of other deliverers is the unknown (*B³dān*) Bedan.⁵⁷² Even though **פדן** uses Bedan, which is the sole reference in the bible, others have chosen to emend it with Barak based on the LXX and **ב**.⁵⁷³ It has been suggested that Bedan may even refer to Abdon or Jephthah.⁵⁷⁴ Nonetheless, some contend that the emendation is inappropriate, because Bedan saved Israel, which is something that cannot be said of Barak or Deborah.⁵⁷⁵

Redaction Criticism

The redaction critic investigates the process of combining smaller units of tradition and literary form into a larger composite whole. We turn our attention briefly to the way the book was shaped by later editors to establish the framework within which the traditions, forms, and sources were used. *Redaktionsgeschichte* of the early 20th century became the methodology of German scholarship to understand the composition of the text.⁵⁷⁶ Through the work of W. Wrede on Mark, the primary focus of this discipline was

Israelite Tribe) [Ger.], (*BZAW* 86: Berlin, Germany: Töppelmann, 1963), 69; A.D.H. Mayes, *Israel in the Period of the Judges* (*SBTSS* 29: Naperville, IL: Allenson, 1974), 82; Noth, *Das System der zwölf Stämme Israels*, 170.

⁵⁶⁹ 1 Sam. 4:18.

⁵⁷⁰ D. Jobling, *Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative & Poetry: 1 Samuel* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998), 43-76.

⁵⁷¹ 1 Sam. 7:6.

⁵⁷² **פדן**. 1 Sam. 12:11.

⁵⁷³ H. Jacobson, "Bedan and Barak Reconsidered," *VT* 44 (1994), 108-109. See also H. Jacobson, "The Judge Bedan (1 Samuel xii 11)," *VT* 42 (1992), 123-124.

⁵⁷⁴ J. Day, "Bedan, Abdon, or Barak in 1 Samuel xii 11?" *VT* 43 (1993), 261-264.

⁵⁷⁵ T.N.D. Mettinger, *King and Messiah: The Civil and Sacral Legitimation of the Israelite Kings* (*ConBibOT* 8: Lund: LiberLäromedel/Gleerup, 1976), 82.

⁵⁷⁶ The name of the discipline was not coined by Willi Marxsen until some fifty years after Wilhelm Wrede had been put it into practice. W. Marxsen, *Der Evangelist Markus: Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte Des Evangeliums* (Mark the Evangelist: Studies in the Redaction History of the Gospels) [Ger.], (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956), 11.

the Synoptic Gospels.⁵⁷⁷ For some, this method could only be applied distinctively to the Synoptics and Acts.⁵⁷⁸ Gunkel showed that this method could be applied to Hebrew Bible texts also.⁵⁷⁹

Once it was recognized that the final author was in fact an *author* and not merely a transmitter of tradition, it became natural and inevitable to inquire into his total literary activity as revealing his [*sic*] purpose and theology, not only into his redaction of previously existing tradition. In this connection redaction criticism shades over into general literary criticism.⁵⁸⁰

Another term that may be used is *Kompositionsgeschichte* because of its concern “with the composition of new material and the arrangements of redacted or freshly created material into new units and patterns, as well as with the redaction of existing material.”⁵⁸¹ The earlier methodologies considered its discipline to include the entire history of the text, distinguishing between compositions for layers, until the final redacted edition.⁵⁸²

There is relative agreement that there are three redactional levels within the book, after the composition of individual hero epics. The original material composition may be classified as a “Pre-Deuteronomistic Judges.”⁵⁸³ Boling prefers to identify the compositions based on chronology and calls this main body of material the “Pragmatic collection (eighth century edition).”⁵⁸⁴ The next level of redaction included the earlier material with some editions which may be classified as the “Deuteronomistic edition.”⁵⁸⁵ Boling suggests this edition belongs to the seventh century.⁵⁸⁶ The final form is the “Deuteronomistic

⁵⁷⁷ W. Wrede, *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien* (The Messianic Secret in the Gospels) [Ger.], (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1901).

⁵⁷⁸ J. Rohde, *Rediscovering the Teaching of the Evangelists*, (Trans.) D.M. Barton (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1969), 9.

⁵⁷⁹ Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis*, 99.

⁵⁸⁰ N.R. Perrin and D. Duling, *The New Testament: An Introduction: Proclamation and Parenthesis, Myth, and History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1982), 238.

⁵⁸¹ N.R. Perrin, *What is Redaction Criticism?* (GBS, NTS: Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1969), 1.

⁵⁸² R. Knierim, “Criticism of Literary Features, Form, Tradition, and Redaction,” *The Hebrew Bible and its Modern Interpreters*, (Eds.) D.A. Knight and G.M. Tucker (*SBL 1*: Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1985), 150.

⁵⁸³ Dalglish, 377-379. This would include Jg. 2:6 – 6:6; 6:11 – 10:5; and 10:17 – 15:20. There is some minor disagreement with this arrangement. But ultimately the disagreement is that the hero stories were compiled and then redacted to include the prologue of 2:6 – 3:6. Cf. Sellin, 212-213.

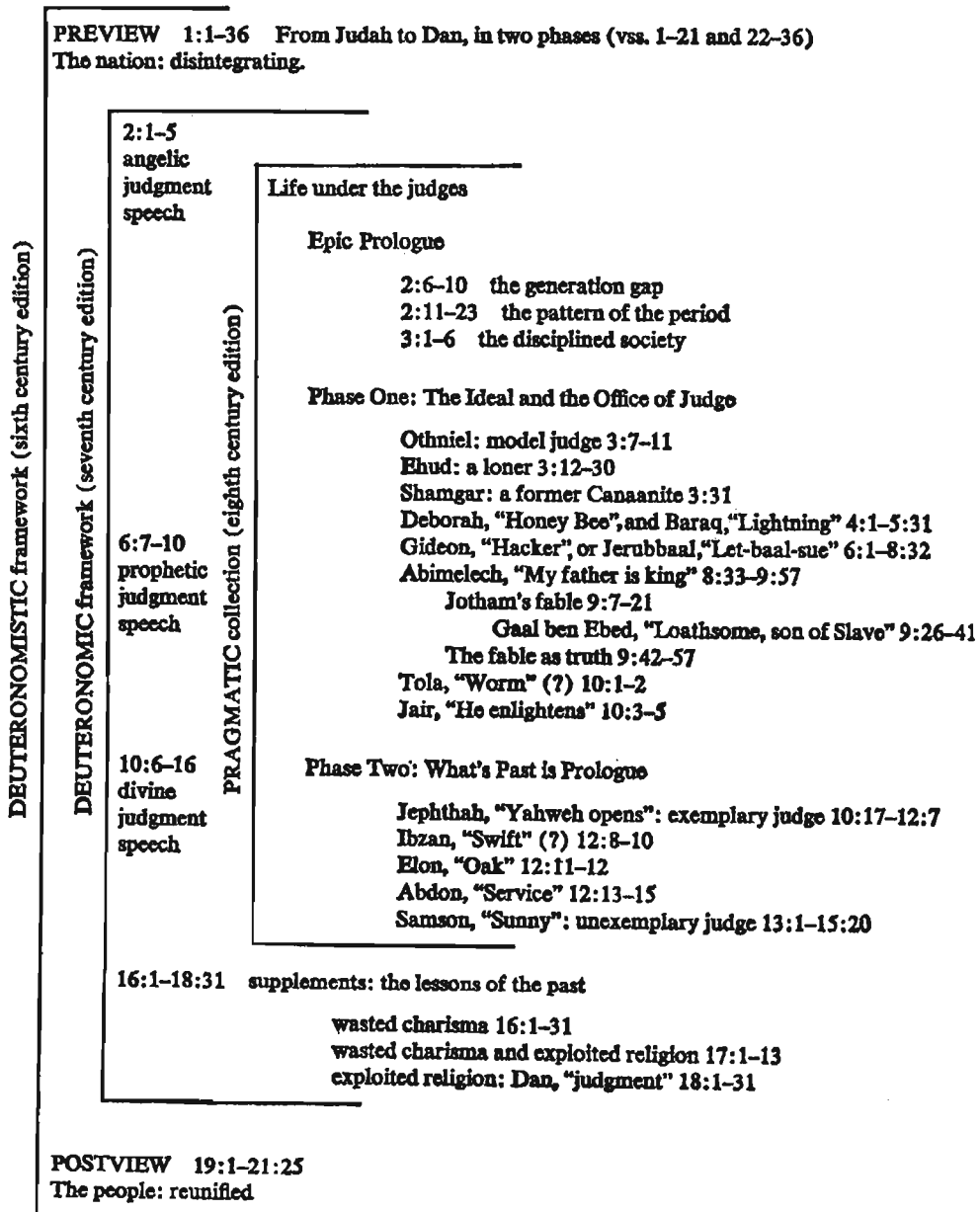
⁵⁸⁴ Boling, *AB*, 30.

⁵⁸⁵ Dalglish, 379-380. The new material added to the framework included 2:1-5; 6:7-10; 10:6-16; and 16:1 – 18:31. Thus, the total corpus of this Deuteronomistic edition was 2:1 – 18:31.

⁵⁸⁶ Boling, *AB*, 30.

edition,” which Boling places in the sixth century BCE.⁵⁸⁷ The structure of the redactional framework is revealed in Figure 2.⁵⁸⁸ The redactional levels are worthy of an interpretive examination; however, this is outside the scope of this research.

FIGURE 2
REDACTIONAL STRUCTURE OF JUDGES



⁵⁸⁷ Ibid. The new material added to the framework included the introduction 1:1-36 and the epilogue 19:1-21:25.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid.

This examination looks at the inherited tradition of the text and how the sources were used and connected based on the theological point of view of the redactor. In Judges, the redactor has utilized characteristic language and recurrent themes. Thus, our inquiry examines the *leitmotifs* used to elucidate the editorial purpose, especially as it relates to the question of divine judgment.⁵⁸⁹

As earlier addressed, the author's purpose may be viewed in three different ways. Therefore, the *leitmotifs* and *leitwords* present in the text form the basis of an examination relative to a polemic for the monarchy, a tribal confederation, and the Canaanization of Israel. Nonetheless, all of these themes may be seen in a macrostructure whereby the implied editorial guidelines are signs and leadership.⁵⁹⁰ The recent scholarship of Amit provides a new interpretive paradigm to view the thematic emphases which have been the primary focus of historical literary criticism.

The redactor has chosen the sources and integrated them throughout the narratives to present a unified theme. Before the theme can be properly evaluated, the *Sitz im Leben* of the period in which the material was organized and edited must be established to help determine the ideological world of the redactor. The scholarly disagreement is not over the content of the redactional levels; but it is primarily over the date identified with the levels. In addition, there is some confusion over the number of redactors because of the scholarly inconsistency of sigla describing redactional work at several of the levels. Generally it is accepted that the core of narratives represents a pre-Deuteronomistic compilation between a *terminus non ante* of the time of Saul and a *terminus ad quem* of the Babylonian exile.⁵⁹¹ However, the question that emerges is how much time elapsed between it and the ensuing editorial levels. Whereas the majority of scholarship necessitates the final redaction was either exilic or post-exilic, Amit breaks away with her

⁵⁸⁹ G.P.C. Streete, "Redaction Criticism," *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticism and their Application*, (Eds.) S.L. McKenzie and S.R. Haynes (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 116. This term was coined by E. Haenchen, *Der Weg Jesu: Eine Erklärung des Markus – Evangeliums und der kanonischen Parallelen* (The Way of Jesus: An Explanation of Mark – Gospel and Pentateuchal Parallels) [Ger.], (Berlin, Germany: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1968), 20-25.

⁵⁹⁰ Y. Amit, *The Book of Judges: The Art of Editing* (BibIntS 38: Leiden, the Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1999), 27.

⁵⁹¹ B. Halpern identifies the four categories of redactional thought and reveals the cacophony of confusion with the nomenclature. Noth refers to Dtr as the Deuteronomist. Smend changes the term so that Noth's Dtr = DtrG. However, Smend suggested there was a nomistic redactor, thus DtrN. The prophetic element is represented by Veijola's DtrP. Cross adds to this list with a Josianic redactor, Dtr₁ and an exilic redactor, Dtr₂. See Halpern's, *The First Historians*, 109-115. For an additional discussion on this see M.A. O'Brien, "Judges and the Deuteronomistic History," *The History of Israel's Traditions: The Heritage of Martin Noth*, (Eds.) S.L. McKenzie and M.P. Graham (JSOT Supp. 182: Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 235-259.

hypothesis that the final work was completed prior to the Josianic reforms.⁵⁹² Her line of reasoning is that despite Deuteronomistic parallels in Judges it does not indicate its redaction by the Deuteronomistic school in the seventh or sixth century BCE, because she hypothesizes that Judges was the prototype that the school used to complete Deuteronomy and formulate their Deuteronomistic tradition rather than vice versa.⁵⁹³ That certainly has plausibility, but *contra* Amit, I propose that the formulation of the two books could have evolved at the same time with Judges only having the outward stamp of Deuteronomistic editing. The normal practice of the Deuteronomistic school was to allow “the old accounts speak for themselves and [then the editor] setting forth his own theological interpretation of history only in the introductions and conclusions.”⁵⁹⁴ This understanding by Noth is oversimplified, whereas there are editorial glosses that impose a cyclical framework on the existing pre-Deuteronomic collection.⁵⁹⁵

They set the period of the judges in the framework of a religious and theological pragmatic outlook which shows disaster at the hand of enemies following upon guilt, and divine help following upon the repentance brought about by the distress; and then renewed apostasy, renewed distress, etc. in regular succession. But a closer examination readily reveals that this pragmatic outlook is really only externally imposed upon the narratives, without being firmly rooted in them. The narratives certainly tell of distress from enemies and of Israel’s prayer for help, of divine hearing and of successful battles fought by the judge sent by God as a deliverer. But the idea that the distress was on each occasion brought about by sin, and that after each deliverance the people once again fell back into its sinful action, *i.e.* apostasy, is quite alien to the majority of the old narratives.⁵⁹⁶

This editorial activity in Judges is paralleled in the same way that pragmatic comments are inserted into the books of Kings. The difference between them is that

In Kings praise alternates with censure, in Judges there is only censure (“And they did what was evil in the sight of the Lord,” but never, “And they did what was right in the sight of the Lord”).⁵⁹⁷

The redactors function historiosophically creating an “era of the judges” and with the narrative a didactic polemic that relates to their own societal situation.⁵⁹⁸ This contribution of integrating this period into the larger Israelite history “with the new idea of a steady increase in Israel’s sin from one generation to the next, point[s] clearly to a

⁵⁹² Amit, *The Book of Judges*, 368.

⁵⁹³ *Ibid.*, 364, and 367.

⁵⁹⁴ Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History*, 47.

⁵⁹⁵ Halpern, *The First Historians*, 124.

⁵⁹⁶ Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament*, 259.

⁵⁹⁷ Weinfeld, 109.

⁵⁹⁸ Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History*, 47-49.

context which extends beyond the period of the judges.”⁵⁹⁹ This continuity seen in moral theological terms through an Israelite historiography, demonstrates the editor’s philosophical view of life and history by emphasizing human insufficiency and divine grace.⁶⁰⁰

The earliest redaction could be placed in the reign of Hezekiah (715-687 BCE).⁶⁰¹ As a result, this historically places it immediately in the context after the dissolution of the northern kingdom of Israel into Assyrian captivity (722 BCE).⁶⁰² This event in the life of Israel had repercussions in the life of Judah which could be used to edit the pre-Deuteronomic material historiographically with didactic import. The instructive value is immense during a period of national introspection, when Hezekiah promoted reforms in the religious life by removing the idolatry in Judah and returned to *Torah* observance.⁶⁰³ Following the wicked reigns of Manasseh and (*’āmôn*) Amon, this was renewed in the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah (622 BCE) after the *Torah* was read to him by (*Hilqîyāhû*) Hilkiah, the high priest.⁶⁰⁴ Regardless of whether this was a Hezekian or Josianic redactor, from this point forward, the inclusion of the conquest narratives of chapter one become important. The chapter is distinctively presented with a southern tribal organization followed by a northern one, with each section having its success and failure motif. Hence, a two fold importance is introduced by the redactor.

This abbreviated exposition of the conquest may serve as the explanation for the troubled history of the northern tribes during the period of the Judges, it may also serve, by extension, as an introduction to the failures of the northern kingdom of Israel.⁶⁰⁵

Judean supremacy is characteristically present in the opening narratives of conquest, in the divine choice of the tribe to go forward first into battle in the epilogue, and by its omission in the negative cyclical format of the hero narratives, with the exception of Othniel who can be placed in the Joshua generation.⁶⁰⁶

⁵⁹⁹ A.D.H. Mayes, “The Period of the Judges and the Rise of the Monarchy,” *Israelite and Judaeae History*, (Eds.) J.H. Hayes and J.M. Miller (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1977), 293.

⁶⁰⁰ Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament*, 265.

⁶⁰¹ Halpern, *The First Historians*, 116; and P.R. House, *NAC: 1,2 Kings* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 352.

⁶⁰² 2 Kg. 17:6.

⁶⁰³ 2 Kg. 18:4-6; and 2 Chr. 29:1 – 31:21.

⁶⁰⁴ חִלְקִיָּהוּ, and חִלְקִיָּהוּ. Cf. 2 Kg. 21:1-26; and 22:10.

⁶⁰⁵ E.T. Mullen, Jr., “Judges 1:1-36: The Deuteronomistic Reintroduction of the Book of Judges,” *HTR* 77 (1984), 43.

⁶⁰⁶ Jg. 1:1-2; and 20:18.

In this period of upheaval and the possible threat of Assyria against Judah, the paradigm of Othniel as a deliver and his defeat of the king of Mesopotamia shows Cushan-Rishathaim as a type of (*San^hērīb*) Sennacherib, king of Assyria who was defeated by the angel of YHWH, when there was a Judean leader.⁶⁰⁷ Hence, Judah is portrayed positively in Judges because it fulfilled the divine command to possess the land. In the late eighth century to early seventh century BCE, the period was marked by an ambivalent attitude critical of the monarchy. Although the immediate historical context is Hezekiah, the prophecy of Isaiah glorifies the Davidic monarchy, which has Messianic and Eschatological ramifications.⁶⁰⁸ Thus, for the redactor in the Deuteronomistic edition, Hezekian reforms typify *Torah* observance, and provide “a cultic and theological view of the Israelite community as a people destined to occupy and hold Canaan provided only that it maintain its moral and cultic integrity.”⁶⁰⁹ With the exile of the northern kingdom, the editorial work of the Deuteronomistic Historian was harshly critical to their inappropriate cultic activity often connecting it to the sin of (*Yārāb‘ām ben-N^hāt*) Jeroboam, son of Nebat with his aberration of *Torah*, by erecting golden calves and altars at Bethel and Dan, and instituting a feast in the eighth month.⁶¹⁰ This provides a setting for the inclusion of the conquest migration of Dan in chapter one and for its cultic activity connected with Micah’s shrine in the epilogue. In contrast, the removal of idolatrous items by Hezekiah signals to the reader a return of the people to YHWH and *Torah* observance. With that change in the spiritual-religious climate of Judah, the redactor can present a polemic that admonishes and warns from the historical perspective of premonarchic Israel, and the recent history of the exile of the ten tribes, that if the kingdom of Judah takes heed by being the lead tribe, unifying themselves around the king, and strengthening its loyalty to YHWH, it could avoid experiencing an exile similar to that which the kingdom of Israel had succumbed.⁶¹¹

If the reign of Josiah is considered, then the final redaction with the inclusion of the rebuke in the Bochim story presents the outlook of the redactor that it is a Judean supremacy which restores the original borders of the united kingdom of a Davidic

⁶⁰⁷ סַנְחֶרִיב. Cf. 2 Kg. 19:14-36.

⁶⁰⁸ Isa. 9:5-6.

⁶⁰⁹ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 140.

⁶¹⁰ יָרָבְעָם בֶּן-נָבָט. 1 Kg. 12:25-33.

⁶¹¹ Amit, *The Book of Judges*, 381.

monarchy.⁶¹² In the post-Josianic era (after 609 BCE) leading up to and including the Babylonian exile the monarchal theme became fundamentally important for the Deuteronomist and with the “hindsight afforded by the situation in his own time, he inevitably concluded that the monarchy had led the Israelite nation to destruction – a theme that he developed in his treatment of the details of his history.”⁶¹³ Yet, the Deuteronomistic preface to this redacted edition of Judges had an immediate prophetic value.

With the monarchy still alive in the person of [(Y^ohōyākīn)] Jehoiachin, released from prison ca. 561 BCE (2 Kgs 25:27-30), and with the hope of deliverance beginning to dawn (Isaiah 40-55), the deuteronomistic writer recreates the past to instruct the Israel of the present of the necessity to follow the lead of Judah, the leader chosen by Yahweh, and to follow the laws of Moses in taking of the land allotted it by Joshua.⁶¹⁴

The other choice to consider is the post-exilic time when Judah had returned to the land from Babylon. The prophetic leadership of Ezra and (N^ohemyāh) Nehemiah in conjunction with the governmental leadership of (Z^orubābel) Zerubbabel had to ask questions about the cultic institutions and leadership without a king.⁶¹⁵ Thus, the Deuteronomistic redactors could look to Zerubbabel as a monarchic possibility; yet, they had to face the question of what the old traditions about premonarchic Israel and the monarchy mean now that the monarchy did not exist.⁶¹⁶ Ultimately there is no *prima facie* evidence and we are left to conjecture in which period the redactors lived and their *Sitz im Leben*, which with retrospection reveals their historiosophical approach and identifies a similar moral and theological decay in Israelite society.

Signs

A sign may be defined as “direct or indirect signals which the people receive from God, indicative of His guiding intervention in the course of events.”⁶¹⁷ The Deuteronomist would have been aware of this guiding principle, as reflected in the call experience of Moses and its validating signs for Israel.⁶¹⁸ The male population in its

⁶¹² Mullen, “Judges 1:1-36,” 53.

⁶¹³ Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History*, 47.

⁶¹⁴ יהויכין. Mullen, “Judges 1:1-36,” 54.

⁶¹⁵ זרובבל, נחמיה.

⁶¹⁶ D. Jobling, *The Sense of Biblical Narrative: Structural Analyses in the Hebrew Bible II* (JSOT Supp. 39: Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1986), 46.

⁶¹⁷ Amit, *The Book of Judges*, 27.

⁶¹⁸ Ex. 4:8-9.

circumcision was equally cognizant of this principle through the sign of the covenant.⁶¹⁹ This concept of the sign, which may be found throughout the bible and especially in the Prophets, is best elucidated in the Gospel of John. John clearly identifies his purpose for using signs and miracles.

Many other **signs** therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;
But these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.⁶²⁰

Operating in the realm of the five senses for physical perception, the (*sēmeia*) sign becomes the vehicle for theological purpose.⁶²¹ The sign could be performed by another human, an angel, or through direct divine action. Nonetheless, it is important to recognize that the term (*’ôṭ*) “sign” in Hebrew may not be a part of the text describing an event that has this function.⁶²² However, other characteristic phrases of the sign are present in Moses’ retelling of the *Torah*.

Has any people heard the voice of Elohim speaking from the midst of the fire, as you have heard it, and survived?
Or has a god tried to take for himself a nation from within another nation by trials, by signs and wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, as YHWH your Elohim did for you in Egypt before your eyes?
To you it was shown that you might know that YHWH, He is Elohim; there is no other besides Him.⁶²³

The Hebrew word appears 79 times in **א**, with 39 of them in the *Torah*.⁶²⁴ Surprisingly, the word appears only twice in Judges.⁶²⁵ The synonymous term miracle in its verbal (*mapli’*) and adjectival (*pil’i*) form also appear only twice in Judges.⁶²⁶ The Arabic cognate (*’āyat*) means a “sign, token, or mark by which a person is known.”⁶²⁷ Thus within the Judges narratives it is more expedient to recognize the sign-event rather than vocabulary which identifies the event as a sign. The Midrashic understanding of the

⁶¹⁹ Gen. 9:8-17.

⁶²⁰ Jn. 20:30-31. Emphasis added.

⁶²¹ **Σ** σημεῖα.

⁶²² **א** אֵיט. Amit, *The Book of Judges*, 30.

⁶²³ Dt. 4:33-35, emphasis added.

⁶²⁴ P.A. Kruger, “אֵיט,” *NIDOTTE I*, 331-333.

⁶²⁵ Jg. 6:17; and 20:38. Andersen and Forbes, 35.

⁶²⁶ **א** מַפְלִי, and **א** פִּלְי. Jg. 6:13; and 13:19. Andersen and Forbes, 201.

⁶²⁷ **آ** آيات. Within an Islamic context, this word in its plural form represents the equivalent of Qur’anic verses. Kruger, *NIDOTTE I*, 331.

narrative is a prophetic foreshadowing of future events whereby “the actions of the fathers are signs for the sons.”⁶²⁸

CYCLICAL ORGANIZATION

The first way in which the sign-event may be distinguished is through the cyclical manner in which Israel responds to YHWH. The cycle in its constituent parts is examined fully in chapter five. However, it is important to understand how the Deuteronomist used these elements to organize the material to demonstrate YHWH communicating with Israel in their apostasy and in their obedience. The principle of cyclicity functions throughout Judges regardless of whether there are three, four, or five stages of the cycle present in the narrative. Elements of the cycle may be absent from the text which alerts the reader to question why the redactor did not choose to comment on these elements, as in the case of the Shamgar narrative. Each stage has a time element attached to it; although the stages of oppression and peace are highlighted. The redactor shows that the stage of the cycle that Israel finds itself in is solely dependent upon Israel.

Once the people has sinned it brings upon itself punishment, whereas the interruption of the punishment and the transition to the stage of deliverance depends upon direct appeal to the Lord (crying out or shouting). The stage of deliverance is mostly of very short duration, and is likely to result in a lengthy period of calm. However, the stage of calm that follows deliverance is disturbed by the renewal of the people’s sinning. The people thus initiate the stages of sin and of crying out, and have the power to change the divine decision and to lead to punishment or to deliverance. It is responsible for the length of the years of enslavement and of quiet. The reader thus comes to learn of the role of human activity in creating an expected and non-arbitrary system of divine responses that determine the course of history.⁶²⁹

The core material of the narrative clearly reveals the cyclical pattern through seven of the twelve judges, as reflected in Table 2.⁶³⁰ Because the other five judges do not fully characterize the sequence of cycles does not negate the judge’s importance nor does it deny that the cycle was not functioning within their period of deliverance. Rather, it states that the redactor, for whatever reason, chose not to concentrate on the cyclical formula within those pericopes.

⁶²⁸ R. Alter, *Genesis: Translation and Commentary* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996), 52.

⁶²⁹ Amit, *The Book of Judges*, 38.

⁶³⁰ *Ibid.*, 45.

TABLE 2
SEQUENCE OF SEVEN CYCLES

Judge	Sin	Punishment	Crying Out	Salvation	Quiet
Othniel	3:7	3:8	3:9a	3:9b-10	3:11
Ehud	3:12a	3:12b-14	3:15a	3:15b-30a	3:30b
Deborah	4:1	4:2	4:3	4:5 – 5:31b	5:31c
Gideon	6:1	6:2-6a	6:6b-10	6:11 – 8:28b	8:28c
Tola	8:33-35	9:1-57		10:1	10:2-5
Jephthah	10:6	10:7-9	10:10-16	10:17 – 12:6	12:7-15
Samson	13:1a	13:1b		13:2 – 16:31	

SIGNS FROM YHWH TO ISRAEL

The author establishes that the cyclical activity in which Israel is immersed is predicated on a distinction between the generation of Israel during the time of Joshua and the subsequent generation that followed. As a result, the key distinguishing factor is that they did not know YHWH or the work that He had done for Israel.⁶³¹ This intimate relationship in which the new generation had lost its intimacy with YHWH is a parallel construction with the generation of Israel during the time of Joseph and the subsequent generation that followed.⁶³² In an effort to explain the lapse into sin by the new generation, the Deuteronomist has created in the narrative a causal relationship that anticipates a converse corollary that through the ensuing signs the new generation would have “direct experiential knowledge of Yahweh provided by His *work*.”⁶³³ Within the patriarchal narratives, the various divine naming events signal knowledge of divinity based on circumstances.⁶³⁴ Yet, personal lapses in faith and relationship can be seen in the use of the generic *Elohim* rather than YHWH. However, in the case of Abraham before Abimelech this identifiable knowledge is confused by his use of the word *Elohim*, which in the context refers to the pantheon of pagan gods who destined him to wander.⁶³⁵ Thus, it is not surprising that Gideon questioned the transcendent presence of YHWH as

⁶³¹ Josh. 24:31; and Jg. 2:10.

⁶³² Ex. 1:6, and 8.

⁶³³ Lindars, *Judges 1-5*, 97.

⁶³⁴ Gen. 14:18; 16:13; 17:1; 21:33; and 22:14.

⁶³⁵ Alter, *Genesis*, 95. Gen. 20:13.

abandonment by equating this with the absence of signs and miracles.⁶³⁶ The perceived sign becomes an important element of communication between YHWH and Israel.

DIRECT SIGNALS. The most obvious form of communication is that which is direct and overt. As in the case of Gideon, the sign authenticates the identity of YHWH and reveals His presence and activity in the life of Israel.⁶³⁷ The text includes fifteen different incidents of direct speech by YHWH.⁶³⁸ These direct speeches are often discourses as a response to an inquiry through an act of prayer. At other times, they become a divine indictment through rebuke. The third category of the divine speech is specific direction regarding a holy war. The final category regards the call experience of the judge.

As signs are experientially related to the human senses, the emotive elements are present with YHWH. The most obvious divine response was anger.⁶³⁹ Nonetheless, anger was displaced by compassion.⁶⁴⁰ Since these responses could not be physically observed, the sign would by necessity require some physical response directed toward Israel that would identify pleasure or displeasure. The negative response toward Israel begins with a volitional act of refusing to drive out the enemy nations.⁶⁴¹ Then, YHWH would sell Israel into the hand of the enemy.⁶⁴² Through these acts He would demonstrate that His hand was against Israel for evil.⁶⁴³ This could be discerned in the manner of Him making a breach in Israel.⁶⁴⁴ His divine disapproval also was characterized by the sending of an evil spirit.⁶⁴⁵ Finally, the worst scenario was YHWH departing from the judge.⁶⁴⁶

Fortunately for Israel, the compassion and mercy of YHWH was longsuffering and He responded to Israel in positive ways. Israel could validate this response when

⁶³⁶ Jg. 6:13.

⁶³⁷ Jg. 6:17-23; and 36-40.

⁶³⁸ Jg. 1:2; 2:20-22; 4:6-7; 6:8-10, 14, 16, 23, 25; 7:2-5, 7, 9-11; 10:11-14; 20:18, 23, and 28.

⁶³⁹ Jg. 2:12, 14, 20; 3:8; and 10:7.

⁶⁴⁰ Jg. 2:18; and 10:16.

⁶⁴¹ Jg. 2:21, and 23.

⁶⁴² Jg. 2:4; 3:8, 12; 4:2; 6:1, 13; 10:7; 13:1; and 20:28.

⁶⁴³ Jg. 2:15.

⁶⁴⁴ Jg. 21:15.

⁶⁴⁵ Jg. 9:23-24.

⁶⁴⁶ Jg. 16:20.

they saw Him raise up judges.⁶⁴⁷ There was an awareness that YHWH was with them.⁶⁴⁸ This was further evidenced by the Spirit of YHWH coming upon the judge.⁶⁴⁹ This divine-human relationship often was experienced during those times when the enemy was given into the hand of Israel.⁶⁵⁰ Israel experienced YHWH anthropomorphically as One who turned toward them, as a witness, and as a judge.⁶⁵¹ If the messenger of YHWH is taken as a theophany, then this manifestation becomes a direct sign of divine response.⁶⁵² Through individual and corporate entreaty, the text identifies a divine response to their inquiry.⁶⁵³ Perhaps one of the most obvious signs for Israel to observe is the sign of war whereby the enemy is summarily defeated and removed from the land in such a manner that the event has a divine signature.⁶⁵⁴ The redactor underscores this with his description of the annihilation of the Moabites, the destruction of the Canaanites, and the slaughter of the Midianites and Ammonites. Historically, the author recalls YHWH's involvement with the generation that wandered in the wilderness, when He went out of Seir and marched from the field of Edom.⁶⁵⁵ The last direct sign of direct involvement is the absence of a sign. From a positive standpoint, this would be those times in which the land of Israel experienced rest from its oppressors.⁶⁵⁶ And as previously inferred, from a negative stand point, when YHWH was not actively communicating with Israel there would be no sign.

INDIRECT SIGNALS. There are numerous signs whereby YHWH chose to act indirectly through various means. At times He acted through nature, by means of earthquake, fire on Mount Sinai, flooding of a river, and astronomically through meteorites.⁶⁵⁷ Through the presence and absence of dew on a fleece, Gideon discerned

⁶⁴⁷ Jg. 2:16, 18; 3:9, 15; 4:4; and 6:14. The narrative does not state that YHWH raised up Deborah as a judge; however, it does imply this by establishing this event already in progress with her judging activity.

⁶⁴⁸ Jg. 1:19, 22; and 2:8. Of course this identification was His presence at a tribal level and only at a personal level with the judge, as a divine representative rather than with individual Israelites.

⁶⁴⁹ Jg. 3:10; 6:33; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19; and 15:14.

⁶⁵⁰ Jg. 1:4; 3:10, 28; 4:9, 23; 8:3; 11:9, 21; and 18:10.

⁶⁵¹ Jg. 6:14; 11:10, and 27.

⁶⁵² Jg. 2:1-4; 5:23; 6:11-22; and 13:3-5, and 9-21.

⁶⁵³ Jg. 1:2; 13:9; 18:6; 20:18, 23, and 28.

⁶⁵⁴ Jg. 1:5, 8, 9, 10, 11-13, 17, 18, 25; 3:10, 28-29; 4:15-16; 7:15-25; 11:23-24, 33; 12:6; 18:27-28, and 29-48.

⁶⁵⁵ Jg. 5:4.

⁶⁵⁶ Jg. 3:11, 30; 5:31; and 8:28.

⁶⁵⁷ Jg. 5:4, 5, 20, and 21.

YHWH's presence.⁶⁵⁸ The author states that YHWH was known for His righteous deeds; however, the text is silent about what those deeds were.⁶⁵⁹ It is possible that the author was thinking of the principle of retribution.⁶⁶⁰

The cyclical stage of YHWH punishing Israel because of its disobedience is seen through the times that the author states the enemy afflicted Israel.⁶⁶¹ The sign was magnified by the rhetorical use of the number of years that Israel served the oppressive nation.⁶⁶² Initially, the nations remained in Canaan so that YHWH might test Israel by them; however, the test proved by and large that Israel would not obey the commandments or walk after the way of the earlier generation.⁶⁶³ These remaining nations acting as a "decoy" and "trap" function were also a symbolic sign.⁶⁶⁴

The cyclical stage of YHWH delivering Israel becomes the predominant sign.⁶⁶⁵ This saving act becomes the genesis of the hero judging Israel as a divine representative.⁶⁶⁶ It is at this point, where the different pericopes reflect individual action that YHWH is indirectly acting through a judge or a situation. This becomes a sign in three respects: to the judge, to those who witness the act, and historically to those who hear or read of the event. The death of Eglon by Ehud shows an indirect divine involvement, by Ehud being able to have a private audience with the Moabite king in order to murder him.⁶⁶⁷ The manner in which Ehud was able to create an embarrassing situation to Eglon's courtiers through the locked door, as well as the judge's escape to safety in order to rally the Ephraimites shows indirect divine involvement.⁶⁶⁸ The third indirect divine element in this story is the empowerment of the Ephraimites to capture the fords of the Jordan River, destroy ten thousand Moabites with no one escaping.⁶⁶⁹ The story of Shamgar single-handedly striking down six hundred Philistines with an ox goad

⁶⁵⁸ Jg. 6:36-40.

⁶⁵⁹ Jg. 5:11.

⁶⁶⁰ Jg. 1:7; 9:56; 15:11; and 16:28.

⁶⁶¹ Jg. 2:18; 6:2-6; and 10:7.

⁶⁶² Jg. 3:8, 14; 4:3; and 10:7.

⁶⁶³ Jg. 2:23, 23; and 3:1.

⁶⁶⁴ Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist*, 156.

⁶⁶⁵ Jg. 2:18; 3:31; 6:36; 8:32, 34; 10:1, 11, and 12.

⁶⁶⁶ Jg. 3:10; 10:2; 12:7, 8, 11, 13, 14; 15:20; and 16:31.

⁶⁶⁷ Jg. 3:20-23.

⁶⁶⁸ Jg. 3:26.

⁶⁶⁹ Jg. 3:28-29.

becomes a sign of deliverance that presupposes an enduing of strength, stamina, and endurance.⁶⁷⁰ During the time of Deborah, she represented YHWH in the oracles that she spoke for Him.⁶⁷¹ Another sign was YHWH's removal of Sisera, an enemy of Israel, through Jael's murder of him by means of a tent peg.⁶⁷² YHWH communicated to Israel through an unidentified prophet.⁶⁷³ In the realm of personal communication, the angel of YHWH remaining with Gideon until he could offer a sacrifice becomes a sign of YHWH's immanence with Israel.⁶⁷⁴ But, by the same token, the vanishing of the angel of YHWH in the midst of the sacrifice shows YHWH's acceptance of the offering and communicates positively to the one making the offering of worship.⁶⁷⁵ When Gideon obeyed YHWH and destroyed the altar of Baal, the event may be seen as a sign of salvation, whereby YHWH saved Gideon's life from the angry Baal worshippers.⁶⁷⁶ To a fearful Gideon, the sign of YHWH's deliverance was his successful infiltration into the Midianite camp with his servant, overhearing the dream and its interpretation indicating his future success in battle and their safe exit from the camp.⁶⁷⁷ As a result of Gideon's faith being undergirded by the Midianite dream the Midianites were engaged in battle. The indirect divine activity may be seen in the enemy turning their swords on each other throughout the whole Midianite army.⁶⁷⁸ Following this event, through the capture of Zebah and Zalmunna, the sign indicates that no enemy can escape from YHWH.⁶⁷⁹ Almost as a corollary of retribution, through the disciplining of Succoth and Penuel, the sign communicates to Israel that when improper responses are given there will be consequences associated with that action.⁶⁸⁰ Whereby Gideon's response to the men of Succoth and Penuel reflect the response of a judge to the people; it would imply that an improper response of Israel in apostasy would result in consequences of a divine response. Following the deliverance by Gideon, when the men of Israel desire for him to

⁶⁷⁰ Jg. 3:31.

⁶⁷¹ Jg. 4:6-7, and 14.

⁶⁷² Jg. 4:21; and 5:26-27.

⁶⁷³ Jg. 6:8-10.

⁶⁷⁴ Jg. 6:18.

⁶⁷⁵ Jg. 6:21; and 13:20.

⁶⁷⁶ Jg. 6:28-32.

⁶⁷⁷ Jg. 7:13-15.

⁶⁷⁸ Jg. 7:22.

⁶⁷⁹ Jg. 8:4-21.

⁶⁸⁰ Jg. 8:14-17.

rule over them as a dynasty, his response to them becomes a sign event that YHWH communicates that He is to be the only One ruling over Israel.⁶⁸¹ This communication event is important because of the manner in which the author does not reveal the Israelite response to Gideon.

[This is] a common convention of biblical narrative: when a speaker addresses someone and the formula for introducing speech is repeated with no intervening response from the interlocutor, it generally indicates some sort of significant silence—a failure to comprehend, a resistance to the speaker's words, and so forth. (Compare Judges 8:23-24. First Gideon declares to his men that he will not rule over them. Seeing their evident resistance, he proposes a concrete alternative they can understand, the collection of gold ornaments to make an ephod.)⁶⁸²

Although this is dealt with later, the fable of Jotham becomes a sign about leadership. Yet, it does specifically state that in the men of Shechem hearing the fable, that God would listen to them, establishing that there would be a divine response.⁶⁸³ Jotham assumes a prophetic role, curses the Shechemites, and YHWH responds by fulfilling the curse against them.⁶⁸⁴ The death of Abimelech by the unnamed woman throwing a millstone upon him is a sign event that judges him unfavorably because of the societal stigma of dying at the hand of a woman.⁶⁸⁵ Even before the birth of Samson, there was a sign through the prophetic utterance of the angel of YHWH that he would be a deliverer; however that deliverance would not begin for many years until he had become an adult.⁶⁸⁶ The second sign associated with his birth was his designation as a *Nazirite*, which implied that there would be a divine closeness between him and YHWH, which should be between Israel and YHWH.⁶⁸⁷ After Samson had grown older, his marriage to the Timnite woman becomes a sign of YHWH seeking to respond to the Philistines.⁶⁸⁸ The collection of stories of Samson killing the Philistines communicates as a sign to Israel that the enemy could be removed from the land.⁶⁸⁹ There are two other sign events in Samson's life that are important. The incident at En-hakkore where YHWH provided for

⁶⁸¹ Jg. 8:22.

⁶⁸² Alter, *Genesis*, 39. Alter makes this observation and connection to Gideon based on the first occurrence of this narrative convention with the Noah pericope. Gen. 9:12.

⁶⁸³ Jg. 9:7-15.

⁶⁸⁴ Jg. 9:20, and 57.

⁶⁸⁵ Jg. 9:52.

⁶⁸⁶ Jg. 13:2-24.

⁶⁸⁷ Jg. 13:5.

⁶⁸⁸ Jg. 14:4.

⁶⁸⁹ Jg. 14:19; 15:3-6, 8, 15-16; and 16:29-30.

Samson's thirst after a great battle reveals YHWH as a deliverer for Samson of his mortal problems.⁶⁹⁰ The capture of Samson through the deceit of Delilah becomes a significant sign, as a prophetic action to Israel of how *Torah* violation led to YHWH departing from him, and even more his unawareness of this.⁶⁹¹ In the epilogue, the action of the Levite in the dismemberment of his *pilegeš* becomes a prophetic sign of the fragmentation and disunity of the tribes which ironically functions as an event that unifies them.⁶⁹²

SIGNS FROM ISRAEL TO YHWH. The text also gives evidence that Israel communicated with YHWH.⁶⁹³ In times of difficulty, specific inquiry was made to Him.⁶⁹⁴ In times of extreme difficulty and oppression, Israel lifted up its voice weeping and crying.⁶⁹⁵ Sometimes the expression was a nonverbal response of groaning because of the enemy.⁶⁹⁶ They communicated with YHWH, and about YHWH, through song.⁶⁹⁷ At other times, it was through a vow or an oath sworn to Him.⁶⁹⁸

Indirectly, Israel communicated with YHWH by its activities. Positively, this occurred when they served YHWH.⁶⁹⁹ Their fidelity and return to Him was evident in times of sacrificial offerings.⁷⁰⁰ This demanded the destruction of idolatrous altars and the erecting of an altar solely for YHWH.⁷⁰¹ This action also was accompanied by the putting away of false gods.⁷⁰² On one occasion, during a time of repentance Israel responded to YHWH through fasting.⁷⁰³

Unfortunately, many of the indirect responses were negative. Often these responses would follow after a judge died when Israel would turn away from YHWH.⁷⁰⁴

⁶⁹⁰ Jg. 15:18-19.

⁶⁹¹ Jg. 16:4-21.

⁶⁹² Jg. 19:29.

⁶⁹³ Jg. 11:11.

⁶⁹⁴ Jg. 1:1; 13:8; 16:28; 18:5; 20:18, 23, 27, 28; and 21:3.

⁶⁹⁵ Jg. 2:4; 3:9, 15; 4:3; 6:6, 7; 10:10, 15; 20:23, 26; and 21:2.

⁶⁹⁶ Jg. 2:18.

⁶⁹⁷ Jg. 5:1-31.

⁶⁹⁸ Jg. 11:30-31, 35, 36; 21:1, 5, 7, and 18.

⁶⁹⁹ Jg. 2:7; and 10:16.

⁷⁰⁰ Jg. 2:5; 6:18-21; 13:16, 19-20; 20:26; and 21:4.

⁷⁰¹ Jg. 6:24-27; and 21:4.

⁷⁰² Jg. 10:16.

⁷⁰³ Jg. 20:26.

⁷⁰⁴ Jg. 2:19; 3:12; 4:1; 8:33; 10:5; and 12:15.

It began by turning away from the commandments.⁷⁰⁵ They would not listen to YHWH or to His judges.⁷⁰⁶ Israel forsook YHWH.⁷⁰⁷ Then, Israel would forget YHWH.⁷⁰⁸ Israel demonstrated these responses by doing evil in the sight of YHWH.⁷⁰⁹ This included serving idols and false gods.⁷¹⁰ They made idols and cultic items of worship.⁷¹¹ Also, they took daughters of the nations around them which He prohibited.⁷¹² At times the response was one of presumption to think that YHWH would bless them, although what they were doing was in violation of the *Torah*.⁷¹³ This was a time when Israel did what was right in their eyes in contradistinction to what was evil in the eyes of YHWH.⁷¹⁴ Even though the signs were mediums that expressed communication between deity and humanity it did not guarantee that Israel would comprehend and understand the sign. This inability to interpret and apply divine communication to their situation is illustrated in the way the narrator portrays in the story of Gideon “how Israel even in the very process of being delivered by Yahweh vacillates between allegiance to him and allegiance to another god.”⁷¹⁵

CANAANIZATION OF ISRAEL

The introductory Deuteronomistic exposition clarifies that the Canaanite nations would negatively influence Israel and generically presents the various stages of the cycle that characterizes the central collection of hero stories. Yet, before this could be introduced, the Deuteronomistic editor presented another introduction emphasizing the successes and failures of Israel’s conquest of the land. Apart from this initial narrative, only in the epilogue is the tribe of Dan shown as additionally making an effort to expand its territory through migration and conquest.⁷¹⁶ Thus, there is no evidence that any tribe

⁷⁰⁵ Jg. 2:17.

⁷⁰⁶ Jg. 2:17, and 20.

⁷⁰⁷ Jg. 2:12, 13; 10:6, 10, and 13.

⁷⁰⁸ Jg. 3:7; and 8:34.

⁷⁰⁹ Jg. 2:11; 3:7, 12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; and 13:1.

⁷¹⁰ Jg. 2:11, 12, 13, 17, 19; 3:6, 7; 8:33; 10:6, 10, 13; 17:5; 18:14, 17, 18, 30, and 31.

⁷¹¹ Jg. 8:27; and 17:3-4.

⁷¹² Jg. 3:6.

⁷¹³ Jg. 17:13.

⁷¹⁴ Jg. 17:6; and 21:25.

⁷¹⁵ Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist*, 171.

⁷¹⁶ Paton, 13. Jg. 18:1-31.

attempted to extend their territory by dispossessing any of the existing Canaanite city-states. The only evidence of any attempt at territorial control or expansion is through the illegitimate leadership of Abimelech.

There is a paradigm that is placed before the reader whether Israel would be successful in the future or it would reflect a failure because of the Canaanite influence.⁷¹⁷ The pressure these nations exerted upon Israel becomes a repeated sign of forsaking YHWH for a Canaanite deity for which a deliver would be necessary to remove that influence and return Israel back to *Torah*. The narrator has prepared the reader for the exposition of the judges when the Prologue concludes with a summary indictment that Israel lived together with the Canaanites and integrated their societies through mixed marriages.⁷¹⁸ The Canaanization of Israel is all said and done; but, if there is any question in the mind of the reader, then the hero narratives make an irrefutable case. Gideon establishes a cultic ephod that leads Israel away in idolatry. His cohabitation with a Shechemite concubine results in the birth of Abimelech who embodies Canaanite culture. Through prostitution Gilead's son Jephthah is born. He later emulates Canaanite practices by sacrificing his daughter. Samson characterizes the societal infidelity through his liaisons.⁷¹⁹

Even with their flaws and failures, the judges become an important sign for the reader because of their position in the cycle of their "ability to deliver the people, together with their inability to guarantee loyalty to God after their deaths" that returns Israel back into the realm of being Canaanized once again.⁷²⁰

Most of the time of narration in the book of Judges is devoted to the acts of the deliverers, which in most cases represent an event which took only a few days. The preference for such proportions of representation indicated that the tendency of editing was to emphasize the deliverance itself, that is, the signs (i.e., the first editorial guideline). We therefore find that, although the initial impression that the deliverers were the leaders of the period, the appearance of other leaders, the absence of reports concerning leadership during the periods between one deliverer and the next, as well as the lack of adequate information concerning the leadership of the deliverers themselves after their acts of deliverance—all these explain why the term 'deliverers' was not chosen to serve as an overall term for the leadership of the period.⁷²¹

Thus, it is necessary to examine the editorial guideline of leadership even though the pejorative term "judge" may not be applicable.

⁷¹⁷ Mullen, "Judges 1:1-36," 39-42.

⁷¹⁸ Jg. 3:5-6.

⁷¹⁹ Block, *NAC*, 140.

⁷²⁰ Amit, *The Book of Judges*, 75.

⁷²¹ *Ibid.*, 65.

Leadership

This period in the early history of Israel followed the conquest of Israel under the leadership of Joshua; but it existed before the time of the Israelite monarchy under Saul. The tribes occupied the land of Canaan and a portion of the Transjordan plateau as reflected in Map 2.⁷²² This map further identifies the judge with the tribal area of his heritage.⁷²³ Within the Judges narrative several functional leadership positions existed; however, the question is whether these positions represented the paradigm of a tribal confederation or a premonarchic evolutionary state or neither.

TRIBAL CONFEDERATION

The redactor is careful to give mention to each of the Israelite tribes at some level throughout the book. This is accomplished by either identifying the tribe outright or by highlighting an individual from a specific tribe. The only exception to this would be the tribe of Gad, which is not mentioned. However, by including the cities of Gilead, Peniel, and Jabesh-Gilead, as well as the deliverer Gideon, this tribe is not excluded.⁷²⁴ The other anomaly is the mention of the house of Joseph in the conquest narrative, which does not specify whether this referred to the tribe of Manasseh or Ephraim or it referred to both of them.⁷²⁵

For Noth, the tribes were organized in an amphictyonic structure around a central cultic sanctuary. Most scholars have abandoned this sociological structural paradigm as being forced upon premonarchic Israel.⁷²⁶ Because of the way that the Deuteronomic Historian edited the material and provided a new introduction, if these redacted elements of his framework are removed, then the amphictyonic impression of a pan-Israelite community disappears.⁷²⁷ The number "12" is important for this organization of the tribes and often the idea of a tribal confederacy is connected to the blessings extended to the twelve tribes by Jacob and later by Moses.⁷²⁸ The problem in Judges is that with the exception of the implied gathering of all Israel in the internecine conflict against

⁷²² Aharoni and Avi-Yonah, 82.

⁷²³ The exception to this would be Ibzan, who *contra* Aharoni should be placed in the Bethlehem located in the tribal area of Zebulun rather than in Judah.

⁷²⁴ Jg. 5:17; 8: 8, 9, 17; 10:3-5, 8, 17, 18; 11:1-3, 6-15, 24, 28-40; 12:1-7; and 21:8-12.

⁷²⁵ Jg. 1:22-25, and 35.

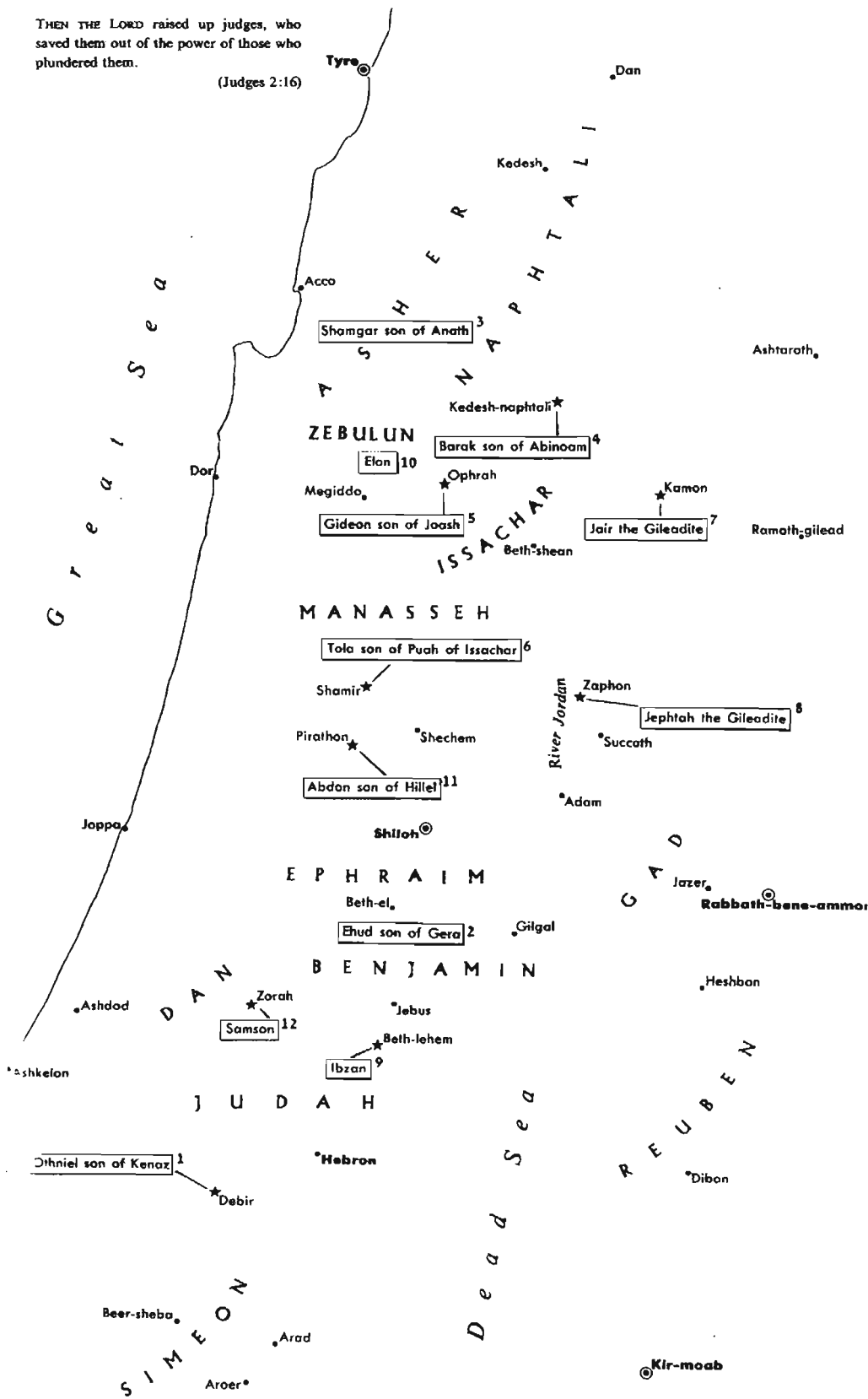
⁷²⁶ See the section, "Social Organization," pages 187-204.

⁷²⁷ Lindars, "The Israelite Tribes in Judges," 96.

⁷²⁸ Gen. 49:2-27; and Dt. 33:6-25.

MAP 2
TRIBAL DISTRIBUTION OF JUDGES

THEN THE LORD raised up judges, who saved them out of the power of those who plundered them.
(Judges 2:16)



against Benjamin in the epilogue, there is no presentation of all twelve of the tribes. The Song of Deborah closely approaches this with the mention of ten tribes (actually only eight because of the mention of Machir and Gilead, which do not appear in any other lists in connection with the known tribes).⁷²⁹ The Deuteronomistic introduction has reworked the idea of the conquest of a pan-tribal Israel; however, Reuben, Levi, and Gad are conspicuously missing. Further there is the confusion about the House of Joseph which is characteristic language of the post-Davidic era.⁷³⁰

Tribal discontinuity is presented both explicitly and implicitly by the editor. Under the leadership of Deborah, the tribes though called to battle against the Canaanites did not come to the aid of their brethren. Only Naphtali and Zebulun mustered in this battle against Sisera.⁷³¹ Later, the Danites provoke the house of Micah into a situation of strife.⁷³² Of course the obvious example is in the internecine war between the tribes and Benjamin following the outrage at Gibeah.⁷³³

If the judge is seen as a representative kernel of the tribe, then the discontinuity becomes more apparent. There is tribal tension between Barak and Deborah in their response to one another about who should do what.⁷³⁴ Gideon finds himself in an intra-tribal conflict with the Ephraimites following the Midianite deliverance.⁷³⁵ Although this conflict with the Ephraimites was resolved, the incident between the Ephraimites and the Gileadites under Jephthah's leadership resulted in great loss of life.⁷³⁶ Additional animosity is present in the story of Jephthah in regard to him with the men of Succoth and Peniel.⁷³⁷ Strife and tension is present between Samson and the fearful men of Judah.⁷³⁸ Also Abimelech is a portrayal of strife and disharmony with his half-brothers and then later with the Shechemites over whom he ruled.⁷³⁹ The presentation of individual, family,

⁷²⁹ Jg. 5:14, and 17.

⁷³⁰ Lindars, "The Israelite Tribes in Judges," 101.

⁷³¹ Jg. 4:6-10.

⁷³² Jg. 18:14-26.

⁷³³ Jg. 20:1-48.

⁷³⁴ Jg. 4:6-9.

⁷³⁵ Jg. 8:1-3.

⁷³⁶ Jg. 12:1-6.

⁷³⁷ Jg. 8:4-9, and 14-17.

⁷³⁸ Jg. 15:10-13.

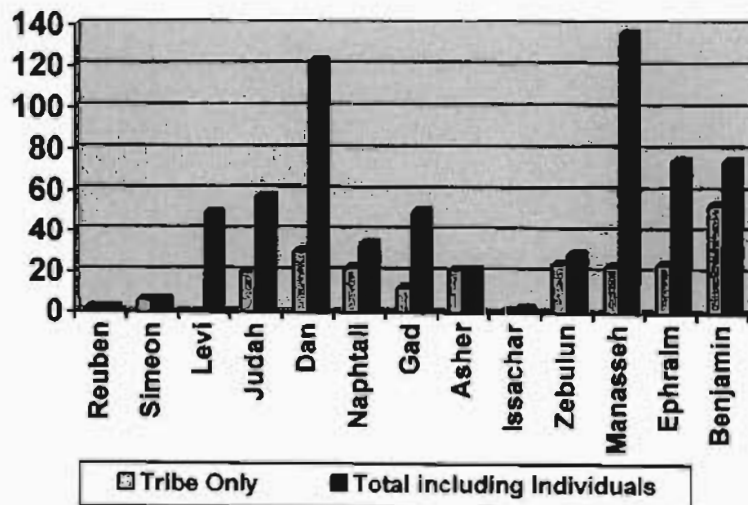
⁷³⁹ Jg. 9:5, and 23.

clan, and tribal strife strongly suggest that the editor did not identify a pan-tribal organization with leadership continuity.

What does appear is a southern and northern emphasis. The structural organization of chapter one clarifies this, where the redactor may have implied the segmentation of the unified monarchy that divided after the Solomonic reign. Judah establishes a hegemony that incorporates Benjamin, Simeon, Levi, and other ethnic groups. The house of Joseph, later representing the northern kingdom dominates from the central mountainous region of Mount Ephraim causing the other tribes to be dispersed as a buffer to any potential international threats to its existence.⁷⁴⁰ For the Deuteronomic Historian, the tribal reality did not reflect a pan-Israelite institution, rather it was a corporate entity made up of all the aggregate sociological levels representing the people of Israel as worshippers of YHWH. Thus, any tribal designation in Judges reflects a geographical orientation and not an ethnic one.⁷⁴¹

As reflected in the previous map, the redactor is able to disperse the judges throughout the majority of the tribal areas. However, no hero figure came from Reuben, Simeon, Levi, or (*'āšēr*) Asher.⁷⁴² Nonetheless, the focal point of the epilogue is about a Levite. Further, by the convention of repetition, the redactor is able to concentrate on a particular tribe and to impart significance to it by verse frequency.

FIGURE 3
VERSE DISTRIBUTION BY TRIBAL REFERENCES



⁷⁴⁰ Lindars, "The Israelite Tribes in Judges," 108-109.

⁷⁴¹ Ibid., 110, and 112.

⁷⁴² מִן אֲשֶׁר.

As reflected in Figure 3, each of the tribes is mentioned showing their verse frequency as it pertains to the tribe and to any reference to the tribe or a person in the tribe. Although the references to some of the tribes do not have as great a numerical representation as others; the author through rhetorical device is able to subtly allow the reader to reinforce his own conviction about tribal Israel with each tribal reference.

THE MONARCHY

Throughout the primeval, patriarchal, and Exodus periods of Israelite history no one functioned as a monarchal ruler for Israel, although distinct and key leadership roles were occupied by Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and Joshua. The absence of a king was one of the distinctive features that separated Israel from the surrounding nations. Even though Israel did not have a king during the premonarchic period does not mean there were no leaders. The question is whether the leaders functioned tribally or pan-tribally and if they were a foreshadowing paradigm for a king.

LEADERSHIP ROLES. Of the tribes, Levi was singled out by YHWH to serve a religious leadership function. From among the Levites, the descendants of Aaron became the legitimate priesthood for Israel.⁷⁴³ And of their number, one male would serve as the high priest. The narrative shows Phinehas functioning in this role as a direct divine spokesman before the assembled congregation.⁷⁴⁴ Yet, the other Levitical and priestly references are presented in a negative context that shows them functioning in a manner other than according to the *Torah*.⁷⁴⁵

The remainder of the leadership roles was not exclusive to a tribal dynasty. A familiar role is that of the prophet. In the two instances, both of them are seen in a positive light as properly representing the divine response.⁷⁴⁶ The author did not provide the identity of the male prophet. However, he did identify the female prophetess, Deborah, who would have been from the tribe of Ephraim.

Another important role within the social structure was those who functioned as (*hazz^qqēnîm*) elders.⁷⁴⁷ The Deuteronomist would have recognized their juridical function administering justice at the city gates regarding the avenging of death, cases of

⁷⁴³ See the section on "Juridical Leadership," pages 236-238.

⁷⁴⁴ Jg. 20:27-28.

⁷⁴⁵ Jg. 17:10, 12, 13; 18:4, 6, 17, 18, 19, 24, 27, and 30.

⁷⁴⁶ Jg. 4:4; and 6:8-10.

⁷⁴⁷ הַזְקֵנִים.

manslaughter, rebellious children, and sexual impropriety.⁷⁴⁸ The requirements for becoming an elder are not specified; yet, their realm of authority would have been limited to the citizenry of their city. It is possible they may have had some didactic purpose for the people in connection with how the previous generation served YHWH even after Joshua had died because of the elders who had seen the works of YHWH.⁷⁴⁹ The local context of service for the elders is present in Succoth and Gilead.⁷⁵⁰ One of their functions was to request Jephthah to lead them into battle and deliver them from the Ammonites.⁷⁵¹ Following the near genocide of Benjamin, the elders of the congregation gave a ruling on the repopulation of the tribe through the kidnapping of the daughters of Shiloh.⁷⁵² It is not clear from the text how these elders assumed their position, how long they functioned in that capacity, or whether it was an isolated incident involving congregational leadership. Nonetheless, the mentioning of the elders in their incompetence and misguided judgment is an editorial consideration illustrating “the problem of lack of overall leadership.”⁷⁵³

Also present within the text are a few other terms which have uncertain meaning. Three of these terms appear predominantly in the Jephthah story. First, there were the (*śārê*) regional leaders of the people of Gilead.⁷⁵⁴ It is possible that this reference was used by the author in apposition to the other more frequent references to elders. The same Hebrew word is used to describe two of the Midianite leaders, as well as unidentified leaders of the city of Succoth and of the tribe of Issachar.⁷⁵⁵ Within the Jephthah narrative, these leaders exercised an authority over the region which enabled them to designate the (*rō'š*) chief leader.⁷⁵⁶ Whereas the first designation appears to be political in nature, it is seen immediately in apposition with (*qāšîn*) “captain” suggesting a military

⁷⁴⁸ Dt. 19:11-13; 21:1-9, 18-21; and 22:13-21.

⁷⁴⁹ Jg. 2:7.

⁷⁵⁰ Jg. 8:14, 16; 11:5, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11.

⁷⁵¹ Jg. 11:6.

⁷⁵² Jg. 21:16-22.

⁷⁵³ Amit, *The Book of Judges*, 74-75. The incompetence is shown by the elders of Gilead, whereas misguided judgment is shown by the elders of Succoth.

⁷⁵⁴ מַלְכֵי, literally “princes.” Jg. 10:18.

⁷⁵⁵ Jg. 5:15; 7:25; 8:3, 6, and 14.

⁷⁵⁶ רֹאשׁ, literally “head.” Jg. 10:18; 11:8, 9, and 11.

authority.⁷⁵⁷ Block makes a distinction between these two terms implying prejudice by the elders toward Jephthah, by offering “him a lesser role than they had made available to the full citizens of Gilead.”⁷⁵⁸ The other dubious term is found at the beginning of the civil war narrative. Most translations speak of the (*pinnôt*) “leaders” of all the people, basing this on a figurative rendering of the word “cornerstone.”⁷⁵⁹ Otherwise, if the Hebrew word is taken in its traditional usage the passage would not reflect leadership but the totality of the assembled Israel with the rendering “the faces of all the people.”⁷⁶⁰

The most frequent and repetitive category involved the charismatic leaders who have been categorized as major and minor judges. As discussed earlier, these judges technically do not judge.⁷⁶¹ The “major judges” are the ones who save and deliver Israel. The “minor judges” are the ones who judge Israel; yet, the narrative does not explain what this judgment entails. What is significant is the nominative term “judge” is not given to any person; but, only to YHWH by Jephthah.⁷⁶² Ultimately, the editor is able to portray the judge in a negative fashion by showing that with the death of the judge his influence is removed and cannot stop the destructive “wheel of cyclicity.”⁷⁶³ One negative feature to the system of leadership was the discontinuity of rulership. The text reveals hiatuses after each judge because there is not a “successor nor a procedure for getting one.”⁷⁶⁴ The only hope for Israel is that YHWH would establish a judge.

LEADERSHIP DOMAIN. With the functional roles these leaders assumed there is the question of whether that leadership extended past being a local-tribal hero into the domain of national leadership. The redactor has presented these twelve culture heroes to be raised up for a specific purpose of deliverance amidst an apostate people who are crying out in repentance. Each of them comes from an identifiable tribe; however, their

⁷⁵⁷ **חַקִּיץ**. This term is used rather infrequently occurring only nine times in the Bible. Josh. 10:24; Jg. 11:6, 11; Prov. 6:7; Isa. 1:10; 22:3; Dan. 11:18; Mic. 3:1, and 9.

⁷⁵⁸ Block, *NAC*, 354.

⁷⁵⁹ **פְּנוֹת**. *BDB*, 819. Jg. 20:2. It is also used figuratively in this same declension in 1 Sam. 14:38.

⁷⁶⁰ *BDB*, 815-819.

⁷⁶¹ See the section “Definition,” pages 103-106; and the section “Charismatic Leadership,” pages 233-236.

⁷⁶² Jg. 11:27.

⁷⁶³ Amit, *The Book of Judges*, 75.

⁷⁶⁴ Jobling, *The Sense of Biblical Narrative*, 52.

rule is not described past the deliverance event, which may or may not have involved a tribal alliance to remove the oppressor.⁷⁶⁵

In the Deuteronomistic circles, a unified Israel is an important theme. Therefore, one might presume that for the redactor his editorial guideline would assuage this thematic consideration in order to portray leadership roles that are pan-Israelite.⁷⁶⁶ However, the phrase (*kol-Yiśrā'ēl*) “all Israel” which appears frequently in Deuteronomy and Joshua and again in 1, 2 Samuel; 1, 2 Kings; and 1, 2 Chronicles is only used twice by the redactor in Judges.⁷⁶⁷ This may be an editorial convention to accentuate tribal reality and the domain of the various leaders. It is generally accepted that the judge did not have a pan-tribal rule and certainly not a confederate rule; but rather a local sphere of influence. Nonetheless, tribal alliances did exist at certain points in the conquest of the land and through Ehud, Deborah, and Gideon as reflected in Figure 4. It should be noted that Jephthah only involved the Gileadites. The internal evidence is silent as to Othniel, Shamgar, Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, and Samson involving any assistance of others, much less tribal alliances. Whereas Figure 4 demonstrates that the redactor utilized verse frequency to show tribal alliances, Figure 5 reveals the number of alliances in which the tribe participated with other tribes. Finally, Figure 6 reveals through the stories where alliances were formed and how many tribes participated in that event. What becomes obvious is that within the central body of deliverance stories, the idea of a unified pan-tribal organization is not present through tribal alliances for war and when alliances were formed it was a relatively small regional association.

⁷⁶⁵ The exception to this would be Shamgar, whose lineage may not be Israelite and to Ibzan because of the identification of which of the two Bethlehem locations he lived.

⁷⁶⁶ Danell, 64-68, and 270-281.

⁷⁶⁷ כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל. The phrase is used as follows: Deuteronomy, 13 times; Joshua, 17 times; Judges, 2 times (Jg. 8:27 and 20:34); 1 Samuel, 17 times; 2 Samuel, 17 times; 1 Kings, 22 times; 2 Kings, 3 times; 1 Chronicles, 20 times; and 2 Chronicles, 22 times. This statistical analysis is based only on this phrase rather than other occurrences using pronoun references or the similar phrase “all of the people” which is also present in these texts.

FIGURE 4
VERSE DISTRIBUTION OF TRIBAL ALLIANCE BY NARRATIVE

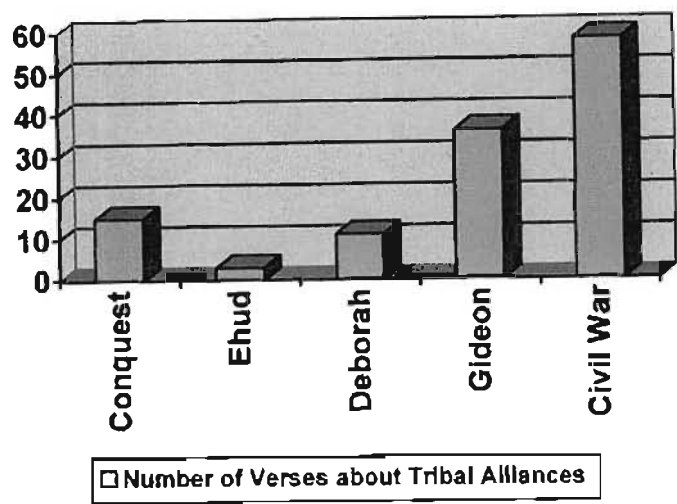
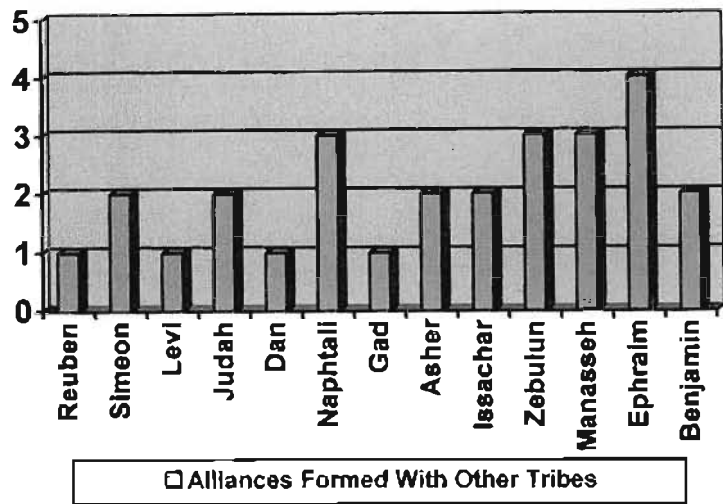


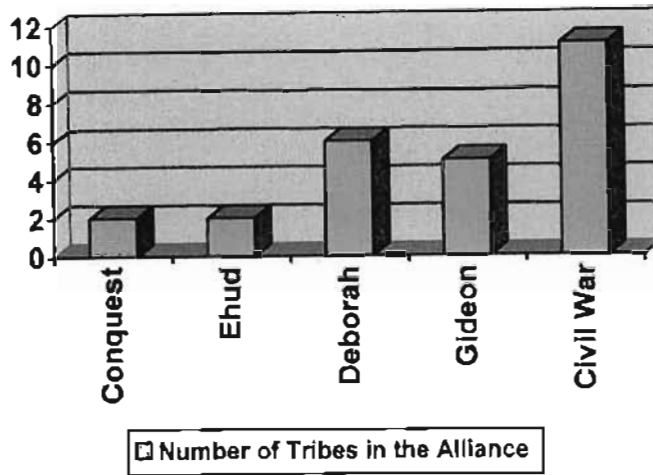
FIGURE 5
NUMBER OF ALLIANCES FORMED WITH OTHER TRIBES



The redactor only highlights the deliverance by the deliverer and as such the internal evidence does not provide any information about the leadership roles in other tribal localities. Because of the mention of these other functional roles of prophet, priest, and elders, the reader is left to assume that “the savior-judges must have originated and been active within a society ruled by the elders.”⁷⁶⁸ In contradistinction to the previous societal functional roles, Amit suggests that in the leadership role assumed by the judge whether alongside or instead of the other local institutional roles that they

⁷⁶⁸ H. Reviv, *The Elders in Ancient Israel: A Study of a Biblical Institution* (Jerusalem, Israel: The Magnes Press, 1983), 47.

FIGURE 6
NUMBER OF TRIBES PARTICIPATING IN AN ALLIANCE



“should not be seen as an organized leadership of a uniform character.”⁷⁶⁹ It is important to remember that the redactor was not as interested in preserving a full history of the period as he was to identify that leadership could be established through the various societal levels as well as through divine empowerment of a deliverer.⁷⁷⁰

The political reality which preceded the monarchy, and whose main characteristic was the lack of ongoing, pantribal human leadership, may be referred to as ‘the kingdom of God’ because, in the absence of a fixed human intermediary appointed by God, the overall rule is understood as the task of God, who determines who and when will save his people. This term, which implies a broad perspective, makes it clear that, in the absence of human super-tribal leadership, this is attributed to God, and the vacuum is filled in times of trouble by local rulers.⁷⁷¹

The redactor has utilized three texts which may begin to point the reader to understand a quasi-tribal confederate arrangement. The first is the conquest narrative of chapter one which presents most of the tribes, with the exception of Reuben, Levi, Gad, and Issachar. The second is in the Song of Deborah, where all but Simeon, Levi, and Judah are mentioned.⁷⁷² Yet, this view has been challenged on the basis of textual emendation by inserting four missing consonants, which would alter the translation of

⁷⁶⁹ Amit, *The Book of Judges*, 68.

⁷⁷⁰ For an examination of this, see the later section on “Social Anthropology,” pages 186-215.

⁷⁷¹ Amit, *The Book of Judges*, 61-62.

⁷⁷² Technically, Manasseh is represented by Machir and Gad is represented by Gilead.

verse thirteen resulting in Judah and Levi being included.⁷⁷³ This would result in a twelve tribe listing and would be based on the assumption that Simeon was absorbed into Judah. The final story involves the civil war, which in effect involved all of the tribes, because although the men of Jabesh Gilead did not join the confederate army, they were present as the object of a later battle. In this last text, there is a significant merismic geographical definition of Israel with the first occurrence of the phrase (*l²miDān w²ad-B²ēr šeba'*) “from Dan to Beersheba.”⁷⁷⁴ As an important phrase, the redactor has initiated its usage which defines a monarchal Israel that is only present in the Hebrew bible prior to the dissolution of the United Kingdom of Israel in the reign of Rehoboam.⁷⁷⁵

LEADERSHIP PORTRAYED NEGATIVELY. The editorial placement of the individual hero narratives initially shows the deliverer in a positive light amidst the cyclical anarchy. The narratives about Ehud, Deborah/Barak/Jael, and Gideon concentrate on the deliverance act with little information about any leadership role they may have occupied until the point of their death when Israel became apostate. Yet, as these stories are placed in a setting that represents the judge as an acceptable institution, the redactor begins to evidence their fallibility and subtly suggests to the reader that another solution to leadership must be sought. This subtle negativity is established as a paradigm in the introductory exposition by preparing the reader for a renewal of the cycle following the death of the judge.⁷⁷⁶ This would suggest that Israel was condemned to this cycle of returning to sin once the judge died. The redactor does not disappoint us with that expectation as he makes this theological closing formula to several of the pericopes. The negative subtlety begins to appear with Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar when the narrator gives no information about their leadership after the victory. In the deliverance against Sisera and the Canaanites instead of the expected androcentric leadership, this is displaced by two women and the honor of victory is not given to Barak.⁷⁷⁷ The negative element becomes more obvious with Gideon when after his victory, an ephod is made, his

⁷⁷³ J.C. de Moor, “The Twelve Tribes in the Song of Deborah,” *VT* 43 (1993), 486-487. The verse would then be translated: “Then the princes of Yôdah descended to the dignitaries, with YHWH descended Levi with heroes” based on the following Hebrew emendation: (*'z yrd[w] šr[y] y[w]d[h] l'dyrym 'm YHWH yrd lw[y] bgbwrym*) בנבורים עם יהודה ירד לוי בנבורים.

⁷⁷⁴ לְמִדָּן וְעַד־בְּאֵר שֶׁבַע.

⁷⁷⁵ Block, *NAC*, 549. Cf. Jg. 20:1; 1 Sam. 3:20; 2 Sam. 3:10; 17:11; 24:2, 15; 1 Kg. 5:5; and 1 Chr. 21:2.

⁷⁷⁶ Jg. 2:19.

⁷⁷⁷ Jg. 4:9.

polygamy is cited which sets the background for the fratricide of all but one child by his son Abimelech.⁷⁷⁸

Once Abimelech has been introduced into the narrative, the prototype monarchy is established for the reader to compare it with the previous deliverer paradigm. The city-state rule may be seen as a genesis for establishing a kingdom; but, that his kingdom never extended geographically or incorporated Israel is a negative point for the reader. The birth narrative gives a negative clue that Abimelech is different from his brothers, because of his mother being a *pîlegeš*; whereas he is the only half-brother.⁷⁷⁹ Unlike his father who had been approached and asked to rule, Abimelech approached his potential subjects and initiated this by his own persuasion.⁷⁸⁰ His first royal act is to surround himself with worthless and reckless men, who possibly were mercenaries.⁷⁸¹ This was immediately followed by the slaughter of seventy of his near kin.⁷⁸² When his half-brother Jotham appears on Mount Gerizim, the Deuteronomist is recalling for the reader the curses pronounced from that location by the Levites, to which all of Israel responded: "Amen."⁷⁸³ The second curse uttered was about the dishonoring of parents.⁷⁸⁴ Jotham testifies to this and exposes the *Torah* curse to which Abimelech has submitted himself. Then, he prophesies a curse against Abimelech which is fulfilled three years later.⁷⁸⁵ If the treachery of Abimelech and the insincerity by the men of Shechem were not enough, the editor emphasizes the divine action of an evil spirit being sent between the king and his subjects.⁷⁸⁶ The result is that the men of Shechem place their allegiance in Gaal rather than Abimelech attempting a *coup d'état*.⁷⁸⁷ The distrust and deceit working through the story is evidenced by the internal civil war between Abimelech and his now disloyal subjects.⁷⁸⁸ The ultimate epithet against Abimelech is that his death was caused by a woman throwing a millstone on his head. Although she did not kill him, she began the

⁷⁷⁸ Jg. 8:27, 30, and 31.

⁷⁷⁹ Jg. 8:31.

⁷⁸⁰ Jg. 8:22; and 9:1-2.

⁷⁸¹ Jg. 9:4.

⁷⁸² Jg. 9:5.

⁷⁸³ Dt. 27:12-23; and Jg. 9:7.

⁷⁸⁴ Dt. 27:16.

⁷⁸⁵ Jg. 9:20, 22, and 56-57.

⁷⁸⁶ Jg. 9:23.

⁷⁸⁷ Jg. 9:26.

⁷⁸⁸ Jg. 9:30-52.

process which was finalized by the mortal wound inflicted by his servant.⁷⁸⁹ The absence of any act of deliverance removes any potential characterization of him as a judge and thus becomes an indictment against his leadership. The redactor in using this story of retribution disassociates the Yahwistic identity in Abimelech's death, something which is not done in other pericopes.

Neither Adoni-bezek, Eglon, Barak, Oreb, Zeeb, Zebah, [n]or Zalmunnah had been portrayed as out-and-out scoundrels. They are all depicted as vaguely worthy of either punishment or blessing as Israel's judges are. But Abimelech is portrayed as a true villain, and it is not *Yahweh* who is said to have punished him!⁷⁹⁰

These negative elements suggest to the reader that this is an attempt at monarchy which will be unsuccessful; yet, for the Deuteronomistic historian it does not have to suggest that another monarchy would fail.

The editor presents the first of two annalistic lists and the reader is immediately in a quandary as to why there is no deliverance story. Then, the Jephthah narrative begins the anticlimactic negative turn of events. The illegitimate birth and family exile of Jephthah suggests to the reader there will be more negativity with this deliverer. Jephthah surrounded himself with worthless fellows and then upon him being summoned by the Gileadite elders is offered a lesser position than the initial standing offer to the local citizenry. The redactor uses more prose to describe the proposed conditions of peace with the Ammonite king than he does with the brief two verses of the deliverance act. This shift from the standard practice of highlighting the deliverance becomes an editorial antagonism that places the focus on the vow and the abomination of human sacrifice. Whereas Jephthah had the Spirit of YHWH to come upon him makes the vow superfluous for victory in a holy war.⁷⁹¹ The final negative assessment was "his inability to distinguish between external enemies and those at home, who are his own countrymen" because of the civil war with the Ephraimites.⁷⁹² This last event, reworked by the redactor concludes the Jephthah narrative; however, Boling posits this incident valorizes Jephthah providing a transition to the other minor judges and contrasts him against the negative assessment of Samson.⁷⁹³

⁷⁸⁹ Jg. 9:53-54.

⁷⁹⁰ Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist*, 175.

⁷⁹¹ Jg. 11:29-31.

⁷⁹² Amit, *The Book of Judges*, 8

⁷⁹³ Boling, *AB*, 214.

The second set of the annalistic lists likewise do not contain any deliverance information. However, what becomes observable is that the length of time they judged Israel, just as in the case of Jephthah is significantly reduced from the earlier judges. The three judges Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon are presented as periods of consecutive leadership; however since the deliverers are not presented in chronological order, this editorial placement allows the reader to see this diminished time period negatively.

The last hero figure presented is Samson. The redactional reworking of the angelic birth announcement presupposes a limited deliverance by the verbal clause (*w^ʔhû' yāḥēl l^ʔhōšīa'*) “and he shall begin to deliver” rather than (*w^ʔhû' yēš'a'*) “and he will deliver.”⁷⁹⁴ The concluding formula that describes his twenty year deliverance is void of the statement that “the land had rest.”⁷⁹⁵ Thus, from start to finish there is much question about this individual. His sexual escapades, his personal vengeance, his vulnerability, his capture, and death all negatively portray Samson. Despite the prayers he uttered in times of personal distress, “he appears never to have had any concern for the interests of Israel, nor any knowledge of the role predicted for him” in his annunciation.⁷⁹⁶ These negative connotations bear on the question of whether he actually functioned in a leadership capacity.

The stories of his salvation indicate that the motivations for his wars were personal. He acted alone, without clan or tribal army, and even elicited the opposition of people of his region, who wanted to give him into the hands of the Philistines (15:9-13). It is interesting that the Philistines refer to him as their personal enemy and not as a representative of Israel.⁷⁹⁷

The disappointment the redactor has created for the reader with the lives of Jephthah and Samson allows the anarchy of the time to form an epilogic conclusion that essentially demands a change in leadership. Perhaps the most negative assessment to the concluding narratives of Judges is the absence of any real leader. There is not any judge or deliverer. The first Levite figures as a central character and assumes a priestly leadership role; however, the sins of idolatry and betrayal illustrate the activity of men doing what is right in their own eyes. The second story about a Levite presents us with internal domestic problems at the nuclear family level that escalates into the outrage at Gibeah until there is an external problem at the pan-tribal level that nearly decimates the

⁷⁹⁴ וְהוּא יֵשַׁע and וְהוּא יִחְלֵל לְהוֹשִׁיעַ ה' Jg. 13:5.

⁷⁹⁵ Jg. 15:20; and 16:31.

⁷⁹⁶ Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist*, 181.

⁷⁹⁷ Amit, *The Book of Judges*, 91. Jg. 16:23-24.

tribe of Benjamin to the point of extinction. The earlier scenes of this event set the background for the internecine war in which “the narrator is intent upon intensifying the doubt and confusion in Israel with which he began his story in Judges 1.”⁷⁹⁸

LEADERSHIP NEEDING A SIGN. In the editorial crafting of the book, there is a point where the two *leitmotifs* converge in the communication paradigm using signs. The humanity of the characters in the book is illustrated through their circumstantial responses of doubt, unbelief, and possibly reluctance to rise to the occasion of the salvation act without some verifiable assurance through a sign that YHWH would empower them. Barak expresses cowardice in his task of deliverance; yet, Deborah’s accompaniment (the prophetess representing YHWH) in the battle becomes a sign of certainty for him.⁷⁹⁹ Gideon exemplifies fear in most of his responses that engendered the need for a sign. He explicitly asked YHWH for a sign that identified the deity, which was given in the sacrificial scene.⁸⁰⁰ That sign, as incredible as it was, did not satisfy Gideon’s reticence who required with the fleece, two more signs in succession that only temporarily quelled his need.⁸⁰¹ Even before the routing of the Midianites, his fear had to be subdued with the sign provided through the dream and interpretation in the Midianite camp.⁸⁰² It is noteworthy in these instances, Gideon calls upon the deity by His generic name *Elohim* rather than His revealed relational name *YHWH*, which might speak to the issue of fear and unbelief. Polzin underscores this by noting, “Yahweh speaks directly to Israel whereas *Elohim* communicates in signs and dreams.”⁸⁰³ In the case of Jephthah, his divine empowerment by the Spirit was not enough for his doubts, which resulted in the conditional rash vow of sacrifice.⁸⁰⁴ Although there was not a precondition for Ehud’s assassination of Eglon, Ehud used this act as a verifiable proof to communicate to the militia he marshaled that the deliverance by YHWH had commenced.⁸⁰⁵

LEADERSHIP AS MONARCHAL PROTOTYPE. The Deuteronomist has carefully inserted monarchal themes and characterizations so that the narrative conditions the reader for a

⁷⁹⁸ Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist*, 202.

⁷⁹⁹ Jg. 4:8.

⁸⁰⁰ Jg. 6:17.

⁸⁰¹ Jg. 6:36-40.

⁸⁰² Jg. 7:9-15.

⁸⁰³ Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist*, 172.

⁸⁰⁴ Jg. 11:30.

⁸⁰⁵ Jg. 3:28.

monarchal paradigm. With the exception of the Abimelech narrative, much of this editorial crafting is covertly subjected to the other motifs in the book.

EXAMPLES OUTSIDE ISRAEL. By including stories that involve oppressive nations that have monarchies, the editor is able to juxtapose this against Israel in an era when it does not have a king, possibly creating for the reader a perception that Israel would be better served with royal leadership. Within the early verses of the conquest narrative, the first identifiable person is Adoni-bezek.⁸⁰⁶ Although not called a king, his leadership ruling over the city-state of Bezek and sadistic torture and treatment of seventy kings conjectures a parallel royal position for him. The redactor shows foreign kings as oppressors but also those who have armies to defend and expand their territory. The first king mentioned was Cushan-rishathaim of Mesopotamia.⁸⁰⁷ The next king was Eglon of Moab.⁸⁰⁸ The Deborah narratives identify Jabin as king of Canaan.⁸⁰⁹ There is some speculation as to whether Sisera was a king because of the question of his mother being the queen-mother.⁸¹⁰ The Song of Deborah acknowledges in a parallel strophe that the kings of Canaan came and fought which may support the idea of both Jabin and Sisera being kings.⁸¹¹ The Song addresses foreign kings and rulers; thus, the Gideon narrative highlights the capture of two kings and two rulers of Midian.⁸¹² However, from this point onward in the book no personal identity is given for any of the remaining foreign kings. The editorial consideration did not specify the king of the Ammonites with whom Jephthah contended.⁸¹³ The only other monarchal reference is the historical citation of (*Sîḥôn*) Sihon, king of (*Hešbôn*) Heshbon, from the time of Moses which was recounted by Jephthah to the Ammonite king.⁸¹⁴

EXAMPLES WITHIN ISRAEL. There are three explicit references to the monarchy and several implicit ones. Although the annalistic lists provide little information about the minor judges, the narrator emphasizes that Jair with his thirty sons who rode on thirty

⁸⁰⁶ Jg. 1:5.

⁸⁰⁷ Jg. 3:8, and 10.

⁸⁰⁸ Jg. 3:12, 14, 15, and 17.

⁸⁰⁹ Jg. 4:2, 23, and 24.

⁸¹⁰ Jg. 4:2, 7; 5:3, 19, 28, and 30.

⁸¹¹ Jg. 5:19.

⁸¹² Jg. 5:3; 7:24, 25; 8:5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 15, 18, and 21.

⁸¹³ Jg. 11:12-14.

⁸¹⁴ *סִיחֹן* and *חֶשְׁבֹן*. Jg. 11:19.

asses had thirty cities. This may imply a dynastic rule by Jair with his sons functioning in a subordinate leadership to him. Potentially political alliances were established because of the marriages with his sons' wives; thus, hinting of "kingly power."⁸¹⁵ The emphasis on the thirty asses contravenes the modern derogatory consideration of this beast of burden, whereas in the A.N.E. this animal was used by nobility rather than peasantry.⁸¹⁶ In order to implicitly connect this A.N.E. usage as a monarchal reference, Malamat compares this to a speech directed to Zimri-Lim, the king of Mari.⁸¹⁷

[If] you are the king of the Haneans (A major Amorite tribe), but moreover you are the king of the Akkadians; my lord ought not ride a horse; may my lord ride in a chariot, with mules, and thus honour the dignity of his royal office.⁸¹⁸

This may have been implied in the Song of Deborah reference, whereby "only royalty rode them, so that they would not get their feet dirty."⁸¹⁹

The first obvious reference involves Gideon when the people have offered him a hereditary rule. It is plausible this offer was extended because of a quasi-kingdom ruling over Manasseh and the city-state of Shechem, his sizable harem that produced seventy sons, and the cultic institution in Ophrah. The combination of these elements may be seen as royal features.⁸²⁰ The cultic items were made from the booty Gideon received. The value of the gold earrings alone, not counting the crescent ornaments, pendants, purple robes, and neck bands may be viewed as an implicit royal offering.⁸²¹ However, the Hebraic semantics weakens this argument because of the choice of (*m^šāl*) "rule" rather than (*m^šlāk*) "reign."⁸²² Yet, for Amit, the semantic choice is an editorial choice that alludes to a progression from rule to reign because of the synonymous usage of both

⁸¹⁵ B. Beem, "The Minor Judges: A Literary Reading of Some Very Short Stories," *The Biblical Canon in Comparative Perspective: Scripture in Context IV*, (Eds.), K.L. Younger, Jr., W.W. Hallo, and B.F. Batto (ANETS 11: Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1991), 152.

⁸¹⁶ Soggin, *Judges*, 196.

⁸¹⁷ A. Malamat, *Mari and the Early Israelite Experience* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1989), 2-4, and 80.

⁸¹⁸ ARM VI, 76:20-25.

⁸¹⁹ Ahlström, *The History of Ancient Palestine from the Palaeolithic Period to Alexander's Conquest*, 374.

⁸²⁰ G. Wallis, "Die Anfänge des Königtums in Israel" (The Beginning of the Kingdom in Israel), *WZMLU* 12 (1963), 239-247.

⁸²¹ See the footnote 1655 on page 337 in connection with the discussion on "Cult Objects, Practices, and Places." Based on the fair market value of gold, at the US commodities and precious metals market in New York, which was US \$331.90 per ounce on April 23, 2003, the 687.82 ounces of gold would have a value of \$228,287.46. The value is based on information obtained from the Internet URL address: http://www.goldline.com/content_prices.htm as of April 24, 2003.

⁸²² חֶלֶב and חֶלֶב. Jg. 8:22.

terms at the onset of the Abimelech narrative based on the expected transfer of leadership to Gideon's progeny.⁸²³ However, the question of who would assume the key leadership role and any subsequent threat is answered by Abimelech's removal of all the potential heirs, except Jotham. Despite Gideon's refusal of this offer of ruling by the Gileadites, his son Abimelech violated his father's will and persuaded the Shechemites to enthrone him as ruler and king.⁸²⁴ The subtlety of the story and its projected direction is seen in the Hebrew name of Abimelech, meaning "the king is my father." The kingdom modeled the city-state paradigm of Canaan rather than a pan-tribal reign. The coronation of Abimelech occurred at the oracular site in Shechem.⁸²⁵ It is presupposed that he was anointed at that time because of the analogous parallelism in Jotham's fable.⁸²⁶ The fable has been considered as one of the harshest antimonarchic documents in ancient literature.⁸²⁷ However, if the editor had not included the fable, which rabbinical exegetes regard as a parable, the institution of the monarchy could be judged negatively by the actions and character of Abimelech.⁸²⁸

On the other hand, the men of Israel, like the trees [in the fable], testify of their desire and need for the protection of a king. Hence, any criticism of the monarchy based upon the Abimelech episode cannot ignore the fact that the trees chose a king of their own free will, and in full awareness of his unexpected demands and of the yoke they were taking upon themselves.⁸²⁹

Of course the onus of this decision reflects that it was a human choice of Abimelech and not a divine choice of him. With the polarization of approaches, the editor places the reader in a dilemma of what other alternative would be possible if there would be no theocratic rule or no dynastic rule. Hence, the redactor accentuates that there was no king and the people acted on their own convictions. This negative assessment by the Deuteronomist of the anarchic society alludes to the need for establishing a monarchy based on pragmatism rather than idealism.⁸³⁰

⁸²³ Amit, *The Book of Judges*, 93-94. The synonymous parallelism of these two words is present in Ps. 105:10; and 145:13.

⁸²⁴ Jg. 9:1-6.

⁸²⁵ Jg. 9:6.

⁸²⁶ Jg. 9:8, and 15.

⁸²⁷ M. Buber, *Kingship of God*, 3rd ed., (Trans.) R. Scheimann (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1967), 63.

⁸²⁸ *Cant. Rab.* 1:2.

⁸²⁹ Amit, *The Book of Judges*, 95.

⁸³⁰ *Ibid.*, 113-114.

Conclusion

As the text was edited, the Deuteronomistic Historian reflected a pro-monarchical position based on the provision within the *Torah* that permitted kingship. Nonetheless, the redactor did not excise the anti-monarchical passages in the pre-Deuteronomistic corpus of the Gideon-Abimelech narrative.⁸³¹ The central climactic focus of this antimonarchic section can still function positively, when it is recognized that the monarchy is not a bad institution, but, that the negative assessment is applied to having the wrong person in the royal office.⁸³² Contrary to accepting that the Deuteronomistic History was basically pro-monarchic, Webb asserts that it presented a realistic historiography of the era revealing the positive and negative character of kingship and judgeship making it neither pro-monarchic nor anti-monarchic.⁸³³ Buber sees it slightly differently as a balance between the two positions, illustrating it by showing Judah positively in the first twelve chapters which he regards as anti-monarchic and conversely by showing Judah negatively in the remaining chapters which he regards as pro-monarchic.⁸³⁴

Likewise, the editorial guidelines used by the redactor do not need to be in a bipolar tension that calls for the reader to decide in favor of a signs versus leadership theme or vice versa. Rather, the reader is able to see that the redactor has utilized these two themes together as opposite sides of the same coin such that they do not need to be seen in mutual exclusivity.

In order to convince the reader that the people were unable to function properly in the absence of ongoing leadership which would assume responsibility for both internal and external matters, the [one] editing was interested in the series of cycles of sin—punishment—crying out—deliverance—quiet. Through the transition of one stage to another and from one cycle to the next, the reader becomes convinced that the people did not persist in their loyalty to God and were unable to deal with situations of subjugation, and that they needed a judge.⁸³⁵

⁸³¹ Jobling, *The Sense of Biblical Narrative*, 79. Jobling identifies four items: 1) Gideon's refusal of the people's offer of kingship (8:23); 2) the anti-monarchal tenor of Jotham's fable (9:8-15); 3) the absence of any monarchical claim by Jotham, though he is a legitimate heir; and 4) the fact that the monarchy of Abimelech has no dynasty and thus comes to an end.

⁸³² Webb, *The Book of Judges*, 159.

⁸³³ *Ibid.*, 201-202.

⁸³⁴ Buber, 83.

⁸³⁵ Amit, *The Book of Judges*, 60. Amit establishes this position in her hypothesis for leadership as a central guideline for the redactor. However, in the overall context, this position she takes not only embodies leadership but the idea of the signs used to communicate to Israel through the cyclical pattern of their relationship and response to YHWH.

This editorial perspective shows that these two guidelines are complementary and have been integrated together, as illustrated in Figure 7.⁸³⁶

FIGURE 7
EDITORIAL LEITMOTIFS IN JUDGES

Lack of Central Leadership	Delivering Judges	Proposed Solution: Kingship for Gideon, Rule of Abimelech	Consecutive and Disappointing Judges	Conclusion: A King for Israel
Absence of Signs	Signs During the Course of Seven Cycles of Deliverance			

The redactor was able to use the various leadership roles with the periodic tribal alliances to unify the narratives and present through the signs performed that Israel could come together for a purpose in response to the need for deliverance; yet, following the death of the hero leader, whatever loosely connected alliances had been formed would again fragment to an individualism at the tribal and lower structural levels. This periodic unity suggested that the judge paradigm was not the perfect solution for Israelite leadership; however, it did not necessarily suggest that a monarchy was necessary. As a result, the redactor presents the leadership element whereby Israel (or in this case Judah) can develop its own “political theology” and praxis.⁸³⁷ The rhetorical use of multi-faceted leadership roles serves an ideological function that describes “a confused political order having implications in both the internal-social realm and the external-political arena.”⁸³⁸ The theology and past history of the Deuteronomist casts a shadow over the premonarchic period by his editorializing of there being no king in Israel; yet, the post-exilic redactor was aware that the monarchy which followed was not a perfect solution either. It is possible that in the redacting of the narratives, the Deuteronomistic Historian looked back at the Patriarchal period and recognized what Israel did not during the premonarchic period, that in the Abrahamic Covenant which promised the geographic inheritance there was the declaration of divine protection.

⁸³⁶ Ibid., 119. The components of this guideline are: Lack of Central Leadership (1:1 – 2:19); Delivering Judges (2:20 – 8:21); Proposed Solution (8:22 – 9:57); Consecutive and Disappointing Judges (10:1 – 16:31); Conclusion (17:1 – 21:25); Absence of Signs (1:1 – 2:19); and Signs During the Course of Seven Cycles of Deliverance (2:20 – 16:31).

⁸³⁷ Jobling, *The Sense of Biblical Narrative*, 87.

⁸³⁸ Amit, *The Book of Judges*, 69.

Do not be afraid, (*'abrām*) Abram.
I am your shield:
Your exceedingly great reward.⁸³⁹

This self declaration identifies YHWH to be not only the protector but the ultimate reward. In the early days of the patriarch, this reassurance was given immediately after the context of international warfare over the Promised Land.⁸⁴⁰ Thus, the divine proposal was to believe that YHWH “as his shield was a much better proposition than relying on the support and strength of the kings of the region.”⁸⁴¹ No doubt, this would include Israelite kings that would come from his loins. The redactor was able to unify the text and show through signs and leaders that the essence of Abrahamic Covenant, YHWH Himself, had escaped historical memory during premonarchic Israel and every man did what was right in their own eyes. This is perfectly illustrated in the story of the Canaanite oppression through Jabin and Sisera. The reader is confronted with the problem of leadership and this narrative composition becomes an overall sign of YHWH, because of the confusion over who is the leader: Deborah, Barak, or Jael? This riddle which typifies the premonarchic era suggests to the reader “that the goal of the story [and of the book] is to bring out the fact that God, and God alone, is the savior of Israel.”⁸⁴² As a result, the redactor establishes a historiosophic meaning for the reader whereby the ultimate solution for Israel is the eschatological reign of Messiah in the Kingdom of YHWH.

⁸³⁹ אֲבְרָם. Gen. 15:1.

⁸⁴⁰ Gen. 14:1-16.

⁸⁴¹ D.S. Briscoe, *The Communicator's Commentary: Genesis* (Waco, TX: Word Books, Publisher, 1987), 143.

⁸⁴² Amit, *The Book of Judges*, 218.

Social Scientific Criticism

At first glance, the social-scientific critics appear to be another class of disciplinarians who have no interest in the historical-critical paradigms of biblical study. Though there may be some truth to this, a more positive approach is an objective shift in the study “to provide access to overlooked dimensions of the writings that are felt to be indispensable to a full understanding of the Hebrew bible.”⁸⁴³ An eisegetical approach of ethnocentrism on the texts without taking into account relevant social scientific tools limits the ability of the research in its “attempts to recover the dynamics of social organization in ancient Israel.”⁸⁴⁴ Considering the research within the social science fields can bridge the A.N.E. cultural gap through illumination of social structures that are inherent in the biblical narrative.

Just as the worldview of the reader is socially shaped, so also the perceptions and literary conventions of the Old Testament writers bear the stamp of their social and cultural situation. The social sciences can sometimes contribute to our understanding of the author’s world by providing useful analogies.⁸⁴⁵

The primary disciplines within the social sciences include, but are not limited to anthropology, sociology, economics, political science, and psychology.⁸⁴⁶ This research will focus on the first two disciplines and will engage the remainder where they are relevant to the Judges narrative.

One of the current forms of social scientific criticism is presented by a methodology that focuses on the institutional sector of ancient Israelite social life through comparative anthropology or sociology, which may be seen in the works of Albright and Alt. Then, there is the approach of Gottwald and Mendenhall with a fresh realism about the premonarchic period where the tribal society is viewed through an anthropological and sociological filter of macro-social theorists like Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber.⁸⁴⁷ Thus, this focus will be on questions regarding the social structures,

⁸⁴³ Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible*, 29.

⁸⁴⁴ N. Steinberg, “Social Scientific Criticism: Judges 9 and Issues of Kinship,” *Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, (Ed.) G.A. Yee (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995), 46.

⁸⁴⁵ R.R. Wilson, *Sociological Approaches to the Old Testament* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984), 6.

⁸⁴⁶ Wilson, *Sociological Approaches to the Old Testament*, 10.

⁸⁴⁷ Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible*, 27-28. For an overview of the Marxian philosophy see N.J. Smelser, *Karl Marx on Society and Social Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973). Obviously, the voluminous German edition of Marx *Das Kapital* is a primary text. In opposition to Marx’s dialectical materialism, see M. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1930); and *idem*, *Ancient Judaism* (New York: Free Press, 1952). The

processes, and circumstances either explicitly or implicitly in the text that have bearing on God's peculiar judgment.

Anthropology

The field of anthropological studies is broad and diverse because of its examination of all aspects of humanity and its cultural components. The discipline can be divided into two major areas of research: physical anthropology and cultural anthropology. Since the examination of human origins and evolution is outside the scope of this research, physical anthropology will not be addressed. The study involving anthropology includes the subfields of ethnology, social anthropology, ethnography, archaeology, and structural anthropology.⁸⁴⁸

Ethnology

These five subfields further define the cultural organization of the various people groups. Ethnology is the subfield that is concerned with the study of cultures in their traditional customs and in their adaptations to changing conditions in the modern world.⁸⁴⁹ The ethnological theory of the evolution of the human culture outlined by Edward Tylor in the 19th century had a profound effect on Hebrew bible cultural studies.⁸⁵⁰ Although his anthropological work influenced others in regard to the religious beliefs of primitive societies and the collection of folklore studies, this had little bearing on the Judges material.⁸⁵¹

Social Anthropology

This discipline within anthropological studies is sometimes considered comparative sociology because of its concern "with social organization rather than with social customs."⁸⁵² This field of study emerged through the work of Durkheim, *et.al.*,

sociological method was forged through the efforts of E. Durkheim, See his, *Rules of Sociological Method: The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (New York: Free Press, 1947).

⁸⁴⁸ Wilson, *Sociological Approaches to the Old Testament*, 17-22.

⁸⁴⁹ G.M. Kelly, "Anthropology," *A Reader's Guide to the Social Sciences*, rev. ed., B.F. Hoselitz, (Ed.), (New York: Free Press, 1970), 46.

⁸⁵⁰ E.B. Tylor, *Researches into the Early History of Mankind*, 3rd ed. (London: John Murray, 1878; abridgement, P. Bohannon, (Ed.) (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1964).

⁸⁵¹ One of those influenced was J.G. Frazer who produced *The Golden Bough*, 12 vols., 3rd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1935); and *Folklore in the Old Testament*, 3 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1918).

⁸⁵² Wilson, *Sociological Approaches to the Old Testament*, 19.

who sought to understand and examine kinship systems.⁸⁵³ A.R. Radcliffe-Brown redefined the organismic view of society through biological terms, so that the interaction of smaller social units forms the societal structure.⁸⁵⁴ Because of the divergence of opinions on the question of the conquest and settlement of Canaan and the use of the synthesis of the archaeological evidence of the 12th and 11th centuries BCE to focus on the settlement theories, the nature of the premonarchic social structure has been overlooked. Even with the paucity of available artifacts, the reconstruction of the early Israelite history should take these elements into consideration.⁸⁵⁵ The narrative texts provide limited information about the social and political structure. One significant problem in social-scientific research is the ambiguous manner in which the term “Israelite” has been used without proper definition, given that it can be used geographically, religiously, socio-politically, and ethnically.⁸⁵⁶

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The identity of Israel is enigmatic in this period as it does not necessitate a tribal confederacy, but is a “term that referred to individuals of marginalized sociopolitical status.”⁸⁵⁷ Three hypotheses have been suggested as schemes for Israelite sociological organization: 1) The Pastoral Nomadic Model, 2) The Religious League Model, and 3) The Socio-Religious Retribalization Model.

THE PASTORAL NOMADIC MODEL. The establishment of Israel based on the idea of a desert infiltration into Canaan has gained some support by comparative ethnographic research on Arabic Bedouin tribes.⁸⁵⁸ Gottwald rejects this approach; yet, he concedes that components of pastoral Nomadism were present as both the archaeological and textual record suggest.⁸⁵⁹ The question of how Israel arrived in the land of Canaan is

⁸⁵³ For a discussion on the history of social anthropology and its methodology, see R.K. Merton, “Manifest and Latent Functions,” in *On Theoretical Sociology: Five Essays, Old and New* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), 73-138.

⁸⁵⁴ A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, “On the Concept of Function in Social Science,” in his *Structure and Function in Primitive Society: Essays and Addresses* (London: Cohen & West Ltd., 1969), 178-187.

⁸⁵⁵ Wilson, *Sociological Approaches to the Old Testament*, 30.

⁸⁵⁶ M. Skjeggstad, “Ethnic Groups in Early Iron Age Palestine: Some Remarks on the Use of the Term “Israelite” in Recent Research,” *SJOT* 6 (1992), 161-162.

⁸⁵⁷ Boling, *The Early Biblical Community in Transjordan*, 57.

⁸⁵⁸ For a survey of this model with its limitations, see Chaney, 41-44. Lemche discusses the Bedouin in the Negev in *Early Israel*, 108-110.

⁸⁵⁹ Jg. 4:11, and 17. Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible*, 279.

outside the scope of this investigation; nonetheless, where nomadic elements and people are present within Judges there are certain aspects of bravery, boldness, and complete independence from entanglements, though sometimes repulsive in their presentation that present themselves in the judging motif either through oppression or warfare deliverance.⁸⁶⁰

THE RELIGIOUS LEAGUE MODEL. The seminal work of Noth, which was not in contrast with three of the four Israelite entry theories was his amphictyonic hypothesis.⁸⁶¹ Because of this effort, the structural organization of premonarchic Israel has been suggested on the hypothesis of the Greek amphictyony (fig. 8).⁸⁶² This sacral confederate league has been recommended as the Hebraic equivalent to (*šibtê Yiśrā'ēl*) “the tribes of Israel.”⁸⁶³ For Gottwald the unifying element is the religious cult.

Without the existence of the cult as the centralized organ of the social system of Israel, no basic themes would have developed at all, and there would have been no occasion for the agglomeration of disparate traditions of proto-Israelites into the harmonized tradition of united Israel.⁸⁶⁴

For Noth, the Israelite amphictyonic cult was organized with a fixed twelve-tribe membership and a central shrine, with the actual location being immaterial.⁸⁶⁵ This comparative approach stems from the apparent similarities to the shrines organized in Greece whereby there was an obligation by the individual members to support and defend the central sanctuary.⁸⁶⁶ The term (*amphiktuonia*) for this Hellenistic structure between city-states was first used in the 4th century BCE as a *nomen proprius* by Demosthenes in Delphi, which has the shrine of Apollo at its center.⁸⁶⁷

⁸⁶⁰ Lemche, *Early Israel*, 90. He suggests that this is a common observation in nomadic ethnographic research.

⁸⁶¹ M. Noth, *The History of Israel*, 2nd ed. (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1960), 85-109.

⁸⁶² The table of the amphictyonic league comes from Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 378.

⁸⁶³ שִׁבְתֵּי יִשְׂרָאֵל. A discussion of this term follows within the subsections of Socio-Religious Retribalization that follows. G.W. Anderson, “Israel: Amphictyony: ‘AM; KĀHĀL; ‘ĒDĀH,” *Translating and Understanding the Old Testament: Essays in Honor of Herbert Gordon May*, (Eds.) H.T. Frank and W.L. Reed (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1970), 142.

⁸⁶⁴ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 101.

⁸⁶⁵ Noth, *Das System der Zwölf Stämme Israels*, 162-170. The central shrine locations included Shechem (Josh. 24); Bethel (Jg. 20:18, 26-28; and 21:2); and Shiloh (Jg. 21:19).

⁸⁶⁶ Mayes, *Israel in the Period of the Judges*, 34.

⁸⁶⁷ Ἀμφικτυονία. N.P. Lemche, “The Greek ‘Amphictyony’ – Could it be a Prototype for the Israelite Society in the Period of the Judges?” *JSOT* 4 (1977), 53. Lemche is citing Demosthenes XI:4, V:19.

FIGURE 8

THE AMPHICTYONY SUBSUMED WITHIN GREEK SOCIETY

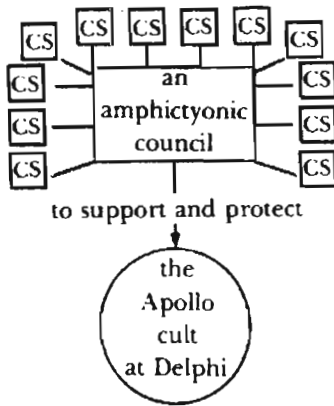
HELLENIC CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Organized by city-states (with some surviving but diminishing tribal states) variously interconnected by means of military leagues, federal unions, and cultic amphictyonies.

THE HELLENIC AMPHICTYONY as a circumscribed cultic community with limited legislative, jural, and military functions, as in the two following examples:

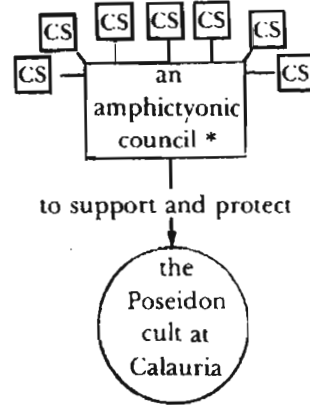
12 member city-states (= CS), with other possible and actual confederate connections, join together in

7 member city-states (= CS), with other possible and actual confederate connections, join together in



by discharging the cult's financial affairs, limited legislative decrees, limited adjudication and arbitration, and occasional military action.

No formal connecting or comprehending links between the Delphic and Calaurian city-states, amphictyonic councils, or cults



by discharging the cult's financial affairs, limited legislative decrees, limited adjudication and arbitration, and occasional military action.

If this model is to represent premonarchic Israel, then the central sanctuary would have to be acknowledged and visited by representatives of each of the tribes, plus the presence of the worship sacrifices and the Ark of the Covenant would be necessary to be present.⁸⁶⁸ Gottwald invalidates this possibility citing the mention of three different shrines in Israel does not support the idea of a central one.⁸⁶⁹

⁸⁶⁸ Mayes, *Israel in the Period of the Judges*, 35.

⁸⁶⁹ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 349.

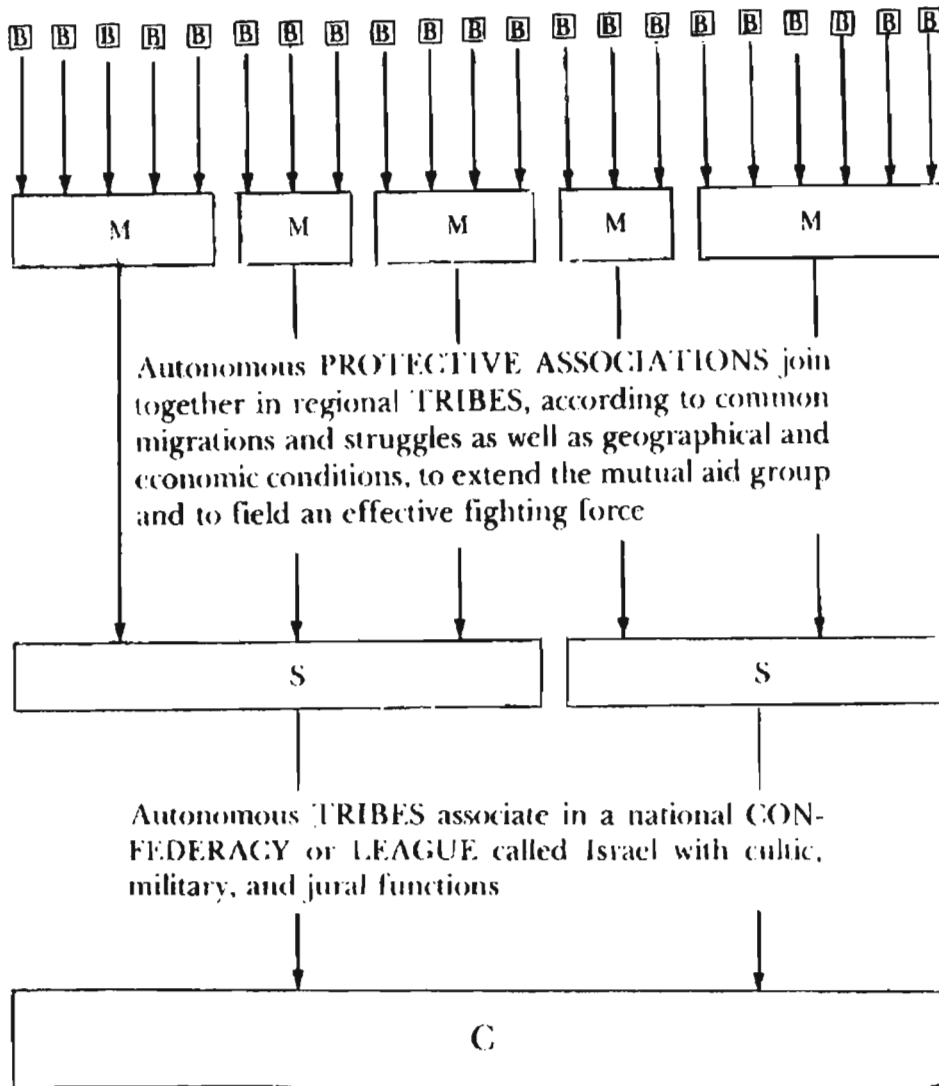
FIGURE 9
ISRAEL'S SOCIETAL FORMATION
ON A BOTTOM-UP MODEL

B = *beth 'āv*

M = *mishpāhāh/'eleph*
 C = confederacy of all Israel

S = *shēvet/matteh*

Autonomous EXTENDED FAMILIES group themselves into local PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATIONS to give mutual socioeconomic aid and to levy troops

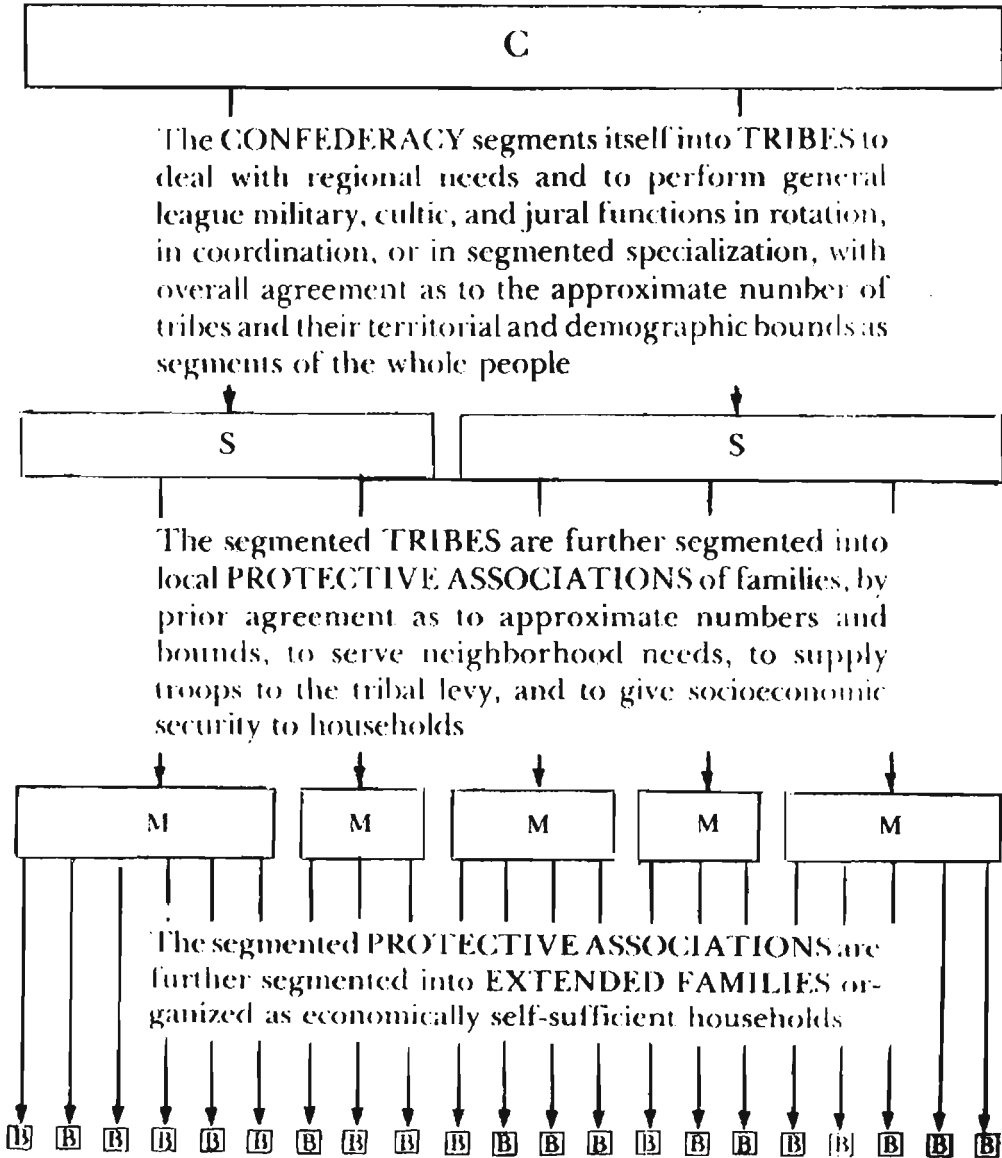


The final encompassing confederacy is co-terminous with the social system and is the RESULT or END PRODUCT of aggregated or pyramided smaller units.

FIGURE 10
ISRAEL'S SOCIETAL FORMATION
ON A TOP-DOWN MODEL

C = confederacy of all Israel S = *shēvet/matteh* M = *mishpāhah/’eleph*
B = *beth-’av*

An unorganized or various organized body of people
commit themselves to a CONFEDERACY of LEAGUE
called Israel with cultic, military, and jural functions.



The final sub-division within the social system is the
RESULT or END PRODUCT of differentiated or
segmented larger units.

THE SOCIO-RELIGIOUS RETRIBALIZATION MODEL. The societal formation has been suggested by models of being formed “Bottom-Up” (fig. 9) with the smaller units converging into the larger units or “Top-Down” (fig. 10) with the converse application of the whole confederacy being subdivided and segmented. Both of these should be acknowledged as complementary models.⁸⁷⁰ Although Gottwald’s organization scheme prefers the “Top-Down” model, this approach examines the elements from the smaller to larger segments, which in no wise implies adherence to the alternative model. The only difference being the inclusion of the smallest kinship unit, the nuclear family, which Gottwald does not include in his model. Because the Hebrew societal structures do not have proper English equivalents, the Hebrew nomenclature is used.⁸⁷¹

NUCLEAR FAMILY. Although normally neglected in societal structure organization schemes, the smallest element of individuals grouped together was the nuclear family. This would include a kinship relationship “composed of parents, their unmarried children, and possibly one or more grandparents.”⁸⁷² Anthropological studies of traditional societies of the Near East cultures “indicates that even in pre-national times in ancient Israel the society contained both nuclear and extended families [בֵּית אִם], and the last mentioned must have been in the minority.”⁸⁷³ Within the Arabic context,

[T]he (beit) is the nuclear unit on which all social organization is based and although it derives much of its prestige and honour from the lineage or clan of which it forms a part, it contributes in turn to that honour (or reduces it) by the behaviour of its members. In Bedouin usage, the word *beit* covers both the tent and its occupants who always form one family. A tent, as has been said, seldom, if ever, stands alone. More frequently a number of tents, forming a large family or a lineage segment, cluster together and act as one solidary economic, kinship and political unit.⁸⁷⁴

Within the Judges narratives, certain terms are present that incorporate the elements of the nuclear family. The first of the marital terms is (’iš) “husband.”⁸⁷⁵ Its counterpart (’iššāh) “wife” is present also in singular possessive and in plural form.⁸⁷⁶ The same Hebrew

⁸⁷⁰ Ibid., 327-334. The tables are taken specifically from pages 330-331.

⁸⁷¹ Within the Arabic culture there is a similar division of societal units: the family, the tribe, the village, the city, the empire, and the community of Islam. C.A.O. van Nieuwenhuijze, *Sociology of the Middle East: A Stocktaking and Interpretation* (Leiden, the Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1971), 379-474.

⁸⁷² Wilson, *Sociological Approaches to the Old Testament*, 37.

⁸⁷³ Lemche, *Early Israel*, 250.

⁸⁷⁴ بيت. A.M. Abou-Zeid, “Honour and Shame Among the Bedouin of Egypt,” *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*, (Ed.) J.G. Peristiany (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 253.

⁸⁷⁵ וְיִשְׁ. Jg. 13:6, 9, 10; 14:15; 19:3; and 20:4.

⁸⁷⁶ וְיִשְׁשָׁה. Jg. 1:12, 13; 3:6; 4:4, 17, 21; 5:24; 8:30; 11:2; 13:2, 11, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23; 14:2, 3, 15, 16, 20; 15:1, 6; 21:1, 18, 21, and 22.

word is used elsewhere, where it is translated “woman” even though its meaning is ascribed to wife, harlot, mother, or concubine.⁸⁷⁷ Elsewhere, the matriarchal form of (*’ēm*) “mother” and its possessive form uses a different word.⁸⁷⁸ The patriarchal form of (*’āb*) “father” and its possessive and plural forms are distinguished from those that are part of the **בית אב** construct relationship.⁸⁷⁹ The progeny of this familial union is represented in its various gender forms. As with the usage of father, the form (*bēn*) “son” does not necessarily indicate the nuclear family.⁸⁸⁰ In addition, the horizontal family relationship of (*’āh*) “brother” is present.⁸⁸¹ The female form is primarily seen as (*bat*) “daughter” although the horizontal relationship of (*’āhôt*) “sister” is present.⁸⁸²

The clearest representation of the nuclear family is seen in the Samson narrative, where his return to the **בית אב** is simply that of the three member home of himself, his father, and his mother.⁸⁸³

BÊT ’AB. As a structure that utilizes the nuclear family as its basic building block, the **בית אב** is an extended family that is primarily a living group of two or more nuclear families.

It includes members with affinal ties, i.e., by marriage, and it excludes some members with consanguineous ties, i.e., by birth, namely, those who leave the group to marry into other *bêth-’avôth* or who separate by choice or circumstance in order to live elsewhere.⁸⁸⁴

⁸⁷⁷ The term is used to refer to a wife in Jg. 13:6, 9, 10, 11, 13; 14:1, 2, 3, 7, 10; and 20:4. It refers to a harlot in Jg. 11:2. It refers to a mother in Jg. 13:24. Its use as concubine is in Jg. 19:26-27.

⁸⁷⁸ **אם**. Jg. 5:7, 28, 8:19; 9:1, 3; 14:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 16, 17; 17:2, 3, and 4.

⁸⁷⁹ **אב**. Where the term specifically refers to father is present in Jg. 1:14; 6:25; 8:32; 9:17, 28, 56; 11:36, 37, 39; 14:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 16; 15:1, 2, 6; 16:31; 19:3, 5, 6, 8, 9; and 21:22.

⁸⁸⁰ **בן**. This term in its singular and plural forms where it is translated or infers “children of ...” is excluded as it is part of a larger structure. The remainder of the forms are present in the nuclear family as found in Jg. 1:13, 20; 2:8; 3:6, 9, 11, 15, 31; 4:6, 12; 5:1, 6, 12; 6:11, 29, 30; 7:14; 8:13, 19, 22, 23, 29, 30, 31, 32; 9:1, 5, 18, 26, 28, 30, 31, 35, 57; 10:1; 11:1, 2, 25, 34; 12:13, 15; 13:3, 5, 24; 17:2, 3, 5; 18:30; and 20:28.

⁸⁸¹ **אח**. BDB, 26. The usage of this term primarily relates to the larger societal structures, nonetheless, the reference in the nuclear family is present in Jg. 1:13; and 3:9.

⁸⁸² **בת** and **אחות**. BDB, 27-28. The primary usage of daughter in its singular and plural forms is found in Jg. 1:12, 13; 3:6; 11:34, 35, 40; 12:9; 19:24; 21:1, 7, 18, and 21. The three times it is found in 14:1-3 are in connection with the Philistine society and are referring to a larger subdivision in its culture. The singular use of sister in 15:2 is in the context of the Philistine nuclear family.

⁸⁸³ Jg. 14:19. An argument may be made regarding this when it is harmonized with Jg. 16:31 and the fact of other brothers who participated in his funeral. It must be noted that Manoah was dead at this time and the mention of his brothers is now not in the context of the **בית אב**, but rather a lineage. Lemche, *Early Israel*, 257.

⁸⁸⁴ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 285.

The archaeological record reflects that in addition to nuclear dwellings, also multiple family compounds existed. Recent excavations at *Khirbet Raddana*, *'Ai*, and *Khirbet el-Meshash* all characterize clusters of dwellings, whereby each independent home was linked to another one by a common wall. The homes each shared a common courtyard.⁸⁸⁵ This residential pattern is present with the story of Micah, where the real estate included (*bêṭ 'ēlōhîm*) a house of gods, a place large enough for five traveling guests, (*bāitîm*) multiple houses, and (*hašā'ar*) a gate.⁸⁸⁶ Gottwald suggests that this gate refers to either a courtyard gate “or it is an anachronistic reference to the family shrine conceived as though it were a sizable temple.”⁸⁸⁷

As previously discussed, there is some degree of fluidity to the Hebraic terms. The context of the words “father’s house” in its strict meaning of the *בית אב* is clear in several of the Judges narratives.⁸⁸⁸ Although a different word (*bānîm*) is used, the context is that of the *בית אב*.⁸⁸⁹ The same can be said of (*'aḥîm*) “brethren.”⁸⁹⁰

The third generation is represented by (*b²nê bānîm*) “grandchildren” who would find a position within the *בית אב*.⁸⁹¹ As part of his extended family, the text mentions Abdon with his sons and his grandsons.⁸⁹²

The idea of a (*hōtēn*) “father-in-law” as part of the nuclear or extended family was possible; however the usage in Judges does not support it.⁸⁹³ The same is true for the (*h^atan*) “son-in-law,” but the two textual instances show this as a visit to the wife’s parents rather than a living arrangement.⁸⁹⁴ The philological similarity between these two terms is best illustrated in “the nomadic custom by which the father-in-law performed the

⁸⁸⁵ Stager, “The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel,” 18-20.

⁸⁸⁶ *הַשְׂעִיר*, *בְּתִים*, *בֵּית אֱלֹהִים* *ו*. Jg. 17:5; 18:2, 14, and 16.

⁸⁸⁷ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 291.

⁸⁸⁸ Jg. 6:15, 27; 8:27, 35; 9:1, 5, 6, 16, 18, 19, 20; 11:2, 7; 14:15, 19; 16:31; 19:2, and 3.

⁸⁸⁹ *בָּנִים* *ו*. BDB, 119-122. This is the plural form of sons. For examples of this, see Jg. 9:2, 5, 18, 24; 10:4; 11:2; 12:9, 14; and 17:11.

⁸⁹⁰ *אֲחִים* *ו*. BDB, 26. This is the plural form of brother. For examples of this, see Jg. 8:19; 9:1, 3, 5, 24, 26, 31, 41, 56; 11:3; 14:3; 16:31; 18:8, and 14.

⁸⁹¹ *בְּנֵי בָנִים* *ו*. BDB, 120. Literally, the meaning is sons of the son.

⁸⁹² Jg. 14:12. There is also mention of Gideon’s children and grandchildren in Jg. 8:22.

⁸⁹³ *חָתָן* *ו*. The modern terminology of father-in-law is better described in the A.N.E. as the wife’s father. BDB, 368. The term is used in Jg. 1:16; 4:11; 19:4, 7, and 9.

⁸⁹⁴ *חָתָן* *ו*. Note that the Hebrew *shores̄h* *חָתָן* is the same for father-in-law and son-in-law with the only difference being the vowel pointing. Jg. 15:6; and 19:5. It should be noted that the first of these references was with the Philistine society.

rite of circumcision upon the bridegroom shortly before the marriage.”⁸⁹⁵ The Arabic term (*katin*) “father-in-law” is aptly translated as “circumciser.”⁸⁹⁶ Neither of the terms (*hōtenet*) “mother-in-law” or (*kalāh*) “daughter-in-law” appear in the text.⁸⁹⁷ By the same token, the terms (*sabā*) “grandfather” (*sabtāh*) and “grandmother” *per se* do not appear in the text.⁸⁹⁸ Nonetheless, there is a reference to Abimelech’s grandfather as his (*bēt-’aḥī ’immô*) “mother’s father.”⁸⁹⁹ In addition to the immediate relations by marriage in the extended family, the progeny of their children would produce the equivalent of (*dôdān*) “cousin,” (*’ahyyān*) “nephew,” and (*’ahyyānīt*) “niece.”⁹⁰⁰ There are no references in Judges to any of these or to the (*dôdāh*) “aunt.”⁹⁰¹ However, the reference to (*dôḏ*) “uncle” is present.⁹⁰²

By definition, the leadership of the *בית אב* is not necessarily the father. Instead, the oldest living male of the lineage is the father *pro tem*. As a result, the position of headship was one of inheritance which would ultimately be passed down to one of the descendants in his lineage.⁹⁰³ Part of the responsibility of the family head is the perpetuation of the lineage.⁹⁰⁴ This may be accomplished through serial monogamy or the more effective means of polycoity or polygyny, of which the first two fall within the boundaries of a monogamous marriage.⁹⁰⁵

For Gottwald, kinship need not be the basis for the formation of the *בית אב*. Yet, it was a compromise where the issue of residence was as much, if not more an integral

⁸⁹⁵ Burney, 15.

⁸⁹⁶ خاتين A.

⁸⁹⁷ חֹתֶנֶת, and כְּלָה. *EHED*, 103 and 298.

⁸⁹⁸ סְבָא, and סְבָתָא. *Ibid.*, 187.

⁸⁹⁹ בֵּית־אָבִי אִמִּי. Literally, it is his mother’s *בית אב*, which would imply her father, and thus ultimately the maternal grandfather. Jg. 9:1.

⁹⁰⁰ אֶחָיוּתִי, אֶחָיוּתִי, and אֶחָיוּתִי. *Ibid.*, 93, 306, and 308.

⁹⁰¹ דֹּדָה. *Ibid.*, 24. The KJV text of Jg. 12:14 poorly identify the thirty grandsons of Abdon as his nephews.

⁹⁰² דֹּד. *Ibid.*, 538. The references in Jg. 9:1, and 3 are of Abimelech’s uncles, however the term used is (*’aḥē-’immô*) אֶחָיוּתִי אִמִּי “mother’s brothers.”

⁹⁰³ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 287.

⁹⁰⁴ Steinberg, 50-51.

⁹⁰⁵ J. Goody, “Polygyny, Economy and the Role of Women,” *The Character of Kinship*, (Ed.) J. Goody (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 180. He notes that concubinage is typically associated with monogamy and not polygyny.

part rather than the issue of kinship.⁹⁰⁶ It is at this point, where the non-biological additions must be considered. Though the general Israelite practice was monogamy, the societal structure allowed for polygamous relationships with additional wives, who may or may not have been considered a (*pîlegeš*) “concubine.”⁹⁰⁷ Other residents within this structure would have been (*na’ar*) “male” and (*na’rāh*) “female servants.”⁹⁰⁸ One instance where there is an adoptive element within the בית אב is the inclusion of the Levite entering (*b²bêt Mikāh*) “in the house of Micah” as a priest and a son.⁹⁰⁹

Within the context of Israel, the בית אב would have been the place of absorption for the (*’almānāh*) “widow,” (*yātôm*) “orphan,” and (*gēr*) “foreigner.”⁹¹⁰ Gottwald contends the Bethel informer is an evidence for his conversion into Israel. However, his argument is flawed, since the narrative states the man left the area for the Hittite territory.⁹¹¹ It cannot be asserted that the *Torah* commandments regarding the care and protection of these three groupings of people were neglected during this period; yet, these three terms are absent from the Judges text.⁹¹²

Functionally, the בית אב would be responsible for its own existence economically, reproductively, and militarily. The family leader would be the central figure of the nuclear families and lineage. Ultimately, it was a living functional social unit of “all the biological descendants of a known common ancestor (distinguished from a fictitious ancestor), thus distinguishable from members of the living group who participated by marriage or adoption or by incorporation.”⁹¹³

MIŠPĀHĀH/’ELEP. The next larger structure during the premonarchic period is the משפחה with its nearly synonymous term אלה, although the societal functions differ. The

⁹⁰⁶ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 285.

⁹⁰⁷ פילגש. BDB, 811. Jg. 8:31; 19:1, 2, 9, 10, 24, 25, 27, 29; 20:4, 5, and 6.

⁹⁰⁸ נער, and נערה. BDB, 654-655. The masculine references to the servant are found in 6:27; 7:10, 11; 19:3, 9, 11, and 13. There is the usage where it refers to a concubine in Jg. 19:3, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 9. The other feminine usage refers to a virgin in Jg. 21:12.

⁹⁰⁹ בבית מיקה. Jg. 17:11-12.

⁹¹⁰ אלה, יחוס, and גר. J. Milgrom, “Religious Conversion and the Revolt Model for the Formation of Israel,” *JBL* 101 (1982), 169-172. Dt. 14:29 and 16:11.

⁹¹¹ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 556-563. Jg. 1:23-26.

⁹¹² The term foreigner is present in Jg. 19:12; yet the context shows that they were outside the scope of premonarchic Israelite society. The אלה term (*nokrî*) נכרי that is used designates someone who is of another country, whereas (*gēr*) גר involves a foreigner who has converted into the cultus. BDB, 158, and 648.

⁹¹³ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 287.

primary term משפחה is used to designate an extended protective association of families comprised of many אב בית.⁹¹⁴ Strong shows that the root of this word (*šph*) points to another noun (*šiphāh*) without the locative (*m*) מ prefix.⁹¹⁵ This corresponds with the idea of progeny from the head of the משפחה, where semen is (*šāpāh*) “poured” into (*šiphāh*) the “maiden” and the result is the (*mišpāhāh*).⁹¹⁶ As a societal level between the family and the tribe, there is some diversity of opinion as to its meaning. Gottwald prefers the protective association of families nomenclature where the kinsman composition is based on the shared communal interests for the solidarity of its members rather than common descent.⁹¹⁷ De Geus ascribes the greatest social and political importance to the משפחה, yet there is some ambiguity to his definition of it being a superstructure of the אב בית.⁹¹⁸ Lemche delimits its importance and identifies it deuteronomistically as “a Priestly systematization of the kinship units which has no relation to the sociological contents the term once possessed.”⁹¹⁹

The secondary term אלה re-describes the משפחה in the context of its military function.⁹²⁰ In the Gideon and Abimelech episodes, the אלה involved in the conquest is subdivided to include (*ro'šim*) “companies.”⁹²¹ A similar usage is present with the

⁹¹⁴ Jg. 1:25; 6:15; 9:1; 13:2; 17:7; 18:19; and 21:24. See also Footnote 979, on page 206.

⁹¹⁵ מ and שפחה. *SECB-HCD*, 74, and 120.

⁹¹⁶ מ, שפחה, and שפח. *BDB*, 1046. Thus, a literal rendering of משפחה would be from the maiden/concubine, if this *shores* is used. This matrilineal philological rendering is also presented by J. Morgenstern who makes a comparative study with Arabic cognates. Cf. “*Beena* Marriage (Matriarchat) in Ancient Israel and its Historical Implications,” *ZAW* 47 (1929), 91-110 and “Additional Notes on ‘*Beena* Marriage (Matriarchat) in Ancient Israel,” *ZAW* 8 (1931), 46-58.

⁹¹⁷ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 257. This would be similar in form and function to the modern Israelite (*qibbūṭ*) קיבוץ and (*mōšāb*) מושב. See *EHED*, 159, and 263.

⁹¹⁸ C.H.J. de Geus, *The Tribes of Israel: An Investigation into Some of the Presuppositions of Martin Noth's Amphictyony Hypothesis* (SSN 18: Assen, the Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1976), 137.

⁹¹⁹ Lemche, *Early Israel*, 262-263.

⁹²⁰ Examples of the military usage are present in several of the narratives. Jg. 4:6, 10, 14; 5:8, 7:3; 8:10; 12:6; 15:11, 15, 16; 20:2, 15, 17, 21, 25, 34, 35, 44, 45, 46; and 21:10. It is noted that there is some latitude as to whether the term should be translated as a military unit or as a number.

⁹²¹ ראשים. *BDB*, 910-911. This usage is found in Jg. 7:16, 20; 9:34, 37, 43, and 44.

(*niz 'āqtā*) “company” that pursues the Danite warriors to retrieve the family idols.⁹²² As a technical term it does not have to be defined as the cardinal number 1000.⁹²³

“[It] was a military unit in old Israel, but it did not contain one thousand men, nor indeed any fixed number, but rather a very much smaller but variable number of men actually mustered or promised for muster by a *mishpāhāh* in order to supply a round of troops from the *shevet* for all-Israelite wars.”⁹²⁴

There are other instances of the nonmilitary use of אֶלֶף, however, they do not exist in Judges.⁹²⁵

Just as with the nuclear family and the בית אב, within the משפחה certain of the terms overlap. A reference to “house” is an example of a much larger societal structure, such as with (*bêt Heber*) “the house of Heber.”⁹²⁶ The other term which has multiple usages is “sons” which may be translated as “children.”⁹²⁷ Although the meaning is consistent with this structure another term “men” is used to describe (*'anšê Gil'ād*) “the men of Gilead.”⁹²⁸

This structure with its two different functional terms has clear textual examples. The Micah pericope illustrates that the priest would be functioning within the context of both משפחה and שבט, rather than simply within a בית אב.⁹²⁹ The Gideon narrative clearly reflects the military usage where his אֶלֶף is the smallest in Manasseh and he is the least in his בית אב.⁹³⁰ The actual size and number of the משפחה differed between each שבט. Gottwald does not find the census of Numbers 26 to be credible enough to

⁹²² נִזְעָקָהּ. BDB, 277. The verbal form of the *shoresh* זעק shows that these are those who have been called out together with the implication of crying out either to one or against one. This verbal form is used in Jg. 3:9, 15; 4:10, 13; 6:6, 7; 10:10, 14; 18:22, and 23.

⁹²³ G.E. Mendenhall suggests that the term should be defined as a tribal designation rather than a numerical value. See his “The Census Lists of Numbers 1 and 26,” *JBL* 77 (1958), 52 and 66. *Contra* Mendenhall, H.L. Allrik supports the polar view of a literal numerical representation. See his, “The Lists of Zerubbabel (Nehemiah 7 and Ezra 2) and the Hebrew Numeral Notation,” *BASOR* 136 (1954), 21-27. For an overview of the problem, see D.M. Fouts, “A Defense of the Hyperbolic Interpretation of Large Numbers in the Old Testament,” *JETS* 40 (1997), 377-387.

⁹²⁴ שֵׁבֶט. BDB, 986-987. Literally, it is defined as tribe; however, the specific discussion follows. Cf. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 271.

⁹²⁵ 1 Sam. 10:19; 23:23; Mic. 5:2; and Zech. 9:7.

⁹²⁶ בֵּית חֶבֶר. Jg. 4:17.

⁹²⁷ Jg. 1:16; 4:11; and 18:30.

⁹²⁸ אֲנָשֵׁי גִלְעָד. Jg. 12:4, and 5.

⁹²⁹ Jg. 18:19.

⁹³⁰ Jg. 6:15. Lemche makes the point that אֶלֶף could not mean the number 1000, because from a comparative point, how can one group of one thousand be larger or smaller than another. Therefore, the military system is the best interpretation. See his *Early Israel*, 255.

yield an average of 4.75 משפחה per שבט; however, in his own assessment of the population he concludes the larger settlements had at least one or more משפחה.⁹³¹

ŠĒBET. The largest subdivision of Israel would have been the שבט. Gottwald suggests that a complementary situation exists in which the שבט can also be referred as (*Maṭṭeh*) from Num. 36:3 where both terms are interchangeable.⁹³² Although, the latter term does not appear in the Judges narrative, he presses the point that

Both terms are used in a literal sense to refer to a “rod” or “staff” conceived as a weapon, an implement, or a ceremonial object, which includes military and political denotations of “staff” and “scepter.”⁹³³

The pejorative term is שבט.⁹³⁴ Although the context is tribal, משפחה is used to refer to men coming from the tribe of Dan.⁹³⁵ The term (*bêṭ-yôṣēp*) “house of Joseph” describes the patriarchal tribe of Joseph.⁹³⁶ The same tribal sense is present with the use of “brother” relating to the conquest narratives involving Judah and (*Šim’ôn*) Simeon.⁹³⁷ The construct use of (*b’ne binyāmin*) “sons of Benjamin” reflects the meaning to be tribal rather than within one of the smaller structures.⁹³⁸ Another term that has a questionable meaning is the (*p’lagôṭ R’ûbēn*) “divisions of Reuben” which when compared to the tributaries of a river may indicate factions or even a sub-tribe.⁹³⁹

The biological patriarchal lineage from the eponymous ancestor is the virtue by which each שבט derives its proper name. Nevertheless, its existence as a שבט is only by virtue of its participation in Israel as one of the שבטי ישראל.⁹⁴⁰ One of the distinctions that must be made with this term is whether it is geographical in nature.

⁹³¹ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 267-270.

⁹³² מטה. BDB, 641.

⁹³³ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 245.

⁹³⁴ Jg. 20:2, 10, 12; 21:3, 5, 6, 8, 15, 17, and 24.

⁹³⁵ Jg. 18:2, and 11.

⁹³⁶ בית-יוסף. Jg. 1:22, 23, and 35. The same type of construction is present regarding the house of Ephraim (*bêṭ ’eprāyim*) בית אפרים in Jg. 10:9, where the meaning intended is tribal.

⁹³⁷ שבעון. Jg. 1:3, and 17. The same literary use is followed in the concluding section where the tribe of Benjamin is referred to simply as their patriarchal brother. Jg. 20:23, 28; and 21:6. In addition, there is a sense of plurality for this word in Jg. 19:23 and 21:22, representing the שבט.

⁹³⁸ בני בנימן. The tribe of Benjamin is seen in this context in Jg. 20:3, 14, 15, 18, 21, 23, 24, 28, 30, 31, 32, 36, 48; 21:13, 20, and 23. This same formula is used with other tribal groups in Jg. 1:8, 9, 16, 21, 34; 4:6; 18:2, 16, 22, 23, 25, 26, and 30.

⁹³⁹ פלגות ראובן. BDB, 811; and Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 284. Jg. 5:15-16.

⁹⁴⁰ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 245.

The Israelite tribes were also territorial units, which means that the individual tribe identified itself with its geographical territory to such a degree that many of the references in the OT are actually more in the nature of geographical notices than references to a particular society which existed in a particular region.⁹⁴¹

The nature of the tribal function is rather elusive and beset with vagueness.⁹⁴² In the normal affairs of the tribe, issues of political borders are mute unless there is an external threat to the people or the territorial land they occupy. In these times of jeopardy, the constituent elements of the שבט would act corporately as a territorial unit.⁹⁴³ These times when the שבט would be a composite unit are primarily motivated by military action, such as in the opening conquest narratives as well as the war against the (*šibtê Binyāmin*) “tribe of Benjamin.”⁹⁴⁴

CONFEDERACY. As the social organization moves upwards from its penultimate position, because an adequate comprehensive Hebraic technical term is absent from the text, an English counterpart must suffice.⁹⁴⁵ Much of the discussion about the identity of Israel as a people has been presented in chapter two. However, in reviewing the Judges narrative certain designations are present for this confederacy, whether in part or in whole. Yet, one designation that is obviously missing is the word (*hagôyim*) “nations,” which is only used in the context that describes their enemies who are left in Canaan for the purpose of testing the Israelites.⁹⁴⁶ This would become both a positive and negative function of divine judgment for them.

The primary reference is (*b²nê Yiśrā’ēl*) “sons of Israel.”⁹⁴⁷ The same formulaic literary structure is present that describes their enemies.⁹⁴⁸ The familial term “brothers” is

⁹⁴¹ Lemche, *Early Israel*, 282.

⁹⁴² de Geus, 211.

⁹⁴³ Lemche, *Early Israel*, 289.

⁹⁴⁴ שְׁבִטַי בִּנְיָמִן. Jg. 1; and 20. Gottwald dismisses the tribal conquest narratives in chapter one as a monarchic redaction rather than historical annals. See his *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 175.

⁹⁴⁵ Ibid., 239.

⁹⁴⁶ הַגִּוִּיִּם. BDB, 156. This plural reference is used of all the nations left in Canaan. Jg. 2:21, 23; and 3:1.

⁹⁴⁷ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. The KJV version solves the gender issue by translating this as the all inclusive children of Israel. For examples of this, see Jg. 1:1; 2:4, 6, 11; 3:2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 12, 14, 15, 27; 4:1, 3, 5, 23, 24; 6:1, 2, 6, 7, 8; 8:28, 33, 34; 10:6, 8, 10, 11, 15; 11:27, 33; 13:1; 19:12, 30; 20:1, 3, 7, 14, 18, 19, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 30, 32, 35; 21:5, 6, 18, and 24.

⁹⁴⁸ The phrase “sons of ...” is used to describe the Ammonite confederacy in Jg. 3:13; 10:6, 7, 9, 11, 17, 18; 11:4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 36; 12:1, 2, and 3. The same formula describes the sons of the East in Jg. 6:3; 7:12; and 8:10. The Philistines are described accordingly in Jg. 14: 16 and 17, as the sons of the people of Delilah. Although a different word is used, Egypt and its people are described as the (*bēt ḥādīm*) בֵּית עֲבָדִים “house of bondage” in Jg. 6:8.

used to describe the sons of Israel.⁹⁴⁹ Another similar designation used was (*ʾiṣ-Yiśrāʾēl*) “men of Israel.”⁹⁵⁰ The designation given in the concluding chapters refers to the composite group as (*kōl šibtê Yiśrāʾēl*) “all the tribes of Israel.”⁹⁵¹ Although this is an historical reference to their patrilineal descent, the term (*ʾbôtām*) “their fathers” is synonymous with the historic confederacy from the point it was a nuclear family up until its premonarchic state.⁹⁵² Yet, even without adjectival or nominal constructs, the singular most distinctive name of the confederacy is simply (*Yiśrāʾēl*) “Israel.”⁹⁵³ At other times, the premonarchic people are called (*hāʾām*) “the people.”⁹⁵⁴

In the Gideon narrative, the oppressive enemy used the term (*b²nê hammelek*) “sons of a king” to describe Israel.⁹⁵⁵ Another singular reference was made in the same story calling them (*maḥ^anēh Yiśrāʾēl*) “the camps of Israel.”⁹⁵⁶ In the context of either worship or military conquest, the terms (*ʿēdāh*) “congregation” and (*qāḥāl*) “assembly” are used in the closing chapters.⁹⁵⁷ Milgrom contends that for premonarchic Israel these two terms expressly represent “a political body invested with legislative and judicial functions” rather than religious gatherings.⁹⁵⁸ He cites the internecine war with Benjamin

⁹⁴⁹ Jg. 20:13.

⁹⁵⁰ אִישׁ־יִשְׂרָאֵל. The examples of this are in Jg. 7:14, 23; 8:22; 9:55; 20:11, 17, 20, 22, 33, 36, 38, 39, 41, 42, 48; and 21:1.

⁹⁵¹ כָּל־שִׁבְטֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל. Examples of this are in Jg. 20:2, 10, 12; 21:5, 8, and 15.

⁹⁵² אֲבוֹתָם. For this example, see Jg. 2:1, 10, 12, 17, 19, 20, 22; 3:4; and 6:13.

⁹⁵³ יִשְׂרָאֵל. The examples of this name are throughout Judges. Yet, where it is the primary subject these are presented. Jg. 1:28; 2:7, 10, 14, 20, 22; 3:1, 4, 8, 10, 12, 13, 30, 31; 4:4; 5:2, 7, 8, 9, 11; 6:2, 3, 4, 6, 14, 15, 36, 37; 7:2, 8; 8:27, 35; 9:22; 10:1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 16; 11:4, 5, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 23, 25, 26, 39; 12:7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14; 13:5; 14:4; 15:20; 16:31; 17:6; 18:1, 19, 29; 19:1, 29; 20:6, 29, 31, 34, 35; 21:3, 17, and 25. There are some locations where YHWH is the focus of the construct relationship where He is the God of Israel. These examples are Jg. 4:6; 5:3, 5; 6:8; 11:21, and 23.

⁹⁵⁴ הָעָם. BDB, 766. The context declares whether the term refers to the composite group or to a smaller one. Examples of where it refers to the complete group are in Jg. 1:16; 2:4, 6, 7, 20; 5:2, 9, 11, 13, 14; 11:23; 20:2, 8, 10, 16, 22, 26, 31; 21:2, 4, 9, and 15. Some of the references that are tribal in nature include: Jg. 3:18; 7:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8; 8:5; 9:29, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 42, 43, 44, 45, 48, 49; 10:18; 11:11; 12:2; 14:3; and 18:20. One instance shows that it was a small delegation in Jg. 3:18. The same word is used to describe the corporate enemy as a group of people. Jg. 2:12; 4:13; 11:20, 21; 14:16, 17; 16:24, 30; 18:7, 10, and 27.

⁹⁵⁵ בְּנֵי־הַמֶּלֶךְ. Jg. 8:18.

⁹⁵⁶ מַחֲנֵה־יִשְׂרָאֵל. Jg. 7:15.

⁹⁵⁷ קָהָל and עֵדָה. BDB, 417, and 874. The usages are 20:1; 21:10, 13, and 16; and 20:2; 21:5, and 8, respectively.

⁹⁵⁸ J. Milgrom, “Priestly Terminology and the Political and Social Structure of Premonarchic Israel,” *JQR* 69 (1978), 69.

as an example of the congregation functioning, but noting that it “was not a permanent and continuous body.”⁹⁵⁹

One ethnographic comparative analysis included the Nuer model, based upon a tribal people in Southern Sudan, who were studied in the 1930’s by British anthropologist E.E. Evans-Pritchard. A similarity to the premonarchic period paralleled the Nuer culture stressing “the concept that groups may come together for united action but may in a very short space of time and in changed circumstances, find themselves at odds with each other.”⁹⁶⁰ This Nuer model has come under some anthropological criticism because of it being an acephalous segmented society.⁹⁶¹

At times, the textual references are to an across the board segment of society present within the confederacy at each of the levels. An instance of this is with the (*b²nôṭ Yisrā’ēl*) “daughters of Israel” as reflected in the conclusion of the Jephthah narrative.⁹⁶² An even smaller segment is reflected by the derogatory term (*b²nê-B²lîya’al*) “sons of Belial” reflecting the rebelliousness of some of the Israelites.⁹⁶³

Both Gottwald and Noth place an important emphasis upon the religious nature of Israel; however, Gottwald makes the cult the center that allows all other socio-politic functions of the nation to intersect and complement the cult (fig. 11).⁹⁶⁴ In all that has been presented regarding the societal structure, the denial:

Is not that families banded together into clans, clans into tribes, and tribes into some sort of federation for the sake of mutual support and defense in the area of ancient Canaan in which they found themselves to be strangers, and of an inferior level of civilization. What has been rejected is that the league was an amphictyony, i.e., a sacral league of precisely twelve tribes after the fashion of the Etruscan, Delphic or Pylaic amphictyonies, with a common central sanctuary whose care was taken in rotation every month by one tribe.⁹⁶⁵

⁹⁵⁹ Milgrom, “Priestly Terminology,” 74-75.

⁹⁶⁰ J. D. Martin, “Israel as a tribal society,” in *The World of Ancient Israel: Sociological, Anthropological and Political Perspectives: Essays by Members of the Society for Old Testament Study*, (Ed.) R.E. Clements (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 96-97.

⁹⁶¹ D. Fiensy, “Using the Nuer Culture of Africa in Understanding the Old Testament: An Evaluation,” *JSOT* 38 (1987), 78.

⁹⁶² בָּנוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל. Jg. 11:40.

⁹⁶³ בְּנֵי בְלִיעֵל. Jg. 19:22; and 20:13.

⁹⁶⁴ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 380.

⁹⁶⁵ de Menezes, 125.

FIGURE 11
THE ISRAELITE CONFEDERACY
COEXTENSIVE WITH ISRAELITE SOCIETY

ISRAELITE CULTURE AND SOCIETY

articulated by extended families, protective associations of families, and tribes cooperating in a common cultic, military, and jural community tending toward standardization of ideology and coordination of action without rivalry from any other confederated instrumentalities.

THE ISRAELITE CONFEDERACY

is coextensive with the Israelite culture and society in that it comprehends all ideology and all action in the social system, while distributing power to undertake various forms of social action to the different levels of organization subsumed within the total confederacy, and it does so in lieu of any centralized political power, either in the confederacy as a whole or in its tribal segments.

**THE ISRAELITE CONFEDERACY AS A COMMON CULTIC, MILITARY, AND
JURAL COMMUNITY
OF INTERACTION WITH SEGMENTED ORGANIZATION**

into

Cross-cut and bonded	TRIBES	Cross-cut and bonded
by cultic assembly	↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓	by cultic assembly
Levitical priests.....	↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓	Levitical Priests.....
Mutual aid.....	↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓	Mutual Aid.....
Intermarriage.....	↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓	Intermarriage.....
Military Cooperation.....	↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓	Military Cooperation.....
Kenite metal craft guild.....	↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓	Kenite metal craft guild.....

The structure of this period was not a borrowed adaptation of Hellenistic amphictyony nor was it a comprehensive social entity sharing a common patriarchal ancestry. Although the cult had its sacrificial system and worship at its center, the religious actions or the place of these actions were not the unifying element for each structural level and entity. Instead, the unifying element in the case of obedience and the element of disunity in the case of disobedience was Yahweh, who pervaded individual and structural level. The development and organization of the tribes was natural, "though separated by the force of circumstances from the others, was still a part of Israel, the

people of Yahweh, and in so far as it was such a part of its experiences were the experiences of the people.”⁹⁶⁶

If the concentric circles of societal organization are viewed androcentrically, then women only function as a small part of the whole at each level. Yet, even within a patriarchal society, the kinship function of women, specifically in their roles as wives and mothers in the domestic environment of the nuclear family and **בית אב** would give them a significant voice in the men chosen to serve in the militia.⁹⁶⁷ The domestic realm is where several women became heroines as female warriors, and the instrument used by YHWH. Jael used the tent peg to kill Sisera.⁹⁶⁸ The unnamed woman of (*Tēhēš*) Thebez used the millstone, a domestic implement to kill Abimelech.⁹⁶⁹ Though the woman warrior is an anomaly in Israel, the social structure was fluid enough for women to function in military activity as divine agents. The battlefield was male oriented; yet, the prophetess Deborah asserts divine guarantee and exemplifies female involvement stating, “for into the hand of a woman will YHWH sell Sisera.”⁹⁷⁰ Deborah and Jael are presented metaphorically in their overt and covert military activity, and thus demonstrate that the clear cut social structure is not as clear and clinical as Gottwald would suggest. Rather, it is a model of gender mutuality as in the cooperation between Barak and Deborah, where each functions in their own specific divinely empowered role.⁹⁷¹

Ultimately, for the purpose of this thesis, it is the awareness that YHWH worked within the societal structure to administer His judgment; however, the examination of the societal elements serves more to understand peripheral issues rather than the immediate focus.

SOCIAL CLASS ORGANIZATION

The premonarchic Israelite society, regardless of which structural theory is adopted, lived within the confines of an economic system, *albeit* primarily agrarian or pastoral in nature. Although the class distinctions may not be as clear cut from textual narratives, the behavior patterns within the nuclear family and upward into the **משפחה**

⁹⁶⁶ Mayes, *Israel in the Period of the Judges*, 109.

⁹⁶⁷ G.A. Yee, “By the Hand of a Woman: The Metaphor of the Woman Warrior in Judges 4,” *Semeia 61: Women, War and Metaphor: Language and Society in the Study of the Hebrew Bible* (1993), 111. See the section on the Function of Women, for this sociological discussion, pages 310-318.

⁹⁶⁸ Jg. 4:21.

⁹⁶⁹ **חַיִּית**. Jg. 9:53-54.

⁹⁷⁰ Jg. 4:9.

⁹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 119.

may well have been governed based on economic obligations or the protection of economic interests.⁹⁷²

Social classes may be said to exist whenever one social group is able to appropriate a part of the surplus labor product of other groups. In such a situation of exploitation, wealth and power accrue disproportionately to those who are able to claim and dispose of what others produce. Those who have this power of economic disposal tend also to have political predominance and ideological hegemony.⁹⁷³

The economic society of this time allowed Israel to practice a household income generating paradigm which Gottwald classifies as a Communitarian Mode of Production (CMP), that is when the social class system of tribute was not extracted from them by a dominant-tribute imposing class making the subjected the dominated tribute-bearing class.⁹⁷⁴ The issue of social class as it pertains to Judges has virtually been neglected. Yet, the CMP flourishes under the leadership of judges who restore peace to the tribal area. Nevertheless, the class distinction through subjection is present primarily when Israel is in a state of apostasy. Accordingly, it may be seen as an ancillary expression of divine judgment.

This classification of the CMP is Gottwald's reworking of Marx's five modes of production, which he has inserted based on an Asiatic Mode of Production (AMP).⁹⁷⁵ The idea of the AMP at work in premonarchic Israel is a partial refutation of Marx's feudalistic perception, but more so the means for explaining the tribal system both structurally and economically based on a village community of multiple **בית אב** if not **משפחה**.⁹⁷⁶ If Israel were simply pastoral nomads, the issue of tribute would be less easy to enforce and would subject them to banditry. Nonetheless, in a more settled life (not discounting elements of pastoral nomadism), the CMP within the AMP is able to function and thus be vulnerable to a dominant tribute bearing class, should the village-based

⁹⁷² Steinberg, 53.

⁹⁷³ N.K. Gottwald, "Social Class as an Analytic and Hermeneutical Category in Biblical Studies," *JBL* 112 (1993), 4.

⁹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 6-8.

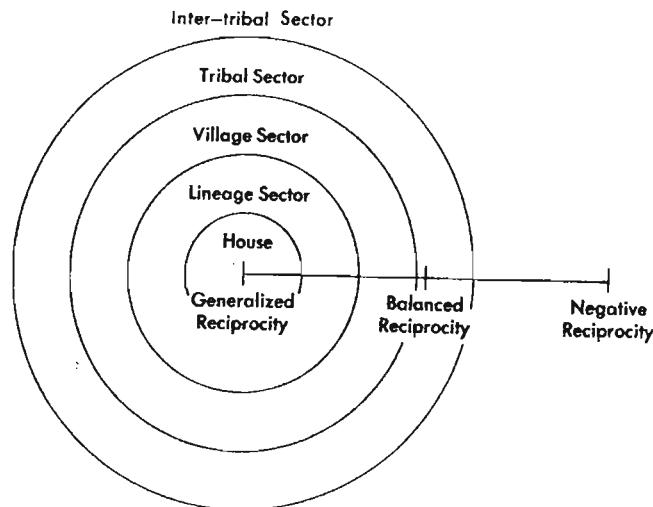
⁹⁷⁵ *Idem*, "A Hypothesis about Social Class in Monarchic Israel in the Light of Contemporary Studies of Social Class and Social Stratification" *The Hebrew Bible in its Social World and in Ours*, (Ed.), *idem*, (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1993), 150-151. He lists the unilinear five-stage system of Marx and Engels in *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848). These modes of production are: 1) the classless primitive community; 2) the slave-based society of classical times; 3) the feudal society based on serfdom; 4) the modern bourgeois society based on the capitalist mode of production; and 5) the classless society of the future.

⁹⁷⁶ Technically this should be represented in the plural (**בֵּית אֲבוֹת** *bēṭ 'ābōt*) and (**מִשְׁפָּחוֹת** *mišpāḥōt*); however, the singular form is used so as not to introduce confusion with the nomenclature.

tribalism turn away from YHWH.⁹⁷⁷ The CMP concept is problematic in its formulation because of its “evolutionary notions of primitive human development.”⁹⁷⁸ Jobling suggests that the “familial mode of production” as proposed by Marshall Sahlins is more characteristic of the premonarchic period while at the same time acknowledging the female role in the family household.⁹⁷⁹ Micah is an example of this familial mode, where he is depicted as a wealthy landowner.⁹⁸⁰

Whereas Jobling has borrowed this concept, likewise Sahlins has borrowed from Elman Service the idea that the concentric circles of tribal organization are cross-cut by a spectrum of reciprocity.⁹⁸¹ As reflected in Figure 12, the dominant tribute imposing class operates on the basis of a negative reciprocity.⁹⁸²

FIGURE 12
RECIPROCITY AND KINSHIP-RESIDENTIAL SECTORS



However, when reciprocity is balanced the society is operating within its social structure and external tribute is not forced upon them. The “general reciprocity” operates within the nuclear family or בית אב and this concept does not have a bearing upon

⁹⁷⁷ *Idem*, “Early Israel and the Canaanite Socio-economic System” *Palestine in Transition*, 29-33.

⁹⁷⁸ D. Jobling, “Feminism and ‘Mode of Production’ in Ancient Israel: Search for a Method,” *The Bible and the Politics of Exegesis: Essays in Honor of Norman K. Gottwald on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, (Eds.) D. Jobling, P.L. Day, G.T. Sheppard (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1991), 241.

⁹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 242; and M.D. Sahlins, *Tribesmen* (Foundations of Modern Anthropology; Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 75-81.

⁹⁸⁰ E. Täubler, *Biblische Studien: die Epoche der Richter* (Biblical Studies: The Era of the Judges) [Ger.], (Tübingen, Germany: J.C.B. Mohr, 1958), 50-51.

⁹⁸¹ Sahlins, 82-83; and E.R. Service, *The Hunters* (Foundations of Modern Anthropology; Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1966), 14-15.

⁹⁸² Sahlins, 85.

tributary class. Within Judges, expressions of divine judgment may be viewed through all three of the class structures, especially as it relates to the issue of tribute bearing.

DOMINANT TRIBUTE IMPOSING CLASS. Primarily, this distinction involves the oppressive nations whom YHWH uses to exact tribute from Israel. The phrase (*wayyimk²rēm b²yad*) “[and He] sold into the hand of” makes the irony of this evident in the text.⁹⁸³ Those dominant foreign nations included (*^aram nah^arāyim*) Mesopotamia, Moab, Canaan, and (*Midyān*) Midian.⁹⁸⁴ Nonetheless, the introductory tribal conquest narrative shows where Israel dominated the Canaanites and collected tribute from their inhabitants.⁹⁸⁵

DOMINATED TRIBUTE BEARING CLASS. Although the same references above would show the converse of the domination, the Moabite and Midianite oppressive regimes clearly indicate the nature of tribute. The king of Moab had oppressed Israel for a period of eighteen years. Ehud represented the Israelites bearing (*minhāh*) with his entourage to Eglon.⁹⁸⁶ The irony is that the tribute Eglon expected was not that which he received. A similar situation is present during the seven year Midianite oppression with its apparent scorched earth policy. Raids were conducted impoverishing Israel in its agricultural produce and its livestock.⁹⁸⁷ There is an oblique reference to the depressed economic condition by foreign domination when the highways were unoccupied and the people walked through the byways.⁹⁸⁸

⁹⁸³ וַיִּמְכְּרֵם בְּיָד. This phrase is used in Jg. 2:14; 3:8; 4:2; and 10:7.

⁹⁸⁴ אֲרָם נְהָרַיִם, and מִדְיָן. Literally, Mesopotamia should be translated “rivers of Aram.” These examples are found in Jg. 3:8, 14; 4:2; and 6:6. Although oppression was exerted upon Israel by the Ammonites, (*^emōrī*) אֲמֹרִי Amorites, Amalek, (*Mā’ōn*) מֵעֹן Maon, Egypt, (*Sidōnīm*) צִידוֹנִים Sidonians, and Philistines, the text does not identify monetary tribute subservience. Jg. 10:11-12.

⁹⁸⁵ Jg. 1:27-35. It is clear from this passage that Manasseh required tribute from the inhabitants of (*Bêt-š²’ān*) בֵּית-שֵׁאֵן Beth-shean, Taanach, (*Dōr*) דּוֹר Dor, (*Yibl²’ām*) יִבְלֵעָם Ibleam, and (*M²giddō*) מְגִדּוֹ Megiddo. The same is true where the inhabitants of (*Qitrōn*) קִטְרוֹן Kitron and (*Nah^alōl*) נַהֲלֹל Nahalol paid tribute to Zebulun. Naphtali subjected the inhabitants of (*Bêt-Šemeš*) בֵּית-שֶׁמֶשׁ Beth-Shemesh and Beth-anath to tribute. After some time, Dan became strong enough to require tribute of the Amorites in (*Har-Heres*) הַר-חֶרֶס Mount Heres, (*’āyālōn*) אֵילָן Aijalon and (*Ša’alḥīm*) שַׁעֲלִימִים Shaalvim. The context suggests that Ephraim collected tribute from the inhabitants of Gezer as well as Asher requiring it from the inhabitants of (*’akō*) עֲכוֹ Acco, Sidon, (*’ahlāb*) אַחְלָב Ahlab, (*’akzīb*) אַחְזִיב Achzib, (*Helbāh*) הֶלְבָּה Helbah, (*’āpīq*) אֶפִּיק Aphik, and (*R²hōb*) רְחוֹב Rehob; however it does not say this explicitly.

⁹⁸⁶ מִנְחָה. BDB, 585, where this is explained as a gift, tribute, or offering. This word is used elsewhere in Judges as an offering; yet, the context of a tribute is evident in Jg. 3:15, 17, and 18.

⁹⁸⁷ Jg. 6:1-6.

⁹⁸⁸ Jg. 5:6.

NATIVE TRIBUTARY CLASS. Whereas the socio-economic classification system of the people is primarily focused on external nations or city-state organizations that are either imposing tribute or tribute is being imposed upon them, internal social class also existed.⁹⁸⁹ This designation finds its greatest application within the monarchic period; nonetheless, there is an embryonic internal mechanism within the *משפחה*. The concept of military support albeit temporary in nature was presented to the men of (*Sukôt*) Succoth by Gideon for the hunger of his three hundred men army which was rejected at their own peril.⁹⁹⁰ The same request was also made of the men of Penuel which received the same response.⁹⁹¹ There was both ten percent conscription for the war against Benjamin and a levy of food for the soldiers.⁹⁹²

The spoils of war became an element subject to tribute by the deliverer. Gideon exacted from his army and their prey all of the golden earrings.⁹⁹³ The six hundred men of Dan took their spoil by force from the house of Micah.⁹⁹⁴ When cities and villages were not razed, some of the spoil became women. This was the case of the four hundred virgins of (*Yābêš Gil'ād*) Jabesh-Gilead who were given to the remaining men of Benjamin.⁹⁹⁵

There were two other instances in which the concept of an internal tribute was paid, although it was more of a hired for money situation. The first of these involved Abimelech receiving 70 pieces of silver from the men of Shechem for his tyrannical reign⁹⁹⁶. A similar hiring for betrayal was present among the lords of the Philistines for the services of Delilah against Samson.⁹⁹⁷ The other instance is when Micah hired the Levite for his priestly services.⁹⁹⁸

⁹⁸⁹ Gottwald, "A Hypothesis about Social Class in Monarchic Israel in the Light of Contemporary Studies of Social Class and Social Stratification," 139-164.

⁹⁹⁰ *חֲסֹדוֹת*. Jg. 8:4-7.

⁹⁹¹ Jg. 8:8-9.

⁹⁹² Jg. 20:10.

⁹⁹³ Jg. 8:24-26. Gideon's tribute of earrings was 1700 shekels of gold.

⁹⁹⁴ Jg. 18:16-20. These items included the graven image, the ephod, the *teraphim*, the molten image, and the Levite.

⁹⁹⁵ *יָבֵשׁ גִּלְעָד*. Jg. 21:10-12.

⁹⁹⁶ Jg. 9:4.

⁹⁹⁷ Jg. 16:5. Delilah received a reward of 1100 pieces of silver from each Philistine lord.

⁹⁹⁸ Jg. 17:10. The Levite received an annual income of 10 shekels of silver, a suit of clothes, and his food.

Within the context of the parable told by Jotham, there is an oblique reference to class organizational structure. The leadership was being offered to the various classes, represented by the cedar tree, olive tree, fig tree, grape vine, and bramble.⁹⁹⁹

LEADERSHIP ORGANIZATION

The narratives in their redacted framework of the cyclical pattern of apostasy-oppression-repentance-deliverance presuppose that a deliverer will arise if the cycle reaches its climax. These heroes in the texts provide a focal point as to the leadership style of the Ancient Near East and need not be a pan-tribal administrator to effect change and fulfill part of the cycle.

He is rather, one who defends the right or just cause, whether in the capacity of a juridical official who hears cases and renders judgments or as a military leader who throws off the oppressor of a victimized people. In either case, the results are the same: the punishment of the offender, the vindication of the innocent party, and the restoration of the right (just) order of things.¹⁰⁰⁰

CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP. The leaders and key figures of the book of Judges are embodied in a charismatic regime that removes the adversarial oppressor.¹⁰⁰¹ This idea was developed by Weber as a phenomenon that emerged onto the biblical scene that did not fit into the pattern of the traditional authority (patriarchal-tribal) or the legal-rational authority.¹⁰⁰² Weber and those who followed his lead with this terminology have applied a Pauline New Testament theological concept of (*charismata*) upon the Hebrew bible.¹⁰⁰³ The closest Hebrew approximation to this term would be in the phrase (*w²rûaḥ YHWH lābšāh*) “and the Spirit of the LORD came upon ...” as in the lives of Othniel, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson.¹⁰⁰⁴

Originally the term “charisma” was tied to a theocratic outlook which contradicts principally any kind of regime based on the authority and sovereignty of a human being

⁹⁹⁹ Jg. 9:8-15. The only identity of these different items in the plant kingdom given is that of the cedar trees of Lebanon representing the general people.

¹⁰⁰⁰ West, 221.

¹⁰⁰¹ Malamat, “Charismatic Leadership in the Book of Judges,” 152.

¹⁰⁰² M. Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, (Trans.) A.M. Henderson and T. Parsons (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), 120-130, and 358-373.

¹⁰⁰³ ἡ χάρισμα. This usage meaning “gift” is found in Rom. 1:11; 5:15, 16; 6:23; 9:29; 12:6; 1 Cor. 1:7; 7:7; 12:4, 9, 28, 30, 31; 2 Cor. 1:11; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6; and 1 Pet. 4:10. Although this transliterates nicely into the word “charismatic” the Greek word (*charis*) χάρις actually defines this concept better as “grace” that has been bestowed upon someone. Examples of this word are: Lk. 2:40; Jn. 1:14, 16, 17; Acts 4:33; 11:23; 13:43; 14:3, 26; 15:11, 40; 18:27; 20:24, 32; Rom. 1:5, 7; 3:24; 4:4, 16; 5:2, 15, 17, 20, 21; 6:1, 14, 15; 11:5, 6; 12:3, 6; 15:15; 16:20, 24; 1 Cor. 1:3, 4; 3:10; and 10:30.

¹⁰⁰⁴ וַיָּבֹאוּ הָרוּחַ יְהוָה לְבִשָּׁהּ. This phrase is present in Jg. 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19; and 15:14.

of flesh and blood. As a theological notion it conveys the idea of God's spiritual gifts, bestowed upon people who function as His emissaries and carry out His mission upon earth.¹⁰⁰⁵

CHARACTERISTICS OF CHARISMATIC LEADERS. Malamat's review of Judges elucidates four key components that help to identify whether a judge/deliverer qualified as being charismatic. First, the initiation of the charismatic attribute only comes to the fore as a result of a major crisis, that being an enemy subjugating Israel.¹⁰⁰⁶ Internal evidence from the text shows there was a time of oppression before the judge began his charismatic deliverance.¹⁰⁰⁷ As already mentioned, the involvement of divinity, whereby there was direct contact with the Spirit of YHWH is a hallmark for the hero's charismatic appointment. The third clue was the affirmation of the judge's authority through a public sign.¹⁰⁰⁸ Examples of this are evident in the theophanic visitations to Gideon and Samson's parents as well as the miraculous signs they each experienced with the fleece of wool, the Midianite dream, and the spring of water.¹⁰⁰⁹ Malamat also noted there was a spontaneous bestowal of that *ad hoc* charismatic authority for their divine task.¹⁰¹⁰ Although divine appointment is implied, the internal evidence shows that human appointment was also present with Jephthah and a usurped appointment as king by Abimelech.¹⁰¹¹

He also makes the distinction that there is no homogeneous principle for choosing the judge, whether it be by virtue of sex, tribe, age group, social class or status.¹⁰¹² This is illustrated with the inclusion of Deborah as a female judge, Jephthah as the son of a harlot, the fearfulness of Gideon, the left-handedness of Ehud, and the immorality of Samson.¹⁰¹³ It should be noted that the "rise and activity of charismatic leaders are not necessarily linked to important religious or civil centers."¹⁰¹⁴ As a result, Deborah's

¹⁰⁰⁵ Z. Weisman, "Charismatic Leaders in the Era of the Judges," *ZAW* 89 (1977), 400.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Malamat, "Charismatic Leadership in the Book of Judges," 161.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Examples of this include: Othniel, 8 years (3:8); Ehud, 18 years (3:14); Deborah, 20 years, (4:3); Gideon, 7 years (6:1); Jephthah, 18 years, (10:8); and Samson, 40 years, (13:1). Though periods of judging are indicated with the remaining judges, with the exception of Shamgar, the description of the subjugating nation and that time period are not mentioned.

¹⁰⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 161.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Jg. 6:22, 38, 40; 7:15; 13:3, 9; and 15:19.

¹⁰¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 162.

¹⁰¹¹ Jg. 11:6; and 9:6.

¹⁰¹² *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹³ Jg. 4:4; 11:1; 6:23; 3:15; and 16:1.

¹⁰¹⁴ *Ibid.*

judgment was under a tree between Ramah and Bethel in (*Har 'eprāyim*) Mount Ephraim; Gideon began at (*'oprāt*) Ophrah; Jephthah began in (*Ṭōb*) Tob from a place of exile; and Samson moved between (*Ṣor 'āh*) Zorah and (*'eštā'ōl*) Eshtaol.¹⁰¹⁵ Finally, within the context of warfare and mustering troops for battle from the tribes, there was a

Specific relationship between the charismatic leader and the people, which is not based on formal rules or administrative organization, and certainly not on coercion; rather, it rests upon emotion, the personal reverence toward the charismatic individual on the part of his devotees.¹⁰¹⁶

This is clearly seen in the lives of Ehud, Deborah and Barak, Gideon, Jephthah.¹⁰¹⁷ The Benjaminite war would be another example; however, there is no single individual described as a charismatic leader.¹⁰¹⁸ One other observation about these heroes is that their authority and extraordinary personal qualities were not passed down or given with the idea of a hereditary succession.¹⁰¹⁹

ANTITHESIS EXAMPLE. Whereas the hero stories present examples of charismatic leaders who bring deliverance, the antithesis of this is seen in a negative light as a charismatic leader establishes himself as king during the premonarchic period. The Abimelech story interjects many anomalies within the societal culture. Hebrew social organization is based upon a patrilineal descent of kinship, which immediately places a question of legitimacy on Abimelech's right of authority traced through his mother's line.¹⁰²⁰ The area of his dominion, originating in Shechem was a populace of both Israelites and Canaanites and the influence of a foreign city-state allowed him to be established in this leadership role by the (*ba^alê Ṣ^akem*) "lords of Shechem" rather than by YHWH.¹⁰²¹ Further, his coronation and payment for regnal service comes from the house of *Baal Berith*, a pagan temple.¹⁰²² His accession to power was a matter of

¹⁰¹⁵ אֶשְׁתָּאוֹל, צִדְרָעָה, מִטָּב, עֶפְרָתָה, הָרַם אֶפְרַיִם. Jg. 4:5; 6:24; 11:5; and 13:25.

¹⁰¹⁶ Ibid., 162-163.

¹⁰¹⁷ Jg. 3:28-29; 4:14; 7:1, 23; and 11:1.

¹⁰¹⁸ Jg. 20-21.

¹⁰¹⁹ Weisman, "Charismatic Leaders in the Era of the Judges," 402. The only point at where there was a lineage succession is between Gideon and Abimelech. But, it should be noted that Gideon said that his children and grandchildren would not rule over them. Abimelech's rulership was not one handed down; but rather one that was usurped through treachery and murder. Jg. 8:23; and 9:2.

¹⁰²⁰ Jg. 9:1-3. Steinberg, 57.

¹⁰²¹ בְּעֵלֵי שֶׁכֶם. Jg. 9:6. Wood, 237.

¹⁰²² Jg. 9:4, and 6.

political maneuvering, claiming a succession to power from his father's position, while assuring no contest by the murder of his half-brothers.¹⁰²³

Whereas other pericopes have their concern with oppressive nations and external threats, the focus here is upon an internal political structure.¹⁰²⁴ A key issue that presents itself is because his three year regency was not preceded by the typical period of subjugation in the Deuteronomic cycle, the cyclical elements are thus not activated and he would constitute an anti-deliverer, with no act of true deliverance and no period of tranquility resulting from his leadership.¹⁰²⁵

MAJOR JUDGE VS. MINOR JUDGE. The designation of whether a judge is considered major or minor follows the same reasoning of whether a prophet is considered major or minor, that being the length of narrative describing the individual. Alt distinguishes these to be two separate categories because neither the charismatic element nor connections with military functions appear in the text.¹⁰²⁶ Hauser uses the pericope of Jephthah as a bridge between the major and minor judge concept, because Jephthah is an important link in that he is present between both of the annalistic lists. This brings Alt's hypothesis about the minor judge into question because of the military conquest involving Jephthah.¹⁰²⁷

There was no substantive difference between the major and minor judges. Both were deliverers, both were charismatic. Both did not hold any "office," and both were sporadic. In the days of both there was no national unity.... We may speculate that the "minor judges" became "minor" and differed from their comrades because the stories concerning them were deleted.¹⁰²⁸

The mention of these minor judges by the Deuteronomistic historian reinforces the narrative by replacing the normal framework with "a system of internal reference that defines the duration of activity [that] stresses the durative nature of the role of the figure of the judge [and it] denotes the temporal bounds of the five 'minor' judges."¹⁰²⁹ Although the narratives are short and succinct, it must be conceded that despite the

¹⁰²³ Jg. 9:2. Malamat, "Charismatic Leadership in the Book of Judges," 163.

¹⁰²⁴ Block, *NAC*, 309.

¹⁰²⁵ Malamat, "Charismatic Leadership in the Book of Judges," 163.

¹⁰²⁶ Alt, "The Origins of Israelite Law," 130-131.

¹⁰²⁷ Hauser, 200.

¹⁰²⁸ Y. Kaufmann, *Sefer Shofetim* (The Book of Judges) [Heb.], (Jerusalem, Israel: Kiryath-Sepher, 1962), 48.

¹⁰²⁹ Mullen, "The 'Minor Judges,'" 195.

limitation of objective facts, the formulaic phrase (*wāyīšpōt 'et-Yisrā'el 'X' šānīm*) “and he judged Israel X years” is present with Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon.¹⁰³⁰

JURIDICAL LEADERSHIP. As previously discussed, one of the problems with Judges is that the שופט in most cases does not act in a juridical sense. YHWH provided judges and deliverers to save them from their oppressors, but the introductory verses declare that they would not obey their judges or YHWH, Himself.¹⁰³¹ Historical reconstruction of these judicial practices is limited to the internal evidence as there is no archaeological evidence.¹⁰³²

Assuming that Israel followed normal patterns, we would suppose that at the lower levels of the social system legal authority was exercised by elders who were able to require that their own kin adhere to commonly accepted social norms. In cases of conflict between larger lineage segments, Israel presumably lacked a centralized judicial authority capable of settling disputes and therefore relied on a process of negotiation. We would expect the effectiveness of this system to have diminished as more people became involved, and in the case of conflicts between large lineages it is likely that satisfactory solutions were difficult to achieve. As a result, large Israelite lineages were probably unstable and prone to fragment over issues that could not be resolved by negotiation.¹⁰³³

This rationale would be based on a complete breakdown of *Torah* observance by premonarchic Israel and would suggest their position of apostasy at some level, as failure to observe the legal code and judgment would be a departure from the Mosaic covenant and YHWH.

LEGAL ACTION. The explicit references to issues of judgment are rather limited in the book of Judges. With the narrative accounts, it must be acknowledged that the author's purpose was not an excursus on the manner of how the national judiciary worked, although there are definable judicial characteristics in some of the proceedings.¹⁰³⁴ An oblique reference is found with the theophanic angel at Bochim pronouncing a judgment upon the people.¹⁰³⁵ The clearest reference is with Deborah when the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. A Midrashic explanation of the text highlights the verb (*wāya'alū*) “came up” so that the coming up of the people to Deborah as the supreme judge was able to decide questions the lower judiciary could not

¹⁰³⁰ וַיִּשְׁפֹּט אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל 'X' שָׁנִים Jg. 10:2, 3; 12:9, 11, and 14.

¹⁰³¹ Jg. 2:17, and 20.

¹⁰³² R.R. Wilson, “Enforcing the Covenant: The Mechanisms of Judicial Authority in Early Israel,” *The Quest for the Kingdom of God: Essays in Honor of George E. Mendenhall*, (Eds.), H.B. Huffmon, F.A. Spina, and A.R.W. Green (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 59-75.

¹⁰³³ *Idem*, *Sociological Approaches to the Old Testament*, 49.

¹⁰³⁴ *Idem*, “The Mechanisms of Judicial Authority in Early Israel,” 73.

¹⁰³⁵ Jg. 2:1-3.

answer and thus the “justice was regarded as on a spiritual elevation.”¹⁰³⁶ The text is silent as to any issues of judgment that were presented to Deborah. In the truest sense of the word, in the dispute between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon, YHWH as Judge brings forth justice through the forces of Jephthah.¹⁰³⁷

In the concluding narrative, the aberrant sexual behavior of the Benjaminites in Gibeah regarding the Levite’s concubine is judged in the assembly of the people of God. The judicial authority to resolve this issue could have been decided at the *משפחה* level; however, this refusal of responsibility resulted in a pan-tribal response.¹⁰³⁸ There is no central human judge mentioned in the text. The testimony of the Levite is heard and Israel responds to this with their (*dābār*) “word” and (*‘ēṣāh*) “counsel.”¹⁰³⁹ However, because the offenders would not be released unto Israel for judgment, *i.e.*, the death penalty, this act of judgment resulted in the near annihilation of the tribe of Benjamin.¹⁰⁴⁰ A second issue of judgment occurs in the story regarding the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead who refused to come and fight in the Benjaminite war. Inquiry was made throughout the tribes to determine if any did not come to the assembly and then corporate judgment based upon a vow was made regarding their sentence, which was the death penalty.¹⁰⁴¹

PROPHET. During the premonarchic period, the office of the prophet was not as developed as it would become. During this era it was a title that indicated a position rather than it naming a function.¹⁰⁴² The masculine form (*nābî*) is used with the anonymous prophet during the Midianite oppression.¹⁰⁴³ The prophet arrives on the scene and succinctly delivers a divine oracle and disappears from the story.¹⁰⁴⁴ The only other usage is the feminine form (*nābî’āh*), where Deborah is called a prophetess.¹⁰⁴⁵ The text presents a dual role of prophetess-judge in which oracles are given.¹⁰⁴⁶

¹⁰³⁶ *וַיַּעֲלֵה*. Jg. 4:5. The modern usage of this word embodies not only coming up (as in going to Jerusalem) to worship, but also for immigrating back to Israel. Fausset, 77-78.

¹⁰³⁷ Jg. 11:27.

¹⁰³⁸ Wilson, “The Mechanisms of Judicial Authority in Early Israel,” 72-73.

¹⁰³⁹ *וַיִּדְבֹּר*, and *וַיִּעֲשֶׂה*.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Jg. 20:7, and 13.

¹⁰⁴¹ Jg. 21:5-11.

¹⁰⁴² de Geus, 207.

¹⁰⁴³ *נָבִיא*.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Jg. 6:8-10.

¹⁰⁴⁵ *נָבִיאָה*. Jg. 4:4.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Jg. 4:6-7, 14; and 5:1-31.

PRIEST. There was one additional classification where judgment could be given and that was through the (*kōhēn*) “priest.”¹⁰⁴⁷ In the Micah pericope, he consecrated one of his sons as a priest, which is in direct violation of the *Torah*, as the priesthood was limited to descendants of Aaron.¹⁰⁴⁸ Micah further consecrated a young Levite as his personal priest, yet we do not know if he was from the priestly Kohathite clan. The responsibility of the priest was relative to the house of idols and giving divine oracles and counsel.¹⁰⁴⁹ The usage in the narrative reflected the Levite was a father and a priest to Micah and then later the Danites.¹⁰⁵⁰ The third priest mentioned was (*Yhônāṭān*) Jonathan and his lineage in the resettled area of Dan.¹⁰⁵¹ However, the possibility exists that this is the name of the Levite who was priest to Micah and the Danites. The last mention of a priest is the High Priest Phinehas who ministered before the Ark of the Covenant.¹⁰⁵²

Ethnography

This subdiscipline is known either as cultural anthropology or ethnography because of the detailed written description of the culture. The study of the people, usually through fieldwork participant observation examines “how people make their living, how people interact with each other, what beliefs people hold, and what institutions organize people in a society.”¹⁰⁵³ The comparative materials in the ethnographies produced through this type of functional anthropology are applicable to biblical studies for interpreting “particular texts and cultural phenomena into a comprehensive social framework.”¹⁰⁵⁴ This type of examination is beyond the scope of this research.¹⁰⁵⁵

¹⁰⁴⁷ כֹּהֵן ה'.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Jg. 17:5; Ex. 28:1, 41, and 43.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Jg. 17:10, 12, 13; 18:4, 6, 17, 18, 19, 24, and 27.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Jg. 17:10; and 18:19.

¹⁰⁵¹ יהוֹנָתָן ה'. Jg. 18:30-31.

¹⁰⁵² Jg. 20:28.

¹⁰⁵³ “Archaeology,” *Encarta 99* [CD-ROM].

¹⁰⁵⁴ Wilson, *Sociological Approaches to the Old Testament*, 21.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Anthropologist S. Scham, suggests the concepts of plot, narrative, and especially metaphor is useful with its symbolic representations of material culture in determining the *Lifeworld* of Iron Age Israel. Her approach is to use the biblical record in conjunction with artifactual evidence to reconstruct the historical society, thus viewing the Judges account as ethnography in itself. See her “The Days of the Judges: When Men and Women Were Animals and Trees Were Kings,” *JSOT* 97 (2002), 37-64.

Archaeology

This subfield that describes and interprets the remains of past societies crosses into many scientific disciplines, whereby the implications need not only verify the biblical narrative or the existence of cultures but also provide insight into anthropological and sociological issues.

BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

The essence of biblical archaeology is to reconstitute the historical setting through site excavation of iconography, pottery, and/or documents. This is avoiding an approach of dismissing the text. Instead, a methodology of approaching this science is by bringing “archaeological as well as textual and ethnographic data into historical discourse by selecting and interpreting them through the problematics of social history.”¹⁰⁵⁶ The term “biblical archaeology” has evolved within the last quarter century as a term that is implicitly theological rather than the *a priori* archaeological interpretation of “Syro-Palestinian archaeology” that has been coined by Dever.¹⁰⁵⁷ Much of this debate centers upon the question of the historicity of Israel and the biblical narrative. Thus, Dever in defense of a diachronic methodology, although not for an evangelical hermeneutic, expresses concern for the waning inclusion of archaeology for the identity of a biblical Israel because of synchronic post-modern ideologies.¹⁰⁵⁸

Historically, the question of the manner of Israel’s arrival in Canaan has been the point of departure. Much effort and debate has arisen as to whether the Israelite occupation was by conquest, peaceful infiltration, a peasant revolt, or the supposition that they were Pastoral Canaanites.¹⁰⁵⁹ The issue of the origin of Israel and their identity has

¹⁰⁵⁶ Stager, “The Archaeology of the Family,” 3.

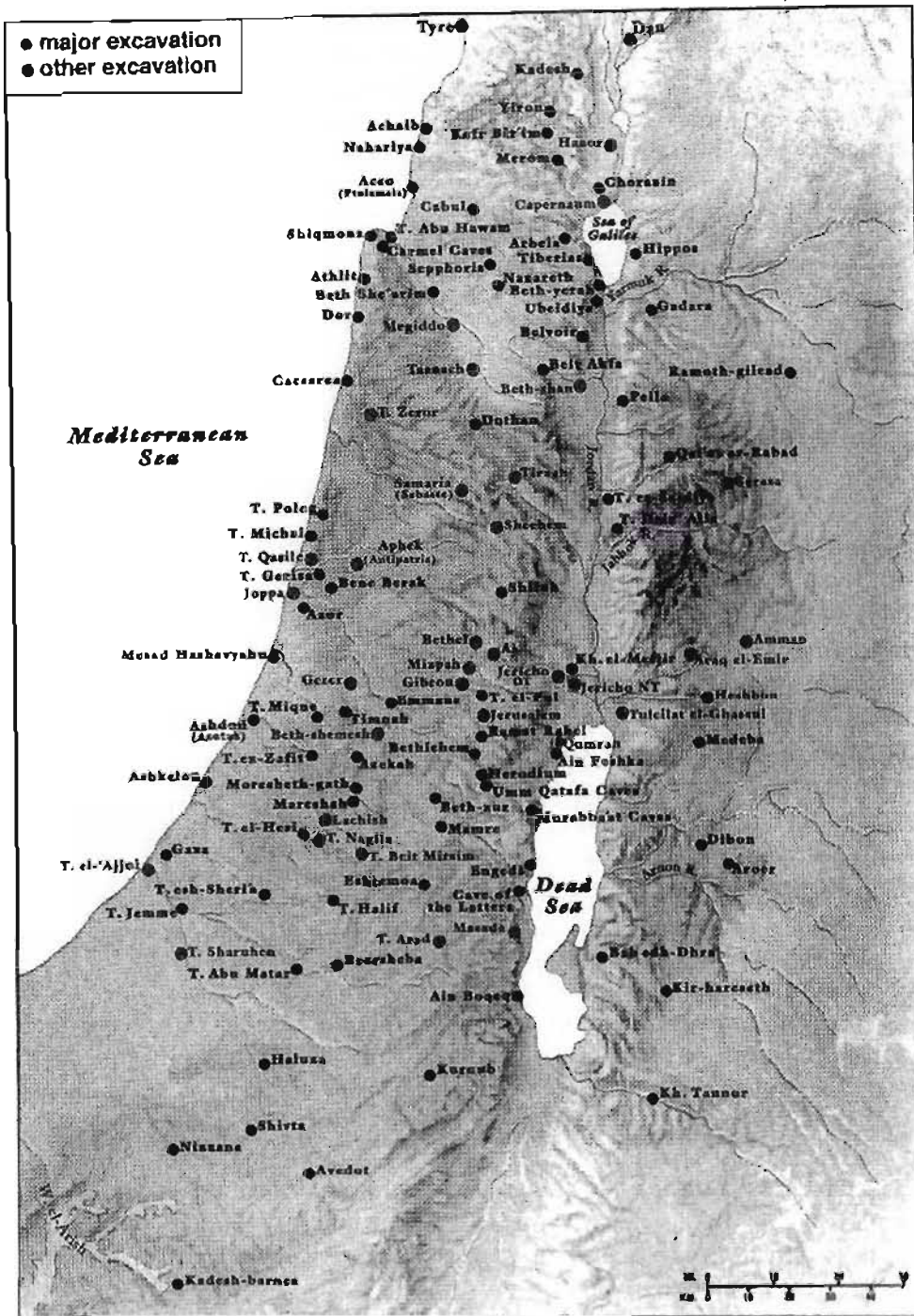
¹⁰⁵⁷ Although the “Biblical Archaeology” debate has begun to subside, the polarity of W.G. Dever need not be a point of alienation to Biblicists, but another tool in understanding the historicity of the text and the correct interpretation of excavation finds in relation to the biblical narrative. In addition to this debate, the Minimalist-Maximalist debate initiated by P.R. Davies and the Tenth Century debate precipitated by I. Finkelstein also enter the fray between archaeologists and historians. For a discussion of these three debates, see Z. Zevit, “Three Debates about Bible and Archaeology,” *Biblica* 83 (2002), 1-27.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Dever is quick to point out his own bias, along with others. Yet, his concern is whether the various forms of biblical criticism, synchronic or diachronic, are being perverted by ideology rather than examining the evidences from the various disciplines before drawing conclusions based on a foregone eisegetical method. See W.G. Dever, “Archaeology, Ideology, and the Quest for an ‘Ancient’ or ‘Biblical’ Israel,” *NEA* 61 (1998), 39-52.

¹⁰⁵⁹ The manner of how the Israelites arrived in Canaan during the premonarchic period is chronologically prior to this investigation; yet some of the archaeological evidence of this presence builds a foundation for the Judges period. For further discussion on these four theories, Y. Aharoni, “The Israelite Occupation of Canaan: An Account of the Archaeological Evidence,” *BAR* 8 (1982), 14-23; V. Fritz,

MAP 3

LOCATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES



"Conquest or Settlement? The Early Iron Age in Palestine," *BA* 50 (1987), 84-99; and S. Ahituv and E.D. Oren, (Eds.), *The Origin of Early Israel—Current Debate: Biblical, Historical, and Archaeological Perspectives: Irene Levi-Sala Seminar, 1999* (Beer-Sheva 12: Beersheva, Israel: Ben Gurion University of the Negev Press, 1998).

previously been addressed in chapter two. To make an archaeological investigation as it relates to Judges, R.B. Cootes suggests:

The Bible is to be critically discounted, Israel is to be defined politically, and the analytical standard for early Israel is to be a generic political history articulated in comparative terms.¹⁰⁶⁰

This is somewhat of a digression from the position of J. Bright, over a decade earlier, when his examination was effected by the internal evidence of the self-contained episodes within the book. He finds the alternating times of internal and external crises as authentic.¹⁰⁶¹

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN ISRAEL. The premonarchic settlement of the tribes of Israel in Canaan in the Iron I Age "are known from archaeological surveys, but only a few [sites] have been excavated."¹⁰⁶² Although Stager, *et.al.* have indicated 120 excavated sites, for the purposes of this investigation, much of the finds and social interpretative information are outside the scope of Iron I and the narrative of Judges.¹⁰⁶³ The map shows the location of archaeological sites excavated prior to 1983.¹⁰⁶⁴ The sites discussed are listed geographically with a north-south orientation.

SHECHEM. Many digs have occurred at this tell in Samaria. One of these campaigns in 1960 examined the temple structure and the fortification of the city. The temple of *Baal Berith* reflects external evidence of the events associated with the Abimelech narrative.¹⁰⁶⁵ It has been suggested that the house of *El Berith* (Jg. 9:46) is connected to a syncretistic worship of YHWH through El, rather than the worship of the banned Canaanite deity.¹⁰⁶⁶ Yet, syncretism does not equate to the monolatrous relationship YHWH required of Israel. With the siege of Thebez by Abimelech the tower of refuge was destroyed.¹⁰⁶⁷ The use of the Hebraic term (*migdal-ōz*) to

¹⁰⁶⁰ R.B. Coote, "Early Israel," *SJOT* 5 (1991), 44. This type of elitism, seen in many of the other biblical interpretative fields where one thing is discounted to elevate another is a segmented hermeneutic rather than an exegesis that looks at all of the complementary disciplines.

¹⁰⁶¹ Bright, *A History of Israel*, 169.

¹⁰⁶² Aharoni, "The Israelite Occupation of Canaan," 16.

¹⁰⁶³ Stager includes a map in order to locate the various sites as well as a discussion on the family unit and housing structure during this period. Cf. his "The Archaeology of the Family," 2-3.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Archer, *SOTI*, 248.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Jg. 9:4. Campbell, "Excavation at Shechem," 107.

¹⁰⁶⁶ E.F. Campbell, Jr., "Judges 9 and Biblical Archeology," *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday*, (Eds.) C.L. Meyers and M. O'Connor (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 265.

¹⁰⁶⁷ See Jg. 9:50-55. Note that Thebez, modern (*Tôbas*) was a dependency of Shechem.

describe the tower “may well be that of a temple, since ‘ōz is one of the commonest of divine epithets.”¹⁰⁶⁸ The actual location of Thebez is uncertain. It has been identified with the Arab village of *Ṭōbaś*, which is about 15 km NE of Shechem.¹⁰⁶⁹ However, no remains from the Iron I era have been found at this location.¹⁰⁷⁰ Therefore, it is speculated that this is “a corrupt spelling of Tirzah.”¹⁰⁷¹

SHILOH. This excavation site has revealed a Middle Bronze age shrine and the evidence of a pastoral population during the Late Bronze period. This would coincide with the pre-Israelite cult center of the Mosaic Tabernacle. The material remains at the site included a 94:6 ratio of bones of sheep and goats to cattle. That the bones were found among offering vessels would corroborate this as a cultic sacrificial site.¹⁰⁷²

TELL EL-FÛL. This site in the Benjaminite tribal allotment is the biblical Gibeah.¹⁰⁷³ The site dominates the battle narrative of the eleven tribes against Benjamin because of the rape and murder of the Levitical concubine. The results of the excavation at *Tell el-Fûl* reveals a destruction level and suggests corroboration with the text due to its presence.¹⁰⁷⁴ Albright identifies this as consistent with the marked hatred of the tribes evident in the narrative.¹⁰⁷⁵ Although there is no question that a level of destruction is present in the Iron Age, the pro-Davidic authorship position of Brooks places the event within the monarchy citing from archaeological evidence “that the site was not in existence at the time of Judges” as it was founded after Saul became king.¹⁰⁷⁶

TELL QASILE. The actual biblical identification of this site in Tel Aviv is unknown; however, it has been positively identified as Philistine in origin. Although this location is not among the five city-states mentioned in the bible, it along with *Tell*

¹⁰⁶⁸ מְנִיחַל עֵזָה. Wright, “Shechem,” 361.

¹⁰⁶⁹ طوباس. A.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Ahlström, *The History of Ancient Palestine from the Palaeolithic Period to Alexander's Conquest*, 387.

¹⁰⁷¹ Y. Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography*, 2nd ed. (Trans.) A.F. Rainey (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1979), 265.

¹⁰⁷² I. Finkelstein, “Excavations at Shiloh: 1981-1984: Preliminary Report,” *Tel Aviv* 12 (1985), 135, and 137; and S. Hellwing and M. Sadeh, “Animal Remains: Preliminary Report,” *Tel Aviv* 12 (1985), 177-180.

¹⁰⁷³ Jg. 20:13.

¹⁰⁷⁴ J.A. Graham, “Iron I at Tell el-Fûl: Some Historical Considerations,” *The Third Campaign at Tell el-Fûl: The Excavations of 1964*, (Ed.) N.L. Lapp, *AASOR* 45 (1981), 29-38.

¹⁰⁷⁵ W.F. Albright, *Excavations and Results at Tell el-Fûl (Gibeah of Saul)*, *AASOR* 4 (1924), 46.

¹⁰⁷⁶ S.S. Brooks, “Was There a Concubine at Gibeah?” *BAIAS* 15 (1996), 38.

Ashdod, not to be confused with biblical (*ʿašdôd*) Ashdod, have produced more extensive evidence about the Philistine material and cultic culture than the combined excavations of the Pentapolis.¹⁰⁷⁷ At the stratum X temple site,

Charred wood found at the bases of the columns was evidence that the stone bases originally held cedar columns which supported the roof. We can easily imagine Samson standing in such a Philistine temple, arms outstretched, straining to topple the columns and destroy the temple with his enemies and himself inside.¹⁰⁷⁸

The text does not identify the actual location of this temple to (*Dāgôn*) *Dagon*.¹⁰⁷⁹ There is remarkable evidence that relates to the metallurgical superiority of tools and weapons found at Philistine sites and absent from Canaanite sites.¹⁰⁸⁰

TELL 'ARAD. A 1962 excavation in the Eastern Negev, approximately 20 km west of the Dead Sea revealed a cultic structure at (*ʿarād*) Arad.¹⁰⁸¹ The tell serves as a source for Jg. 1:16-17 and the dwelling place of the semi-nomadic (*Hōbāb*) Hobab the Kenite.¹⁰⁸²

BEERSHEBA (*Bʿʿēr Šēbā*).¹⁰⁸³ Due to the many strata of remains, the information unearthed in stratum VI, below the monarchic period, is meager and fragmented.¹⁰⁸⁴

TEL MĀŠŌŠ. This excavation site is located in the Negev approximately 15 km east of Beersheba. The presence of an unfortified settlement with its cisterns and granaries suggest that within this era, this tribal group enjoyed a time of peace.¹⁰⁸⁵

OTHER SITES. Gottwald identifies there is evidence of twelve new settlements during Iron I.¹⁰⁸⁶ Fritz outlines the pottery finds as well as the housing and temple layouts

¹⁰⁷⁷ אֲשֶׁדּוֹד. T. Dothan, "What We Know About the Philistines," *BAR* 8 (1982), 31.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Dothan, 35.

¹⁰⁷⁹ דָּגוֹן. Jg. 16:23-30.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Jg. 5:8; and 1 Sam. 13:19. Dothan, 35.

¹⁰⁸¹ עָרָד. Jg. 1:16.

¹⁰⁸² חֶבֶב. Jg. 4:11. B. Mazar, "The Sanctuary of Arad," 299.

¹⁰⁸³ בְּאֵר שֶׁבַע.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Aharoni, "The Israelite Occupation of Canaan," 18.

¹⁰⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible*, 264. Seven of the settlements were on previously unoccupied sites: Dor (*Khirbet el-Burj*), Beeroth (*Tell Radanna*), Gibeah (*Tell el-Fûl*), Beersheba (*Tell es-Saba'*), and the unknown biblical sites of (Giloh), (*Izbeth Šarṭah*), and (*Tell 'Eṭun*). There were five new settlements on long deserted sites: Shiloh (*Khirbet Seilûn*), Ai (*et-Tell*), Mizpah (*Tell en-Naşbeh*), Bethzur (*Khirbet et-Ṭubeiqah*), and Hormah (*Tell Māšōš*).

of the various stratum in Hazor, Ashdod, Megiddo, (^a*pēq*) Aphek, Gezer, and Lachish; however the elements relative to the cyclical pattern of judgment are not addressed.¹⁰⁸⁷

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES OUTSIDE ISRAEL. Although there are many different sites within Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt, there are two sites of importance to the Judges narrative.

EGYPT. The Merneptah victory stele mentions Israel clearly within the context of its subjugation and defeat.

The princes are prostrate, saying: "Mercy!"
Not one raises his head among the Nine Bows.
Desolation is for Tehenu;
Hatti is pacified;
Plundered is Canaan with every evil;
Carried off is Ashkelon;
Seized upon is Gezer;
Yanoam is made as that which does not exist;
Israel is laid waste, his seed is not;
Hurru is become a widow for Egypt.¹⁰⁸⁸

The question is whether the mention of Israel should be interpreted as a place or ethnic people designation.¹⁰⁸⁹ In either case, oppression and defeat through warfare is present. Within the same reign of Pharaoh Merneptah is the Karnak battle reliefs with chariots which includes (^a*šq³lôn*) Ashkelon and an open country scene that would be premonarchic Israel.¹⁰⁹⁰ Although the names are no longer visible on the relief, the second and third battle scenes may correspond with the Merneptah stele and thus could be Gezer, Yanoam, and Israel.¹⁰⁹¹

JORDAN. The excavation at *Tell el-'Umeiri*, between Amman and Madaba on the Transjordanian plateau revealed a fortified site occupied at the end of LB IIB and into Iron I. This settlement has a series of inner rooms within the household building, one of which included a 90 cm standing limestone slab with an accompanying limestone rock votive altar. The presence of the cultic corners in these rooms is consistent with the

¹⁰⁸⁷ חַיַּיִם. Jg. 1:16; 4:2; 5:19; and 20:1. Fritz, "Conquest or Settlement," 87-90.

¹⁰⁸⁸ "Hymn of Victory of Mer-ne-Ptah (The "Israel Stela")," *ANET*, 378. Emphasis added.

¹⁰⁸⁹ G.W. Ahlström and D. Edelman, "Merneptah's Israel," *JNES* 44 (1985), 59-61.

¹⁰⁹⁰ חַיַּיִם שְׁקֵלֹן. Jg. 1:9. F.J. Yurco, "3,200-Year-Old Picture of Israelites Found in Egypt," *BAR* 16 (1990), 21-38. This interpretation of Israel as the pastoral relief found at Karnak has been rejected by A.F. Rainey, "Rainey's Challenge," *BAR* 17 (1991), 56-60, and 93.

¹⁰⁹¹ Yurco, 28.

narrative of Micah and the Levite, although the actual location would have been west of the Jordan River.¹⁰⁹²

CONCLUSION. The historical methodological approach of archaeology has been to disavow the perceived biblical past for a disciplinary independence. A historiographical interdependence with the narrative influenced by whatever external data may be discovered is bringing some archaeologists to a more integrated approach.¹⁰⁹³ Not all of the items of social structure that may be reconstructed from a scientific historical point of view necessarily corroborate the biblical account; but neither do they invalidate it as historically inaccurate. Within the Iron I period, biblical archaeologists have recognized the fragments are meager and limited. The archaeological evidence shows the agrarian, non-urban society of the early Israelite cult had limited cult paraphernalia.¹⁰⁹⁴ The introduction of a small horned incense altar suggests the offering of incense being used outside the parameters dictated in the *Torah* regarding the central sanctuary.¹⁰⁹⁵ The engraved cult stand (fig. 13) was one of the furniture items that archaeologists found in a 10th century BCE shrine at Ta'anach.¹⁰⁹⁶ The *Tell 'Amal* site included stone and pottery cult stands (fig. 14).¹⁰⁹⁷ Near Hebron, a complete stand (fig. 15) was unearthed at *Beit Aula*.¹⁰⁹⁸ For

¹⁰⁹² Jg. 17:1-13. L.G. Herr, "Urbanism at Tell el-'Umeiri During the Late Bronze IIB-Iron IA Transition," *Urbanism in Antiquity: From Mesopotamia to Crete*, (Eds.) W.E. Aufrecht, N.A. Mirau, and S.W. Gauley (*JSOT Supp.* 244: Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 150.

¹⁰⁹³ H.G. Williamson, "The Origins of Israel: Can We Safely Ignore the Bible?" *Beer-Sheva* 12 (1998), 141-151.

¹⁰⁹⁴ W.G. Dever, "The contribution of archaeology to the study of Canaanite and Early Israelite religion" in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*, (Eds.) P.D. Miller, Jr., P.D. Hanson, and S.D. McBride (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1987), 235. Dever sites this paraphernalia to include ceramic vessels and cult stands for food offerings and animal sacrifices.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Ex. 30:1-9 regarding the acceptable kind of altar of incense and Num. 4:16 for the acceptable officiant of this altar. M. Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel: An Inquiry Into the Character of Cult Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly School* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1978), 230-238. See also, C.L. Meyers, *The Tabernacle Menorah: A Synthetic Study of a Symbol from the Biblical Cult* (*ASORDS* 2: Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976), 69-77.

¹⁰⁹⁶ P. Beck, "The Cult-Stands from Taanach: Aspects of the Iconographic Tradition of Early Iron Age Cult Objects in Palestine," *From Nomadism to Monarchy: Archaeological and Historical Aspects of Early Israel*, (Eds.) I. Finkelstein and N. Na'aman (Jerusalem, Israel: Israel Exploration Society, 1994), 364-365. The 54 cm high cult stand found by Lapp is dated 10th century BCE.

¹⁰⁹⁷ P. Beck, "The art of Palestine during the Iron Age II: local traditions and external influences (10th-8th centuries BCE) in *Images as media: Sources for the cultural history of the Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean (1st millennium BCE)*, (Ed.) C. Uehlinger (*OBO* 175: Fribourg, Switzerland: University Press; and Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 173. These two stands found at this (יִזְרְעֵאל 'e'l) Jezreel valley site in Level III are dated 10th century BCE. However, the current location of these artifacts was not given.

FIGURE 13

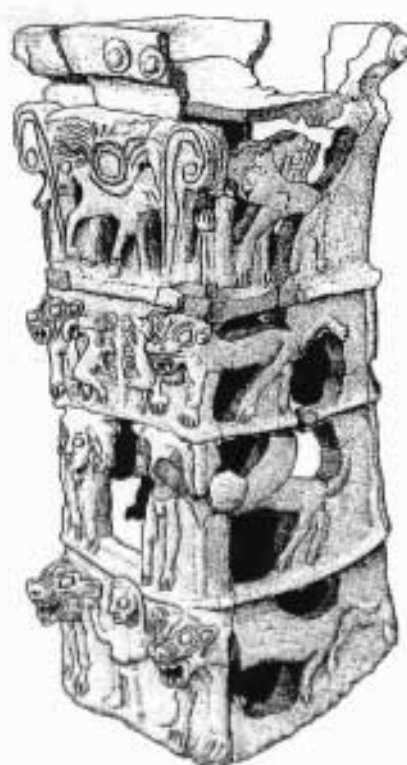


FIGURE 14



FIGURE 15



Dever, "there is nothing in the archaeological record *per se* that reflects 'Yahwism' – or indeed, any distinctive new Iron I ideology."¹⁰⁹⁸ As a result, these finds should complement the interpretations of the other disciplines, rather than be the

¹⁰⁹⁸ P. Beck, "The art of Palestine during the Iron Age II," 179. The *Beit Aulā* cult stand was dated 11th century BCE. The current location of the stand was not given.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Dever, 235.

main corpus for the social reconstruction.¹¹⁰⁰ Thus, the fallacy of the material culture having a logical and necessary priority over the written evidence can be avoided.¹¹⁰¹

ICONOGRAPHY

The archaeological pursuit within the ancient Near East need not be an esoteric science, but rather a complementary discipline within the critical examination of biblical texts. Thus the received text in its transmitted form is examined against actual primary sources of unearthed artifacts.¹¹⁰² Through these fragmentary (and complete) evidences researchers identify the social and religious context by iconography and epigraphy. As an outgrowth of archaeology through the epigraphic record one acknowledges empirical data that validates chronological, geographical, and social considerations.¹¹⁰³

As an emerging discipline, iconography provides an artifactual history of Israel. This field of study has been popularized primarily through the research efforts of Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger.¹¹⁰⁴ The anthropological approach of American archaeologist W.G. Dever reveals a system of symbols in the material sources which when properly interpreted "define archaeology as the systematic analysis of extinct cultures through their material remains."¹¹⁰⁵ The calligraphs found are intended to be read rather than viewed as a piece of artistry. The pedagogical advantage is that "they tend to summarize a particular concept in one or two grand 'gestures.'"¹¹⁰⁶ The *Sitz im Leben* dictates the meaning ascribed to a symbol used in its historical cultural context. Thus

¹¹⁰⁰ A. Hurvitz, "The Historical Quest for 'Ancient Israel' and the Linguistic Evidence of the Hebrew Bible: Some Methodological Observations," *VT* 47 (1997), 301-315; and Finkelstein, "Ethnicity and Origin of the Iron I Settlers in the Highlands of Canaan," 198-212.

¹¹⁰¹ Hess, "Fallacies in the Study of Early Israel," 353-354.

¹¹⁰² H. Weippert, *Palästina in vorhellenistischer Zeit: Handbuch der Archäologie, Vorderasien II/1*, [Ger.] (Munich, Germany: C.H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1988).

¹¹⁰³ J.H. Tigay, "You Shall Have no Other Gods: Israelite Religion in the Light of Hebrew Inscriptions," *HSS* 31 (1986), 1-41; and O. Keel and C. Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*, (Trans.) T.H. Trapp (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1998).

¹¹⁰⁴ Although well out of the chronological scope of this study, a predecessor of both Keel and Uehlinger, H. Rosenau examined both Jewish and Christian iconography through various art forms found within the synagogue building, the *Haggadah*, (a Passover liturgical book), and on sarcophagi. See her "Contributions to the Study of Jewish Iconography," *BJRL* 38 (1956), 466-482; and "A Note on Judaeo-Christian Iconography," *JJS* 7 (1956), 79-83.

¹¹⁰⁵ Dever, "The Contribution of Archaeology," 210. Dever includes bibliographical references to both historical and methodological approaches in archaeology.

¹¹⁰⁶ O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms*, (Trans.) T.J. Hallett (New York: The Seabury Press, 1978), 7.

within biblical iconography, “religious concepts are expressed not only in texts but can be given a pictorial form on items found in the material culture.”¹¹⁰⁷ As a result, “the images do not—at least not primarily—serve to explain what they portray, but to *re-present* it.”¹¹⁰⁸

Keel’s approach sets empirical parameters that limit the archaeological record to the scope of the geographic region and chronological era illustrating the period in question and excluding comparisons from other cultural settings.¹¹⁰⁹

When one interprets iconographic material, it is important to analyze not only the varied formats in which certain types of images are fashioned (figurines, cultic stands, seals, jewelry, ivory decoration on pieces of furniture, etc.) but also to note that different types of image-bearing artifacts each perform unique functions.¹¹¹⁰

An important interpretation factor is that the symbols appear in an iconographic context depicting a theme which is called a constellation. The strict methodological approach classifies the source material by “the role played by individual signs, their relationship to one another, and the relative importance attached to each.”¹¹¹¹

The ancient Near East...has a preference for concepts which are in themselves concrete, but which frequently signify a reality far larger than their concrete meaning. To the ancient Near East, similar forms, colors, movements, and sounds readily suggest a deeper coherence.¹¹¹²

This iconographic survey is limited to a sampling of source data of the Late Bronze Age IIB and Iron Age IA that coincides with the chronological record of the book of Judges.¹¹¹³ Weippert acknowledges iconographic evidence is virtually nonexistent in Middle Bronze Age I.¹¹¹⁴ Egyptian imports appear in Middle Bronze Age IIA. The established tribal culture in Israel produced sufficient settlements and encampments to generate the icons during premonarchic Israel in Middle Bronze Age IIB.¹¹¹⁵ In addition

¹¹⁰⁷ Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*, 10.

¹¹⁰⁸ Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 10.

¹¹⁰⁹ Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*, 10-11.

¹¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹¹¹² Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 8.

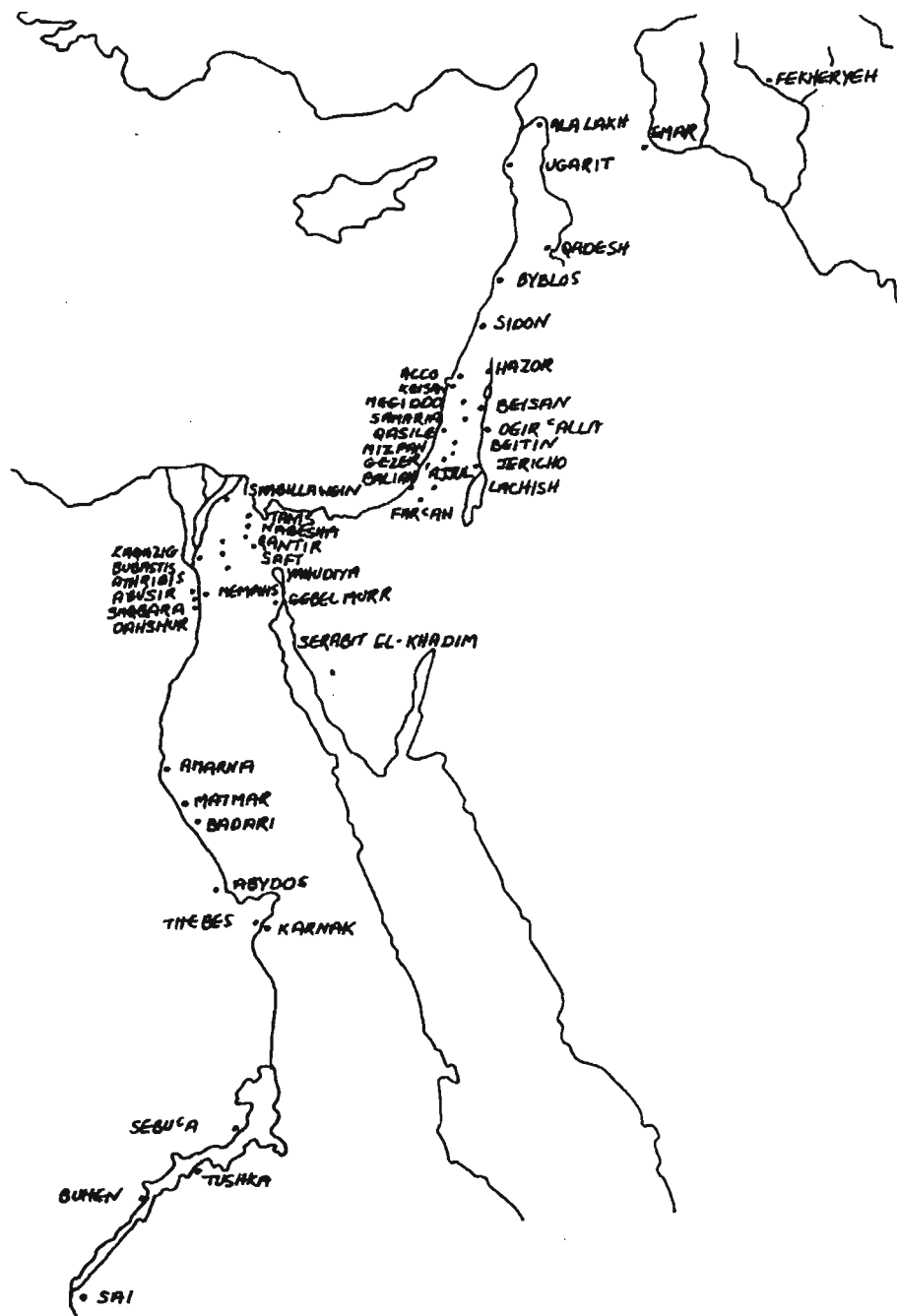
¹¹¹³ I. Cornelius, *The Iconography of the Canaanite Gods Reshef and Ba'al: Late Bronze and Iron Age I Periods (c 1500 – 1000 BCE)*, (OBO 140: Fribourg, Switzerland: University Press; and Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 21. Although his work is primarily related chronologically to the period of Israel’s history covered in the books of Samuel, he provides an archaeological catalog demarcating the eras throughout the Hebrew Bible period. The periodization employed is: Middle Bronze (MB) IIA: 2000-1750 BCE; MB IIB: 1750-1550 BCE; Late Bronze (LB) I: 1550-1400 BCE; LB IIA: 1400-1300 BCE; LB IIB: 1300-1150 BCE; and Iron IA: 1200-1100 BCE.

¹¹¹⁴ H. Weippert, 182-200.

¹¹¹⁵ Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*, 17.

to narrowing the iconographic search to begin with the Late Bronze Age and to the physical geography of tribal Israel within the Levant, only those socio-religious artifacts that relate to God’s judgment are considered. Because the iconographic images come from many provenances, Map 4 reflects archaeological sites throughout the Near East.¹¹¹⁶

MAP 4
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN THE NEAR EAST



¹¹¹⁶ I. Cornelius, 234.

Cornelius asserts the necessity of “the iconographic sources should be used as independent sources” and then synthesized with textual evidences to understand the ancient Canaanite society.¹¹¹⁷ This runs counter to the philosophical artistic approach of Keel who places primacy on the icon as an independent source to be understood in its own context apart from literary evidences.¹¹¹⁸ Rather an intermediate approach is taken understanding that:

The importance of interpreting an image in its own right and independently from a textual source cannot be overemphasized, we nevertheless suggest that the comparison of word and picture remains a *sine qua non* in ANE iconography, since it constitutes a complementary controlling factor in the interpretation of the picture and the text, and it may serve as a safeguard against a *l’art pour l’art* approach to iconography.¹¹¹⁹

THE ICONOGRAPHY OF DEITY. Before examining the sources that *re-present* the cyclical judicial elements present in LB IIB and Iron IA, it is necessary to focus upon anthropomorphic and other forms of gods, goddesses, and images of God. The biblical record cites the foreign Canaanite gods *Baalim* and *Ashtaroth* were worshipped and served by Israel.¹¹²⁰ As a result, archaeological evidence is present to underscore that “early Israelite religion did not develop independently from Canaanite culture and religion.”¹¹²¹ The two primary categories of division are geographic in nature belonging to either an Egyptian or Northern Canaanite style. In order to consider the iconography, they will be presented in their genres: seals, reliefs, and bronze figurines rather than in the typical categories of the menacing or standing/sitting god.

SEALS OF GODS. These seals are extant in two primary forms: the stamp seal and the cylinder seal.¹¹²² The larger representation of seals in Israel is found with the stamp seal. Keel maintains that this miniature art as an iconographic object was an important

¹¹¹⁷ Ibid., 264.

¹¹¹⁸ O. Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder gesehen zu werden: Drei Fallstudien zur Methode der Interpretation altorientalischer Bilder* (The Right to let the Pictures be Seen: A Threefold Study of the Methods of Interpretation of the Old Oriental Picture) [Ger.], (OBO 122: Fribourg, Switzerland: University Press and Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 271.

¹¹¹⁹ M. Klingbeil, *Yahweh Fighting from Heaven: God as Warrior and as God of Heaven in the Hebrew Psalter and Ancient Near Eastern Iconography*, (OBO 169: Fribourg, Switzerland: University Press; and Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 164.

¹¹²⁰ The Hebraic plural form is represented in the text of Jg. 2:11-13 and so presented here.

¹¹²¹ I. Cornelius, 1. Cf. Ezek. 16:3.

¹¹²² N. Avigad, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, rev. by B. Sass, (Jerusalem, Israel: The Israel Exploration Society, 1997). He has produced a large volume of stamp seals, catalogued by country as well as information on its epigraphy. Unfortunately, the seals discussed were not relative to this investigation.

medium for communicating ideas and culture.¹¹²³ The smaller quantity of cylinder seals does not negate its value for study because the surface area of the cylinder gives a contextual constellation rather than an isolated icon or fragmented scene.¹¹²⁴

The Egyptian style seal iconography reveals the deity primarily as a charioteer, an archer, or as a local god.¹¹²⁵ The pyramidal and conical seals of the Iron Age I are engraved on the existing faces and/or base and are made of glass, bone, and hard paste.¹¹²⁶ The presence of zoomorphical heads and often onomastic inscriptions make Egyptian deities easily identifiable.¹¹²⁷ Although our focus is more of an examination of the Canaanite deity as it relates to Israel rather than the gods of Egypt, several seals from Egyptian iconography are included to show the marked difference. The line drawing of a soft paste scarab (fig. 16) found in Tomb 542 at *Tell el Far'a*, Israel shows a bearded deity with two horns and the streamer from the back of the headdress.¹¹²⁸ A Steatite scarab (fig. 17) from the same tomb location reveals a deity with deployed wings, the rear streamer from the conical headdress and the two horns. The question of a beard is undeterminable from the line drawing and it has been identified as *Reshef*.¹¹²⁹ Although not a seal *per se*, an impression on a jar stopper (fig. 18) found at a public building named the Governor's house, also at *Tell el Far'a*, represents a zoomorphic

¹¹²³ O. Keel, "Bildträger aus Palästina/Israel und die besondere Bedeutung der Miniaturkunst, (The Picture Carrier of Palestine/Israel and the important significance of this Miniature Art.)" *Studien zu den Stempelsiegeln aus Palästina/Israel I* (Studies of the Stamp Seals of Palestine/Israel, Vol. 1) [Ger.], (Eds.) O. Keel and S. Schroer, (OBO 67: Fribourg, Switzerland: University Press; and Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985), 20. Thus far, there are four volumes in this series: (OBO 67, 88, 100, and 135).

¹¹²⁴ Klingbeil, 166.

¹¹²⁵ M. Shuval, "A Catalogue of Early Iron Stamp Seals from Israel," *Studien zu den Stempelsiegeln aus Palästina/Israel, Band III* (Studies of the Stamp Seals of Palestine/Israel, Vol. 3), [Ger.], (Eds.) O. Keel, M. Shuval, and C. Uehlinger (OBO 100: Fribourg, Switzerland: University Press; and Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 93.

¹¹²⁶ Shuval, 72.

¹¹²⁷ I. Cornelius, 14.

¹¹²⁸ Shuval, 133. The current location of the scarab is not identified but it is dated Iron I. As the study of iconography evolves, certain judgments are made as to the correct re-presentation of the artifact for research purposes. The primary way of portraying the icon has been through a line art rendering so that the nuances of the motif are revealed. The obvious liability is the art may not be a perfect copy of the original. On the other hand, photographic representations may be exact; however, the lighting of the object along with shadows may not properly reveal the focus of the object. Thus, the preferred method has been the use of line art as is reflected with the illustrations included.

¹¹²⁹ *Ibid.* The current location of the scarab is not identified but it is dated Iron I.

deity standing upon a quadruped. The head, the headdress, the collar around the neck, the short garment, and the scepter all present an Egyptian god.¹¹³⁰

FIGURE 16

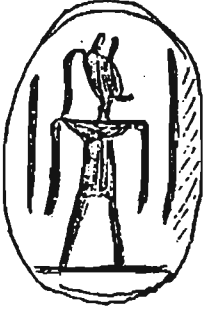


FIGURE 17



FIGURE 18



The Northern Canaanite seal iconography contains a standing god upon an emblematic quadruped, such as a lion, a bull, or other horned animal.¹¹³¹ These deities are not as easily identified as their Egyptian counterparts due to their anthropomorphic representation. Yet, contextual icons of worshippers, offerings, and cultic objects help to distinguish it.¹¹³²

A cylinder seal of chlorite (fig. 19) found at *Tell Atchana* (Alalakh), Turkey within a house structure reveals a sitting deity holding a goblet with two other deities approaching with a menacing pose.¹¹³³ An impression on a cylinder seal (fig. 20) pose and its left hand holding an axe toward an approaching Egyptian god to the right.¹¹³⁴ Another view of the Canaanite *Baal* is present on a Steatite cylinder seal (fig. 21) found at Byblos, Lebanon that shows the right hand holding a mace.¹¹³⁵

¹¹³⁰ Ibid., 140. The current location of the pottery is not identified but it is dated Iron I.

¹¹³¹ Ibid., 101.

¹¹³² I. Cornelius, 14-15. Cornelius refers to R.M. Boehmer's article "Götterdarstellungen in der Bildkunst (The gods descriptive power in picture art)" in *Reallexicon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie* (The Assyrian Lexicon of Truth which existed before Asian art), Vol. 3 (Berlin, Germany: Walter de Gruyter, 1957), 466-469, in which divine attributes can be discerned by the presence of three criterion: 1) the horned cap of the gods, 2) the garments, and 3) the animal pedestal or base.

¹¹³³ Ibid., 171. It is catalogued in the British Museum as *BM 130652* and dated ca 1500-1365 BCE.

¹¹³⁴ Ibid., 171-172. It is catalogued in the Aleppo Museum in Aleppo, Syria as *Msk 73.1066* and dated ca 1500-1200 BCE.

¹¹³⁵ Ibid., 172-173. It is catalogued in the Byblos Museum in Beirut, Lebanon as *Byblos 1658* and dated ca 1500-1200 BCE.

FIGURE 19



FIGURE 20



FIGURE 21



FIGURE 22



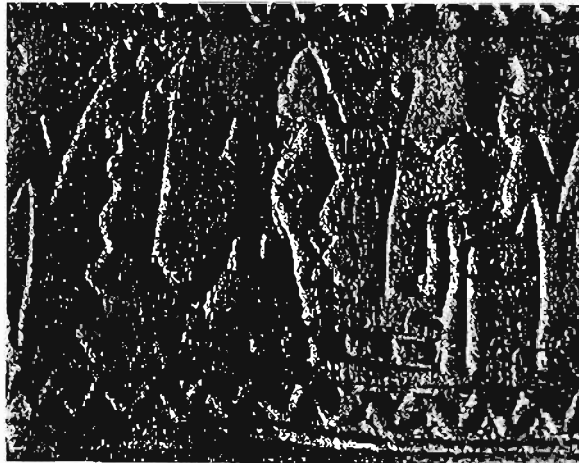
A cylinder seal with a single border (fig. 22) found at *Tell Deir 'Alla*, Jordan reflects three deities, two of which are Canaanite and the other (on the right) is the Egyptian *Ptah*. The *Baal* figure (on the left) moves forward with an unclear weapon in its raised right

hand.¹¹³⁶ On a cylinder seal of serpentine (fig. 23) found at an unknown Syrian location, the deity is shown twice with an uplifted right hand and a downward pointing spear in the left hand. The helmet has a sharp point and a dagger is present on the waist.¹¹³⁷ The *Baal* figure is not always shown in a menacing pose or with weaponry. The other primary view is in a standing or sitting position. A cylinder seal with wavy borders of green schist (fig. 24) which was a surface find at Byblos shows a Canaanite god sitting on a pedestal with the customary pointed headdress with a streamer and the kilt with a tassel between the legs.¹¹³⁸ A Carnelian scarab (fig. 25), also a surface find at Byblos, reveals the same Canaanite deity due to the striding figure having the typical high headdress, with horns in the front and a streamer at the back.¹¹³⁹ A scarab with brown glaze (fig. 26) found at *Tell el-Yahudiya*, Sinai, Egypt shows a bearded figure, identified with *Baal* due to the two raised wings. The deity wearing a horned headdress with a streamer to the back is sitting on the back of a lion.¹¹⁴⁰

FIGURE 23



FIGURE 24



¹¹³⁶ Ibid., 174-175. It is catalogued in the Jordan Archaeological Museum in Amman, Jordan as *Amman J. 9808* and dated ca 13th – 12th Centuries BCE.

¹¹³⁷ Ibid., 175. It is catalogued in the Bible Lands Museum in Jerusalem, Israel as *BLMJ 6876* and dated ca 1600-1300 BCE.

¹¹³⁸ Ibid., 182. It is catalogued in Beirut, Lebanon as *Byblos 7169* and dated ca 1500-1100 BCE.

¹¹³⁹ Ibid. It is catalogued in Beirut, Lebanon as *Byblos 1170* and dated ca 1500-1100 BCE.

¹¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 197-198. It is catalogued at University College in London, England as *UC 38070* and dated ca 1200-1100 BCE.

FIGURE 25

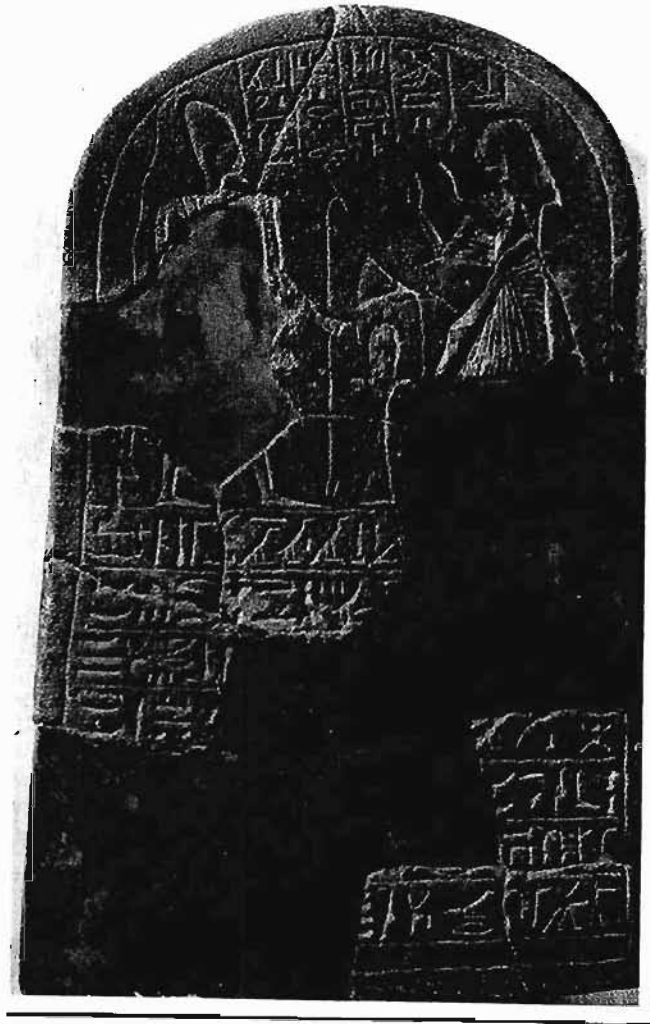


FIGURE 26



RELIEFS/STELAE OF GODS. The Ugaritic Mami stele (fig. 27) is the only extant relief with an onomastic inscription that identifies it as *Baal*.¹¹⁴¹ The red sandstone is of imported Egyptian material, possibly from *Gebel el-Ahmar* but discovered in the Syrian temple of *Baal* at Ras Shamra. The ideograms are written with determinatives that denote a foreign people and country.¹¹⁴²

FIGURE 27



¹¹⁴¹ Ibid., 134.

¹¹⁴² Ibid., 151-152. It is catalogued in the *Musée national du Louvre* (hereafter *Louvre*), Paris as AO 13176 and dated ca 1300 BCE.

Classified under the theme of the menacing god, a white limestone stele (fig. 28) also from Ras Shamra reveals a standing figure with a raised arm lifting “his weapon threateningly above his head.”¹¹⁴³ The “smiting god” gesture is typical of the Levant LB period.¹¹⁴⁴ Significantly different than Egyptian stelae is the long Asiatic beard and accompanied with two large curled locks hanging down to the chest.¹¹⁴⁵ A similarity exists with the 14th century warrior god of Boğazköy regarding the curved weapon, the body composition and the kilt around the waist.¹¹⁴⁶ A stone stele in the form of an anchor (fig. 29) from the same location has a similar stance without brandishing a weapon but holding a spear resting on the ground with an upward point. The icon has elements of two distinct cultures. The Asiatic beard is present along with the deity wearing an Egyptian white crown.¹¹⁴⁷

FIGURE 28



FIGURE 29



¹¹⁴³ Ibid., 134-138. It is catalogued in the *Louvre* as AO 15775 and dated ca 1700-1400 BCE.

¹¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 139-140.

¹¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 136-137, and 140. Although the curled locks are analogous to both Syrian and Anatolian weather gods, this could be some anthropomorphic representation of the *Torah* commandment regarding the beard and the side locks in Lev. 19:27.

¹¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 140.

¹¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 138-139. It is located in the National Museum in Aleppo, Syria and dated ca 1500-1100 BCE.

FIGURE 30

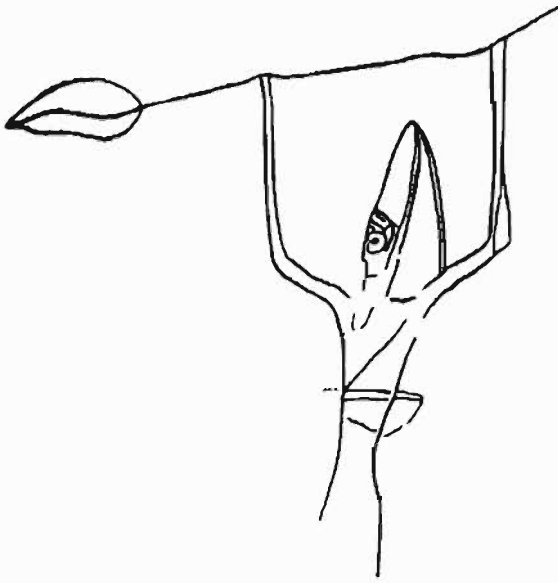
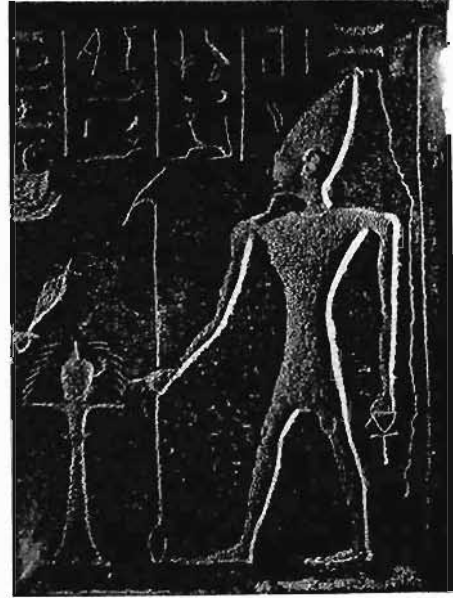


FIGURE 31



In a syncretistic fashion, elements combining the Canaanite Baal and the Egyptian Seth gods, an incised relief (fig. 30) from the Egyptian-Canaanite Fosse Temple located at Lachish depicts the deity raising both hands over his head with a large lance. The brandished weapon is the chief Egyptian element, whereas the headdress, streamer, and Asiatic beard reflect Canaan.¹¹⁴⁸

Baal is further depicted in reliefs with the theme of the standing god. The typical triad of stelae involves a brandished weapon, a sword, or without any weapons.¹¹⁴⁹ A reworked piece during the New Kingdom of a black granite relief (fig. 31) on part of the throne of a colossal statue of the Middle Kingdom is identified as *Baal* despite an inscription to *Seth*.¹¹⁵⁰

BRONZE FIGURINES OF GODS. Various figurines in the bronze genre exemplify “the smiting pose” associated with the menacing god. However, only one such figurine is clearly identified as *Baal*.¹¹⁵¹ A bronze figure of 10.4 cm with green patina (fig. 32) reveals horns, a beard, and a dagger on the customary kilt with its right hand raised in a menacing fashion.¹¹⁵² The standing god figure is evident in a 6.8 cm bronze (fig. 33) from

¹¹⁴⁸ Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses and Images of God*, 76. The line drawing was taken from a relief that remains on the side of the Temple located at the Tell in Lachish. It is dated as LB.

¹¹⁴⁹ I. Cornelius, 142.

¹¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 151. It is located in the Ägyptisches Museum, Staatliche Museen in Berlin, Germany as *Berlin 7265* and dated ca 1224-1214 BCE.

¹¹⁵¹ D. Collon, “The Smiting God: A Study of a Bronze in the Pomerance Collection in New York,” *Levant* 4 (1972), 111-134.

¹¹⁵² I. Cornelius, 232. It is located in the Reuben and Edith Hecht collection of the University of Haifa in Haifa, Israel as *H-1906* and dated 2nd millennium BCE.

from an unknown Syrian location. This figurine does not have the lower arms and lower legs; yet, the conical headdress, the short kilt, the dagger, and the curled headlock are present.¹¹⁵³ To the untrained eye, the bronze figure of a bull (fig. 34) found east of (*Dōtān*) Dothan would not suggest deity.¹¹⁵⁴ However, the significance of the bull is complex and without other figures found with it, the context is unclear as to the particular meaning. Nonetheless, it has been ascribed to represent *Baal*, YHWH, and *El-Berit*.¹¹⁵⁵

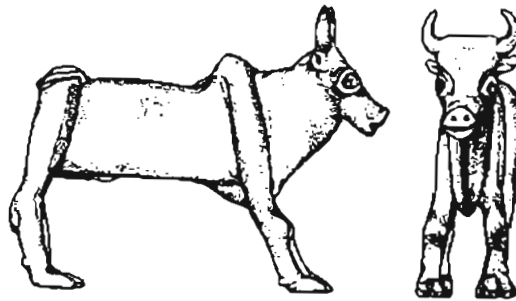
FIGURE 32



FIGURE 33



FIGURE 34



ATTRIBUTES OF GODS. Certain features in the iconographic presentation make the deity figure distinguishable from the human. One of those attributes is the headdress with the presence of horns. Further, the Canaanite deity *Baal* is singled out from Egyptian and other Asiatic deities by the presence of the bull head (horns), a conical

¹¹⁵³ Ibid., 233. It is located in the Bible Lands Museum in Jerusalem, Israel as *BLMJ* 393 and dated 14th century BCE.

¹¹⁵⁴ גרין, 11.

¹¹⁵⁵ Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses and Images of God*, 118. Biblical references of Num. 23:22; 24:8 and Judges 8-9 have been given as possible interpretation schemes.

headdress that has a streamer to the back, and the curled lock of hair.¹¹⁵⁶ Weapons are often present with the deity although they need not be brandished. Attacking weapons are maces, axes, spears, bows, and the dagger, with the latter usually attached to the waist.¹¹⁵⁷ Cornelius concludes “there is thus one basic meaning in the raised weapon and raised hand (or fist) [of the deity], that of absolute *power*.”¹¹⁵⁸

IMAGES OF GODDESSES. One of the icon motifs that appear during the Egyptian Twelfth Dynasty (the same time period as MB IIA) are scarabs and seals of a naked woman. Typically the headdress and other anatomical features designate her as Egyptian; yet, one seal (fig. 35) recovered from Beth Shemesh is an early prototype of the representation of the “Naked Goddess.”¹¹⁵⁹ There have been 44 of these MB IIB scarabs recovered in Israel, in which she appears in isolation as the chief image. The cylinder seals with a larger surface area present her “flanked by worshippers or opposite a partner.”¹¹⁶⁰

Within the MB IIB period of Canaan, erotic sexuality is more normative than a fertility emphasis where the gesture of the hand can be seen more explicitly with the breasts (fig. 36) on the lead figure from *Tell el-Ajjul*. The nature of deity is seen with the horns above the head.¹¹⁶¹ The less obvious gesture is the holding of a protruding abdomen in (fig. 37) which seems to suggest a fertility symbolism but has also been interpreted as eroticism.¹¹⁶² As this goddess was popularized through seals and even precious metals, there was an over emphasis of gender “either by depicting her genital region proportionally too large and/or by identifying her female gender by depicting her physical body very realistically.”¹¹⁶³ The Late Bronze Age finds of Megiddo included

¹¹⁵⁶ I. Cornelius, 246-248. For a discussion on the headdress see R.D. Barnett, *The gods of Zinjirily: Compte rendu de la 11^e rencontre assyriologique internationale* (Leiden, the Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1964), 68. For a discussion on the lock of hair see H. Seeden, *The Standing Armed Figurines in the Levant (Prähistorische Bronzefunde I/1)*, (Munich, Germany: C.H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1980), 141-142.

¹¹⁵⁷ I. Cornelius, 250-253. For photographs of weapons at the Obelisks Temple at Byblos see Y. Yadin, *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands: In the Light of Archaeological Study, Vol. 1* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1963), 170-171. For a discussion of the weapons used during the Judges period, see Yadin's second volume, 247-263.

¹¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 257-258.

¹¹⁵⁹ Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*, 26. The location of this MB IIA seal is not identified.

¹¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 35. The location of this MB IIB lead figurine is not identified.

¹¹⁶² *Ibid.* The location of this MB IIB lead figurine is not identified.

¹¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 47.

three golden inverted pear-shaped pendants (fig. 38) imitating the female genitalia.¹¹⁶⁴ A similar pendant (fig. 39) found at *Tell el-Ajjul* contains the standard features of the same goddess, but under the name “Branch Goddess” because of the branch or sacred tree growing from her navel.¹¹⁶⁵

FIGURE 35



FIGURE 36



FIGURE 37



FIGURE 38

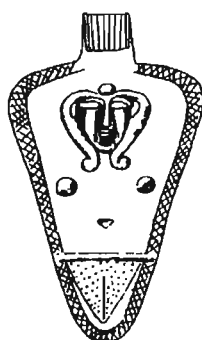
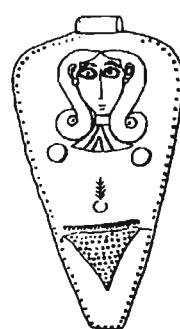


FIGURE 39



SACRED TREE IMAGES. A slightly pyramidal Steatite scaraboid (fig. 40) found at Beth Shemesh, Israel reflects a cultic flowering tree with three horned animals at the top.¹¹⁶⁶ The combination of the animals above the anthropomorphic sacred tree is an unusual find, whereas the palm-and-ibex and master of the animals motifs are more common.¹¹⁶⁷ The presence of the sacral tree is evident in different artifacts. A painted vessel (fig. 41) found at Hazor, Israel displays the supremacy of the tree that is worshipped by the animals.¹¹⁶⁸ A painting on a clay pottery stand (fig. 42) found at

¹¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 54. The location of this LB pendant is not identified.

¹¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 54. The location of this LB pendant is not identified.

¹¹⁶⁶ Shuval, 155. This scaraboid is located in Room 123 at the Department of Antiquities in Beth Shemesh as I.8672 and is dated as Iron I.

¹¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 112.

¹¹⁶⁸ Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*, 56. The location of this MB IIB pottery is not identified.

Megiddo, Israel focuses the attention on the tree flanked by horned animals.¹¹⁶⁹ In addition to the animals, the sacral tree is shown to be worshipped by a human on a cylinder seal (fig. 43) found also at Megiddo.¹¹⁷⁰ Although much more ornate, an additional cylinder seal (fig. 44) found at the same location embodies the typical animals, worshippers, and the "Naked Goddess" as the background to the sacral tree.¹¹⁷¹ For Keel, the tree in the tree cult of Iron Age I, is "a symbol and signal of the presence of a divine power, namely of prosperity and blessing, which ultimately resides in the earth."¹¹⁷²

FIGURE 40



FIGURE 41



FIGURE 42



FIGURE 43



FIGURE 44



¹¹⁶⁹ Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*, 56-58. The location of this MB IIB pottery is not identified.

¹¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 56. The location of this MB IIB cylinder seal is not identified.

¹¹⁷¹ Ibid. The location of this MB IIB cylinder seal is not identified.

¹¹⁷² O. Keel, *Goddesses and Trees, New Moon and Yahweh: Ancient Near Eastern Art and the Hebrew Bible* (JSOT Supp. 261: Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 46. In his third chapter, he specifically describes the tree cult during this time period and illustrates it with over thirty line drawings of the artifacts.

The tree in its cultic dimension is problematic. Trees were created by God on the third day and this action was pronounced as good.¹¹⁷³ God met Abram in Shechem at (*'ēlôn Mōreh*) “oak of Moreh” and Abram’s response was to erect an altar.¹¹⁷⁴ The problem was when the tree was elevated from being just wood to an object of worship because of the theophanic manifestation. In the *Torah*, the planting of a tree next to YHWH’s altar was expressly forbidden.¹¹⁷⁵ To avoid the cultic use of the tree, the command was given to destroy groves in connection with Canaanite idolatry.¹¹⁷⁶ The divine cleansing of these sites by fire was an element of judgment and sanctifying the land for an obedient Israel. Their response to this command shows that “the ‘cutting down’ [*kr̥*] (*כרת*) of trees is an act of [holy] war.”¹¹⁷⁷

SUMMARY. During the transition period into the Early Iron Age when traditional preferences changed in Canaan from cylinder seals to stamp seals, the essence and miniature form of the gods changed also. The seals of this period do not depict any anthropomorphic goddesses, although some figurines have been found.¹¹⁷⁸ The female deity recedes into the background and her bodily form is transmogrified into the stylized tree motif present in the Deborah and Gideon narratives in Judges.¹¹⁷⁹ The motif of the suckling mother animal was produced more frequently in place of the goddess.¹¹⁸⁰ The attributes of the Iron I deities “include many [of the same] Bronze Age ones, such as garments, streamers, head-coverings, horns, and standing on emblematic animals.”¹¹⁸¹ The political and warrior aspects represented through common symbols of the chariot and archer attributes reflect the transition to a hidden god where sovereignty and domination at a human level appears.¹¹⁸²

¹¹⁷³ Gen. 1:11-12.

¹¹⁷⁴ אֵלֹן מֹרֶה *Gen. 12:6.*

¹¹⁷⁵ Dt. 16:21.

¹¹⁷⁶ Dt. 7:5; and 12:3.

¹¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 55. Dt. 20:19.

¹¹⁷⁸ Shuval, 116.

¹¹⁷⁹ Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*, 152-153. Cf. Jg. 4:11; 6:11, 19, 25, 28, and 30.

¹¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 149.

¹¹⁸¹ Shuval, 117.

¹¹⁸² Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*, 397-398.

All this is an expression of the disappearance of the cultural world of the Late Bronze Age, of the break-up of institutions related to religion, cult, and mythology, and the coalescence of new cultural orders. The engravers of Early Iron Age seals used some of the old elements, signs, and symbols but in different configurations and with modified emphasis. They added new elements from places not well represented in Bronze Age seals in Canaan, and invented others, thus creating new glyptic languages, consistent with the respective Iron Age I cultures.¹¹⁸³

The biblical image ban brings into question whether an iconistic or aniconistic tribal culture existed in specific regard to YHWH.¹¹⁸⁴ Because the second commandment does not specifically ban figurative art but rather prohibits the creation and veneration of cultic images of YHWH, N. Avigad classifies Israel as an aniconic nation stating that “the archaeological evidence proves that the Israelites did observe the prohibition of making images, except for some minor attempts to form crude images in pottery.”¹¹⁸⁵ S. Schroer strongly refutes both Avigad and the conclusions of M.A. Levy that state the pictorial representations were related to idolatry in Canaan rather than by Israel. Uehlinger notes that the second commandment would not have been necessary had Israel not known images.¹¹⁸⁶

The question would rather be placed as to when in the Judges period was Israel showing iconism and when was it showing aniconism. There are two basic forms of aniconism.¹¹⁸⁷ The first is a *material aniconism* where a deity is “represented by some physical object, usually a shaped stone or stone pillar.”¹¹⁸⁸ The other is an *empty-seat*

¹¹⁸³ Shuval, 117.

¹¹⁸⁴ Ex. 20:4; and Dt. 5:8.

¹¹⁸⁵ C. Uehlinger, “Northwest Semitic Inscribed Seals, Iconography, and Syro-Palestinian Religions of Iron Age II: Some Afterthoughts and Conclusions” *Studies in the Iconography of Northwest Semitic Inscribed Seals: Proceedings of a symposium held in Fribourg on April 17-20, 1991*, (Eds.) B. Sass and C. Uehlinger (OBO 125: Fribourg, Switzerland: University Press; and Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 279.

¹¹⁸⁶ Uehlinger, “Northwest Semitic Inscribed Seals,” 281. Uehlinger cites S. Schroer as a source for this belief based on her research and cataloguing of artifacts in *In Israel Gab es Bilder: Nachrichten von darstellender Kunst im Alten Testament* (Israel had this Picture: The news about the art produced in the Old Testament.) [Ger.], (OBO 74: Fribourg, Switzerland: University Press; and Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987).

¹¹⁸⁷ B. Sass, “The Pre-Exilic Hebrew Seals: Iconism vs. Aniconism,” *Studies in the Iconography of Northwest Semitic Inscribed Seals: Proceedings of a symposium held in Fribourg on April 17-20, 1991*, (Eds.) B. Sass and C. Uehlinger (OBO 125: Fribourg, Switzerland: University Press; and Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 194-256. The majority of his work examines nearly 700 late Iron Age stamp seals of which almost 500 of them are aniconic.

¹¹⁸⁸ V. Hurowitz, “Picturing Imageless Deities: Iconography in the Ancient Near East,” *BAR* 23 (1997), 48.

aniconism where the presence of the deity is “indicated by the provision of a resting place for the god, such as a throne, pedestal, or animal mount.”¹¹⁸⁹

The A.N.E. iconography was phenomenologically connected to events depicted in the narratives where the divine warrior elements are present.

Yahweh acts as a warrior he never becomes the warrior-god exclusively, he rather remains the supreme god displaying warrior characteristics, but not in the form of mere emblem which would designate him as the war-god.¹¹⁹⁰

The divine involvement in the affairs of Israel through various acts of judgment showing YHWH fighting on behalf of Israel (or against Israel) from heaven does not have to suggest there was an actual YHWH iconography, but it does not deny that the people of Israel would have recognized YHWH through a pictorial representation on iconographic artifacts.¹¹⁹¹ The icons used and the metaphorical imagery of YHWH fighting as a warrior from heaven depicts Him “as being in ultimate control, and His supremacy is continuously emphasized [and] . . . His victory is an anticipated fact and His dominion over the chaotic forces a *fait accompli*.”¹¹⁹² This genesis of Iron I with the icon of slaughter, changes from the conquest of Canaan to the era of the Judges, which reflects the hidden nature of God, acting through humanity in the cyclical patterns of judgment.¹¹⁹³

THE ICONOGRAPHY OF SIN. The second commandment ban against images would convict an Israelite involved either in the making or veneration of certain artifacts that held worship properties. Those representations in violation of this commandment would include the “Naked goddess” as earlier referenced in figures 35, 36, 37, 38, and 39. Further, it would include artifacts of the sacred tree, shown previously in illustrations 40, 41, 42, 43, and 44. As a modified anthropomorphic representation of deity, an Egyptian stele (fig. 45) shows the motif of a god that has ears that hear which is an obvious

¹¹⁸⁹ Hurowitz, “Picturing Imageless Deities,” 48. For a further discussion on aniconism see T.N.D. Mettinger, *No Graven Image? Israelite Aniconism in its Ancient Near Eastern Context (ConBibOT 42)*: Stockholm, Sweden: Almqvist & Wiskell International, 1995).

¹¹⁹⁰ Klingbeil, 302.

¹¹⁹¹ Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*, 407. Another source of examining this is among cult stands. Cf. P. Beck, “The Cult-Stands from Taanach,” 352-381.

¹¹⁹² Klingbeil, 306. This is paralleled in the iconography of Mesopotamia of this same era and later into Iron Age II. Cf. T.W. Mann, *Divine Presence and Guidance in Israelite Traditions: The Typology of Exaltation* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 74-80.

¹¹⁹³ Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*, 398.

transgression against making a graven image.¹¹⁹⁴ Three cultic masks (fig. 46) also denoted as *teraphim*, “presumably qualified the wearer to speak in the name of the deity and to utter oracles.”¹¹⁹⁵ Although clearly Egyptian, a tomb painting (fig. 47) shows the process of fifteen men making “two statues of Thut-mose III, a sphinx, and an offering table for the temple at Karnak.”¹¹⁹⁶ Whereas the previous Egyptian icon is prior to this study period, the following Assyrian relief (fig. 48) found at Nineveh shows the idols being taken into captivity by the Assyrian soldiers.¹¹⁹⁷

FIGURE 45

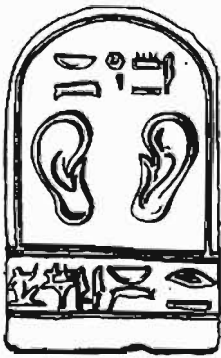


FIGURE 46

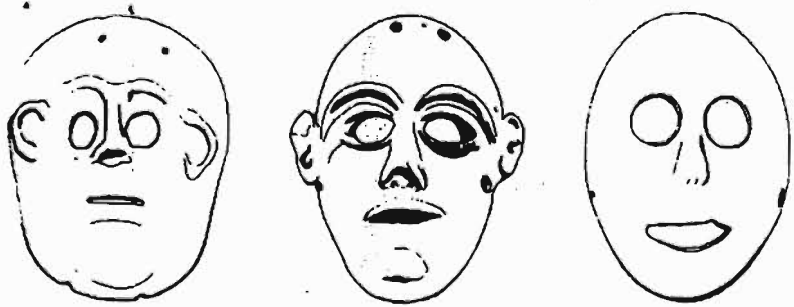
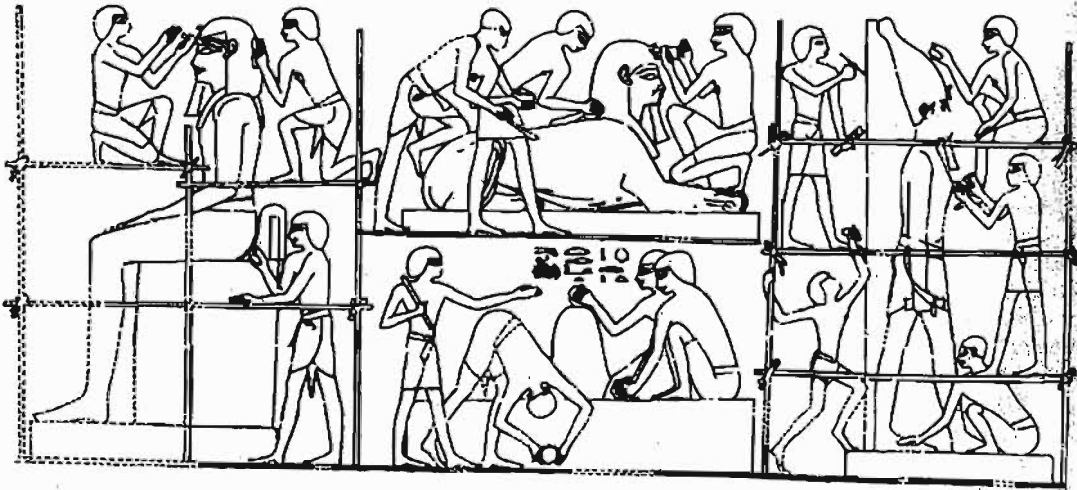


FIGURE 47



¹¹⁹⁴ Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 192. Cf. Ps. 116:1b-2. This memorial stone is located in Berlin, Germany and is catalogued as 7354. No date is given.

¹¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 194. Cf. Jg. 17:5; and 18:17-20. The first two ceramic masks (left to right) were found at Hazor and are dated in LB II. The third mask is made of limestone and was found at Hebron. The ceramic masks are located at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. The limestone mask is located in a private collection, not identified.

¹¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 233. Cf. Ps. 115:4. This tomb painting of the tomb of Rekh-mi-Re is found at Abd el-Qurna, Egypt and is dated 1502-1448 BCE, and is well before the Judges period, nonetheless reflects the standard practice that Israel was accustomed while in Exile.

¹¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 101. Cf. Ps. 115:7. This relief is found at the southwest palace of Sennacherib in Nineveh and is dated 704-681 BCE.

FIGURE 48



THE ICONOGRAPHY OF SUBJUGATION. The theme of an oppressive force depicting elements of subjugation either at the onset in a combat scene or in its occupation is scarce among inscribed West Semitic seals. Rather, the combat element is typically a semi-divine anthropomorphic figure subduing an animal.¹¹⁹⁸ Subjugation can be illustrated in iconography through scenes of warfare, siege, the retreat or flight of a people, and through being subdued.

WARFARE. This representation of combat is depicted iconographically as human warriors, divine warriors, or as a combination of the two.¹¹⁹⁹ A combative force is shown in a scarab (fig. 49) found at *Tell el Far'a* that reveals a drawn bow by the chariot driver who is moving forward in battle over the slain.¹²⁰⁰ The conqueror motif on one of the Iron Age scarabs (fig. 50) shows an archer in a chariot in pursuit of both a caprid and a human.¹²⁰¹ A sword of victory to slaughter an enemy before the royal Egyptian god is seen on a scarab (fig. 51) from *Tell el-Ajjul*.¹²⁰² A similar slaughter scene depicting a leg taking a long stride is seen on a fragment of a monumental basalt stele (fig. 52).¹²⁰³

¹¹⁹⁸ T. Ornan, "Mesopotamian Influence on West Semitic Inscribed Seals," *Studies in the Iconography of Northwest Semitic Inscribed Seals: Proceedings of a symposium held in Fribourg on April 17-20, 1991*, (Eds.) B. Sass and C. Uehlinger (*OBO 125*; Fribourg, Switzerland: University Press; and Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 54.

¹¹⁹⁹ Although out of the chronological scope of this investigation, background information on the Middle Bronze Age regarding warfare is helpful. S. Cornelius, "The Iconography of Weapons and Warfare in Palestine/Israel C. 1500-1200 BCE," *JNSL* 25 (1999), 263-275. Another possibility is J.B. Pritchard's *ANEP* 2nd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 49-54.

¹²⁰⁰ Shuval, 76.

¹²⁰¹ Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*, 120.

¹²⁰² *Ibid.*, 92.

¹²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 92.

FIGURE 49



FIGURE 50



FIGURE 51



FIGURE 52

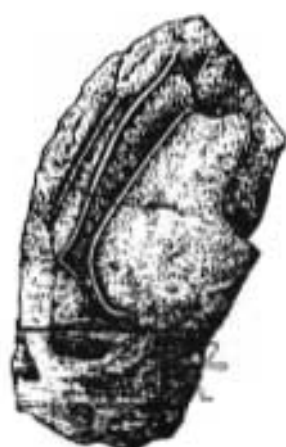
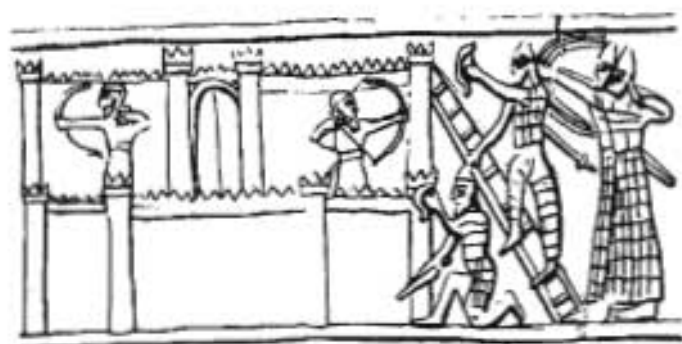


FIGURE 53



SIEGE. An early Assyrian bronze relief (fig. 53) found at Balawat, highlights the siege as the oppressive army is enlarged and its foes are miniaturized proportionally.¹²⁰⁴

RETREAT. This motif shows the attacking army overpowering their subjects, in such a manner that the subjects flee in retreat as a last hope of escape before being subdued. An Egyptian relief (fig. 54) shows the people of the village of Mutir (in Canaan) in retreat away from the city and toward the field or forest with the animals.¹²⁰⁵ The depiction on the limestone relief (fig. 55) on the exterior north wall at Karnak shows a despairing army in defeat and in retreat from an attacking force.¹²⁰⁶

SUBDUED. The conquest of Israel is depicted on an ivory inlay (fig. 56) from Megiddo during the time of Ramesses II, where the charioteer is unarmed, moving slowly, with the vanquished naked Hebrews bound pulling the horse and chariot in

¹²⁰⁴ Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 101. This relief at Balawat is dated 858-824 BCE, which is actually much later than our focus; however, it is an adequate representation of the siege.

¹²⁰⁵ Ibid., 101. Jg. 5:6-7. This relief is found at Luxor, Egypt and is dated 1301-1234 BCE.

¹²⁰⁶ Ibid., 180. The dating of this relief is not given.

FIGURE 54



FIGURE 55

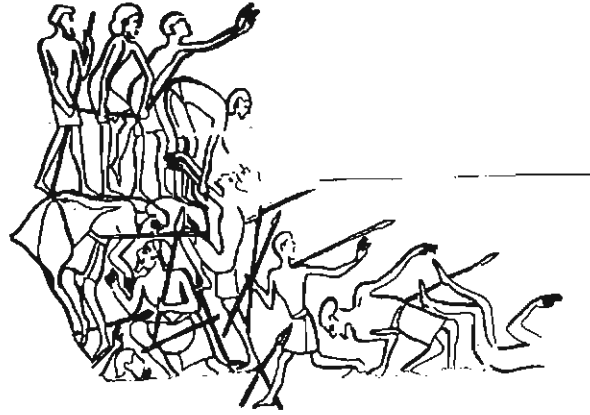


FIGURE 56



FIGURE 57



FIGURE 58



return from the battle scene.¹²⁰⁷ A cylinder seal of the same Pharaoh (fig. 57) from Beth She'an represents the Egyptian victory over the Asiatics.¹²⁰⁸ An Egyptian seal amulet (fig. 58) shows the foreign victory by Egypt as pharaoh sits on the nine bows, which is symbolic of having conquered enemy lands.¹²⁰⁹

¹²⁰⁷ P. Beck. "The art of Palestine during the Iron Age II," 165-183. The article itself primarily features cult stands and artifacts in the Iron II age which is outside the scope of this inquiry. The inlay dated 1350-1150 BCE is catalogued as # 38780 at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, Israel.

¹²⁰⁸ Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*, 90-92. The location of this seal is unknown.

¹²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 80.

FIGURE 59



FIGURE 60



THE ICONOGRAPHY OF SUPPLICATION. The motif of supplication and prayer is not easily found within Iron IA. The earlier Egyptian representation of the divine hearing ear to the suppliant was previously discussed (fig. 45). The prostrate position of prayer is illustrated in a papyrus (fig. 59).¹²¹⁰ In an earlier Egyptian period, a sketch on limestone (fig. 60) shows the form of prayer through kneeling and outstretched arms.¹²¹¹ Also slightly earlier, but within the context of Israel, a bronze plaque (fig. 61) found at Hazor shows a standing person with an uplifted hand and possibly a (*talit*) around the shoulders.¹²¹² An Egyptian woman is depicted in prayer with her knees bent and

¹²¹⁰ Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 310-311. Ps. 138:2. This papyrus is entitled "The Book of the Dead of Heruben" is located in Cairo, Egypt and is dated 1085-950 BCE.

¹²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 310. The location of this sketch is not given; but it is dated 1570-1085 BCE.

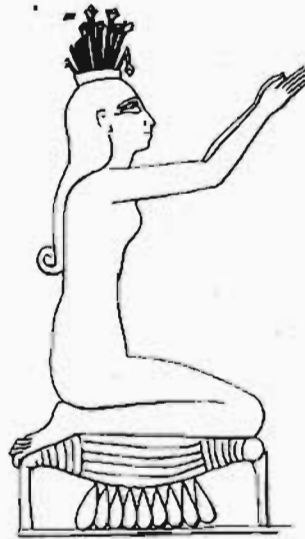
¹²¹² חַלִּית, *EHED*, 115. The word is used to reflect the prayer garment worn by men in Israel. See Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 311-312. This bronze plaque found at Hazor, Israel is not given a location; but it is dated 1500-1200 BCE.

legs perpendicular to her erect body and uplifted hands in a limestone relief (fig. 62) found at Abydos, Egypt at the temple of Seti I.¹²¹³

FIGURE 61



FIGURE 62

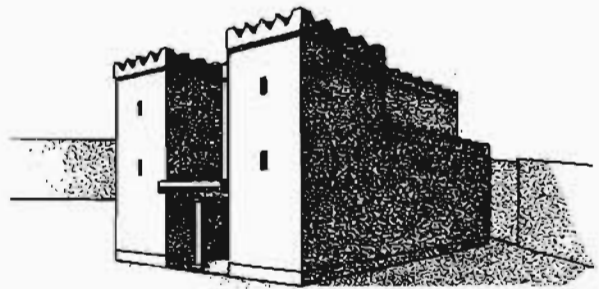


THE ICONOGRAPHY OF SALVATION. This motif of salvation which includes deliverance from the oppressive enemies is rather abstract in its iconographic depictions. This type of deliverance would suggest being in a position of dominion over all forces including those in the animal kingdom. One such Assyrian chalcedony cylinder seal (fig. 63) shows an individual male with a threshing instrument subduing one animal, while already having subdued another weaker animal, which may represent its protection.¹²¹⁴ Although not initially obvious, a line art drawing of a reconstruction of the Fortress Temple at Shechem (fig. 64) illustrates how a fortress can be a place of refuge.¹²¹⁵

FIGURE 63



FIGURE 64



¹²¹³ Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 334. The location of this relief is located at the Temple of Seti I in Abydos, Egypt and it is dated 1317-1301 BCE.

¹²¹⁴ Ibid., 58. Cf. Jg. 14:5-6. The location of this cylinder seal is at the British Museum and is catalogued as BM 89023. It is dated 9th-7th centuries BCE.

¹²¹⁵ This fortress which was brought under subjection is typified by Abimelech who oppressed Israel. Jg. 9:46-49. Ibid., 179-180. The Shechem temple is dated 1650 BCE.

THE ICONOGRAPHY OF SHALOM. This motif is the most abstract of all of the ones considered; yet, peace and rest are represented in several ways. One way is through the freedom of worship and libations as shown on a limestone votive tablet (fig. 65).¹²¹⁶ An Assyrian relief (fig. 66) expresses this same worship freedom with sacrifices made at an altar for the chariot.¹²¹⁷ Apart from sacrificial offerings, worship is illustrated through dancing and the use of musical instruments. An Amarna tomb relief (fig. 67) reflects how grief and mourning have been turned into dancing.¹²¹⁸ A stele (fig. 68) from Abydos shows women in a procession using tambourines and one using a harp.¹²¹⁹ In a basalt relief (fig. 69) found at Carchemish, the worship elements are reflected by playing of a loud cymbal (*š^alāṣal*) and by blowing the (*šōpār*) ram's horn.¹²²⁰

FIGURE 65



FIGURE 66

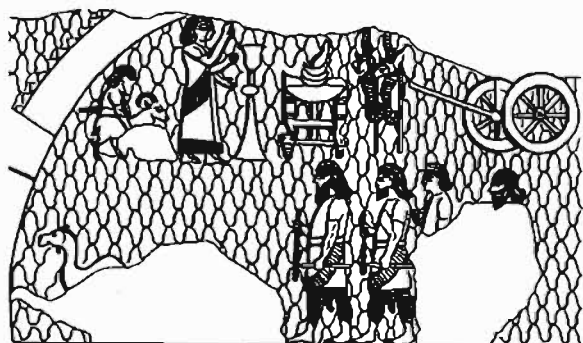


FIGURE 67



¹²¹⁶ Ibid., 179. The tablet was found at Ur; but it is located at the British Museum, catalogued as *BM 188561*. It is dated 2500 BCE. Although well out of the chronological scope of this examination, the tablet conveys the essence of the theme.

¹²¹⁷ Ibid., 238. This relief found at Nineveh is dated 704-681 BCE.

¹²¹⁸ Ibid., 339. The location of this relief is at the entrance wall on the right side of the tombs, tomb number one, of the southern group of tombs at Amarna, Egypt and it is dated 1377-1358 BCE. Ps. 30:11.

¹²¹⁹ Ibid., 339. The location of this stele is at the *Kom es-Sūltan* in Abydos, Egypt and it is dated 1301-1234 BCE. Ps. 68:25-26.

¹²²⁰ חַלְצֵל וְשֹׁפָר. BDB, 854; and 1051. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 341. The location of this relief is at the British Museum as *BM 117810*. It is dated 9th-8th centuries BCE. Ps. 150:5; 83:3.

FIGURE 68



FIGURE 69

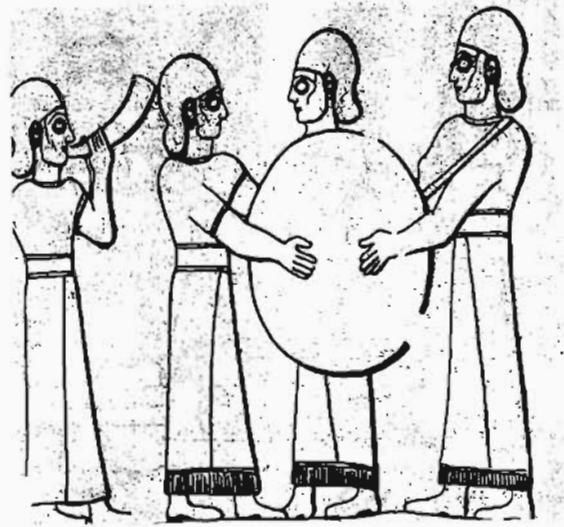


FIGURE 70



FIGURE 71



The second major motif of peace is through the absence of war and the normalcy of life. Also, chronologically after our examination another relief (fig. 70) from Nineveh illustrates the regional peace with the destruction of weapons.¹²²¹ In a painted relief (fig. 71) from *Serabit el Khadem* in the Sinai Peninsula, agricultural workers are present with one riding on a donkey.¹²²²

CONCLUSION. During Iron I, the iconographic symbol systems focused upon an aggressiveness oriented toward a dominating superiority and a fertility manifested in the human, animal, and plant kingdoms.¹²²³ As Israel moved toward the tenth century, the

¹²²¹ Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 242. This relief found at Nineveh is located at the British Museum as *BM 128941*. It is dated 668-626 BCE. Ps. 46:9.

¹²²² *Ibid.*, 280. The provenance of this relief is not given. Jg. 5:10; and 10:4.

¹²²³ Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*, 130.

foreign iconographic deity representations “would not have been conceptualized as being equal to and independent of YHWH, but would have been viewed as entities and powers of blessing that functioned under his control.”¹²²⁴ The iconography of this era should be viewed as complementary to the textual interpretations of Judges because of the interrelatedness of the images of gods, society, and humanity. The pictorial world of premonarchic Israel portrays the complexity of the reality of the social structure in a time of change.¹²²⁵

EPIGRAPHY

The inscriptions found on the ancient Near East artifacts provide additional information that often corroborates the iconographic evidence.

Epigraphic evidence suggests that Israelites preserved their identity in the biblical literature without compromising their description of the historical period in which they came into existence.¹²²⁶

As a science, these inscriptions may be interpreted based on a two-fold classification system of whether or not the epigraph is onomastic. This of course does not discount the importance of the examination of materials used for the writing and the alphabetic script of the particular language.¹²²⁷

For the Northwest Semitic inscriptions of the Late Bronze and Iron Ages, that means texts [were] written on stone, pottery, papyrus and metal in the languages of Ugaritic, Aramaic, Phoenician, Hebrew, Moabite, Ammonite, and Edomite.¹²²⁸

The issues surrounding the spread of the alphabet, the change of its consonantal forms, and the literacy level of the Levantine peoples are beyond the scope of this study.¹²²⁹ Epigraphic inscriptions were made with a pointed or carving instrument, which included graffiti, votive inscriptions, burial epitaphs, memorial stelae, weights, seals, and coins. Paleographic inscriptions were written in ink and included the dipinto, ostraca,

¹²²⁴ Ibid., 149.

¹²²⁵ Ibid., 394.

¹²²⁶ Hess, “Fallacies in the Study of Early Israel,” 354.

¹²²⁷ J. Naveh, *Early History of the Alphabet: An Introduction to West Semitic Epigraphy and Palaeography* (Jerusalem, Israel: The Magnes Press; and Leiden, the Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1982), 1-12.

¹²²⁸ W.E. Aufrecht, “Urbanization and Northwest Semitic Inscriptions of the Late Bronze and Iron Ages,” *Urbanism in Antiquity: From Mesopotamia to Crete*, (Eds.) W.E. Aufrecht, N.A. Mirau, and S.W. Gauley (*JSOT Supp.* 244: Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 116.

¹²²⁹ For a discussion on the orthography of the Iron Age, see F.M. Cross, Jr. and D.N. Freedman, *Early Hebrew Orthography: A Study of the Epigraphic Evidence* (*AOS* 36: New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1952), 45-57.

papyrus, and parchment.¹²³⁰ Among the written documents, they have been classified as monumental, formal, and occasional.¹²³¹ Unfortunately, the archaeological yields of these inscriptions are meager.¹²³² Nonetheless, the small quantity of inscribed seals, jar-stamps, graffiti, and ostraca has been unearthed at most modern excavation sites.¹²³³

THE ONOMASTIC INSCRIPTIONAL EVIDENCE. The non-literary sources of personal names inscribed in Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, or Latin are not limited to the seals, graffiti, and ostraca, but also include funerary inscriptions.¹²³⁴ The determination of names that are culturally Hebraic is compounded with the influence of other cultures, as with the case of Shamgar ben Anath.¹²³⁵ One of the practices of Judaism, both before and after the exile, was the use of a theophoric name, originally a short sentence or statement about God.¹²³⁶ This is evidenced in the 194 biblical names that terminate in the *yh* or *yhw*

¹²³⁰ Naveh, 3-5. For a discussion with examples of the various types of inscriptions and documents see G.A. Cooke, *A Textbook of North-Semitic Inscriptions: Moabite, Hebrew, Phoenician, Aramaic, Nabataean, Palmyrene, and Jewish* (Oxford, England: The Clarendon Press, 1903). The section on Hebrew inscriptions is rather limited to a few pages; yet, his cross referencing with biblical texts is outstanding. Although outside the chronological scope of this investigation, for background material about epigraphy in the Roman era of Christianity, see O. Marucchi, *Christian Epigraphy: An Elementary Treatise With a Collection of Ancient Christian Inscriptions Mainly of Roman Origin*, (Trans.) J.A. Willis (Chicago, IL: Ares Publishers, Inc., 1974), 37-47 and *Manual of Christian Archeology*, 4th Ital. ed., rev., (Trans.) H. Vecchierello (Paterson, NJ: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1935), 193-265.

¹²³¹ A.R. Millard, "An Assessment of the Evidence for Writing in Ancient Israel," *Biblical Archaeology Today: Proceedings of the International Congress on Biblical Archaeology: Jerusalem, April 1984* (Jerusalem, Israel: Israel Exploration Society, 1985), 301.

¹²³² Likewise, the nature of West Semitic epigraphic and paleographic resources is rather limited. Cf. E. Lipinski, who brings into question the problems associated with dating the inscriptions in "Epigraphy in Crisis: Dating Ancient Semitic Inscriptions," *BAR 16* (1990), 42-43, 49. Cf. L.G. Herr, who presents the epigraphic inscription evidence of Aramaic, Ammonite, Hebrew, Moabite, Edomite, and Phoenician seals; however, his section on the Hebrew seals is limited to 9th – 6th centuries BCE, in *The Scripts of Ancient Northwest Semitic Seals (HSMS 18: Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1978)*, 79-152. The work of W.E. Aufrecht primarily deals with Ammonite seal inscriptions; yet, his work is well presented with the inscriptions, transliteration, translation, and provenance. See, *A Corpus of Ammonite Inscriptions (ANETS 4: Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1989)*, 1-342.

¹²³³ A.M. Honeyman, "Semitic Epigraphy and Hebrew Philology," *The Old Testament and Modern Study: A Generation of Discovery and Research: Essays by Members of the Society for Old Testament Study*, (Ed.) H.H. Rowley (Oxford, England: The Clarendon Press, 1951), 267-268.

¹²³⁴ One of the larger finds of onomastic inscriptions was found at a tomb in (Y²rihō) יריחו Jericho. However, it is well out of the chronological scope of this examination. Cf. R. Hachlili, "The Goliath Family in Jericho: Funerary Inscriptions from a First Century A.D. Jewish Monumental Tomb," *BASOR* 235 (1979), 31-65. Another large find of personal names, among 951 items was from the excavation at Masada, relative to the Jewish Revolt. Y. Yadin and J. Naveh, *Masada I: The Yigael Yadin Excavations 1963-1965: Final Reports: The Aramaic and Hebrew Ostraca and Jar Inscriptions* (Jerusalem, Israel: Israel Exploration Society, 1989).

¹²³⁵ Jg. 3:31; and *BDB*, 779. For more information on the personal names in the book of Judges, review the section "Names" in chapter four, pages 405-411.

¹²³⁶ G. Mussies, "Jewish Personal Names in Some Non-Literary Sources," *Studies in Early Jewish Epigraphy*, (Eds.) J.W. van Henten and P.W. van der Horst (*AGAJU 21: Leiden, the Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1994*), 262-263.

suffix.¹²³⁷ Comparative analysis reveals that Akkadian morphology of animals uses this theophoric onomastic termination, whereas it is absent in Hebraic animal names, because of the negative religious and metaphorical sentiment connected to idolatry. This becomes an evidence for accepting the theophoric element attached to names.¹²³⁸

The major limitation of this type of examination is the presence of source material. The largest find comes from the discovery of the Samaria ostraca, where “the names of more than 1200 pre-exilic Israelites are known from Hebrew inscriptions and foreign inscriptions referring to Israel.”¹²³⁹ The onomastic inscriptions cited were largely theophoric with 577 and 77 having יהוה and אל as the theophoric elements, respectively. Only 35 personal names related to pagan deities, whereas the small remainder of names has no theophoric element.¹²⁴⁰ The 8th century BCE outpost of *Kuntillet Ajrud* (about 95 km North by Northwest of Eilat) was an Israelite religious outpost that contained inscribed names of ‘El, YHWH, *Baal*, and *Asherah*.¹²⁴¹ Excavations of Iron Age tombs at *Khirbet el-Kôm* (about 12 km west of Hebron) revealed inscriptions with the theophoric names Nethanyahu (fig. 72), ‘Uriyahu (fig. 73), and ‘Oniyahu (fig. 73).¹²⁴² The longest inscription from this site is on a pillar between two of the chambers in the second tomb, which identifies that the not only are the names theophoric in nature, but there is the element of a relationship with YHWH (fig. 73).¹²⁴³ In addition, there is the presence of a

¹²³⁷ יהוה, יה, and ה.

¹²³⁸ Z. Zevit, “A Chapter in the History of Israelite Personal Names,” *BASOR* 250 (1983), 1-16. Zevit catalogues the theophoric names and distinguishes between pre-exilic and post-exilic sources.

¹²³⁹ Yet, this epigraphic onomasticon is dated from Iron II and out of the scope of this examination. Cf. Tigay, “You Shall Have No Other Gods,” 9. Nonetheless, Tigay includes an extensive bibliography, as well as lengthy appendices of names with their provenience. With each listing there are subdivisions regarding the nature of the theophoric name.

¹²⁴⁰ Tigay, “You Shall Have No Other Gods,” 12.

¹²⁴¹ Z. Meshel, “Did Yahweh Have a Consort? The New Religious Inscriptions from the Sinai,” *BAR* 5 (1979), 27.

¹²⁴² The unpointed Hebrew names are: (נְתַנְיָהוּ) *Nethanyahu*, (אֲרִיָּהוּ) *‘Uriyahu*, and (אֲנִיָּהוּ) *‘Oniyahu*. These names may be translated as: YHWH has given, YHWH is my light, and YHWH is my strength. Cf. W.G. Dever, “Iron Age Epigraphic Material from Khirbet El-Kôm,” *HUCA* 40-41 (1969-1970), 151-159. For the transliteration of Palaeo-Hebrew script see Appendix 3, page 776.

¹²⁴³ The inscription, identified as Inscription 3, East Pillar between chambers 1 and 2 of Tomb 2 has been transcribed by Dever from its Paleo-Hebrew as:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. לאֲרִיָּהוּ הַקֹּיב כַּחבָּה. | 1. (Belonging to) ‘Uriyahu. Be careful of his inscription! |
| 2. בִּרְךָ אֲרִיָּהוּ לִיהוָה. | 2. Blessed bye ‘Uriyahu by Yahweh. |
| 3. וּמֵאֲדָר יָד לְאִשֶּׁר תִּהְיוֹשׁ עָלָה. | 3. And cursed shall be the hand of whoever (defaces it)! |
| 4. לְאֲנִיָּהוּ. | 4. (Written by) ‘Oniyahu. |

bowl (fig. 74) inscribed with the word ('ēl) on its underside reflects a vessel, probably used for libation offerings to God.¹²⁴⁴

FIGURE 72

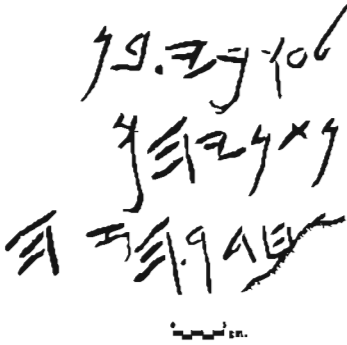


FIGURE 73

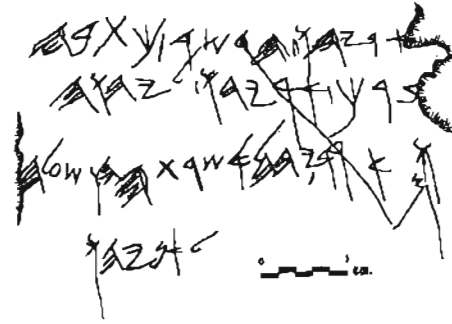
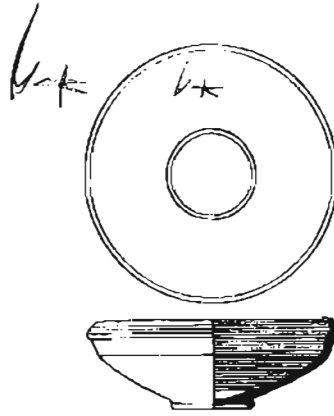


FIGURE 74



There are additional inscriptions which have been dated circa 12th-10th century BCE from *Tel Arad*; however the majority of them are either fragmentary or non-theophoric.¹²⁴⁵ The 10th century Gezer Calendar does not produce any information relative to God's judgment.¹²⁴⁶ An inscription from this same time period was discovered on a jar handle at *Tel 'Amal*.¹²⁴⁷ Another non-theophoric onomastic inscription was on a bowl rim found at *Tel Batash*.¹²⁴⁸

¹²⁴⁴ H. L. Dever, "Iron Age Epigraphic Material," 172-173.

¹²⁴⁵ G.I. Davies, *Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions*, 33-34. Davies includes *Tel Arad* Ostraca 76-79.

¹²⁴⁶ M. Lidzbarski and G.B. Gray, "An Old Hebrew Calendar-Inscription from Gezer," *PEFQS* 41 (1909), 26-34.

¹²⁴⁷ The 10th century inscription was *(lmmš) ל.מ.ש.* A. Lemaire, "A propos d'une inscription de Tel 'Amal" (A proposal of one inscription from Tel 'Amal), *RB* 80 (1973), 55.

¹²⁴⁸ This 10th century inscription was *([b]n hnn) ב.נ.ח.* A. Mazar and G.L. Kelm, "Tel Batash (Timnah) – 1984-1985," *Hadashot Arkheologiyot* 88 (1986), 20.

THE NON-ONOMASTIC INSCRIPTIONAL EVIDENCE. The religious loyalties of a society were reflected in formulas of salutations in letters and prayers for blessing.¹²⁴⁹

Given sufficient documentation, a polytheistic society in the ancient Near East will yield either single texts mentioning more than one deity at a time, or different but contemporary texts mentioning different deities. Israelite inscriptions of the same types are exclusively Yahwistic almost without exception.¹²⁵⁰

Once again, the artifactual evidence uncovered thus far among the salutations and the votive objects which are pre-exilic are not early enough to consider for examination.¹²⁵¹ An incised sherd from *Khirbet Tannin* was found.¹²⁵² As with iconography, but even more so with epigraphy, further evaluation of Iron I will depend upon the work of archaeologists unearthing the relevant artifacts.

Structural Anthropology

While the newer literary criticism branched into synchronic scholarship through areas of structuralism and deconstruction, elements of this methodology were applied to anthropology by C.G. Lévi-Strauss to develop a new sub-discipline.¹²⁵³ This structural approach to anthropology has generally been avoided by biblical scholars.¹²⁵⁴ Yet, some of this work provides new insight into Israelite religion and culture, although this approach has not had an effect on Iron I interpretations.¹²⁵⁵

¹²⁴⁹ For a discussion of the formulas of salutations in letters, see H. Schmökel, "Hammurabi und Marduk," *RA* 53 (1959), 188-192. Regarding votive inscriptions, see N. Avigad, "Excavations in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem, 1971 (Third Preliminary Report)," *IEJ* 22 (1972), 193-200.

¹²⁵⁰ Tigay, "You Shall Have No Other Gods," 21.

¹²⁵¹ Though much later, there is a 7th century Phoenician incantation text in Aramaic that aggrandizes *Baal* and his demons as "the Blood-spatterer, the lord who readies his chariot (for battle)." In this context, the Old Phoenician incantation is comparable to votive prayers, although directed toward Syrian deity, and thus a warning for Israel not to be entangled with the religious culture of the Canaanites. F.M. Cross, "Leaves from an Epigraphist's Notebook," *CBQ* 36 (1974), 486-490.

¹²⁵² This 11th century inscription (*šmn*) שמן looks to reflect that it was a pot that contained oil. A. Lemaire, "Notes d'épigraphie nord-ouest sémitique," (Northwest Semitic Epigraphic Notes.) *Semitica* 35 (1985), 13.

¹²⁵³ C.G. Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, (Trans.) J.H. Bell, rev. ed. (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1962).

¹²⁵⁴ Wilson, *Sociological Approaches to the Old Testament*, 22.

¹²⁵⁵ For a critical evaluation of this approach, see J.W. Rogerson, *Anthropology and the Old Testament* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1979), 102-119. Rogerson suggests structural anthropology is a tool to understand the implied Hebrew Bible classificatory system of reality. For examples of how this approach is used to understand ancient Israelite religion and society, see M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), 41-57; and J. Pitt-Rivers, *The Fate of Shechem, or the Politics of Sex* (New York and Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 113-171.

Sociology

The examination method of the science of society as it relates to the biblical text involves a functional analysis. Historically, within the discipline three interconnected postulates were adopted.

Substantially, these postulates hold first, that standardized social activities or cultural items are functional for the *entire* social or cultural system; second, that *all* such social and cultural items fulfill sociological functions; and third, that these items are consequently *indispensable*.¹²⁵⁶

The functional unity of the society is predicated on a social system where the total social structure with the totality of its social usages creates “a condition in which all parts of the social system work together with a sufficient degree of harmony or internal consistency.”¹²⁵⁷ The postulate of universal functionalism highlights the positive function of standardized social and cultural forms based “upon the principle that in every type of civilization, every custom, material object, idea and belief fulfills some vital function.”¹²⁵⁸ The postulate of indispensability is the most ambiguous of the three, because of the uncertainty of whether the function and/or the item represent the indispensable part of the working society.¹²⁵⁹

An application of this tri-fold functional analysis presupposes full integration of all elements of the society and focuses upon only the functional or positive elements functioning within the culture. This type of analytical approach discounts the dysfunctional forms of culture which present functional alternatives, equivalents, or substitutes that contribute either positively or negatively on society.¹²⁶⁰ At this point a revised sociological paradigm for functional analysis is used in order to examine the elements to which a specific function has been imputed both subjectively and objectively (Table 3).¹²⁶¹ The sociological items present in the Judges narrative that are subjected to this functional analysis include the functions of religion, hospitality, holy war, and women. As these items are examined it will determine whether this type of diachronic analysis serves to support or refute the question of divine judgment in its cyclical form.

¹²⁵⁶ Merton, 79. He specifically identifies these postulates as functional unity of society, universal functionalism, and indispensability.

¹²⁵⁷ Radcliffe-Brown, 397.

¹²⁵⁸ B. Malinowski, “Anthropology,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1st Supplementary Volume (London: 1926), 132-133.

¹²⁵⁹ Merton, 86.

¹²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 90.

¹²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 104. The table comes from Merton, 104-108.

Of these eleven items in the paradigm, they do not always apply in the theological context; however, specific notation is made as to the nature of the function or dysfunction present.

TABLE 3
SOCIOLOGICAL FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS PARADIGM

1. The item(s) to which functions are imputed.
2. Concepts of subjective dispositions (motives, purposes).
3. Concepts of objective consequences (functions, dysfunctions).
4. Concepts of the unit subserved by the function.
5. Concepts of functional requirements (needs, prerequisites).
6. Concepts of the mechanisms through which functions are fulfilled.
7. Concepts of functional alternatives (functional equivalents or substitutes).
8. Concepts of structural context (or structural constraint).
9. Concepts of dynamics and change.
10. Problems of validation of functional analysis.
11. Problems of the ideological implications of functional analysis.

Function of Religion

The unified system of beliefs and practices of premonarchic Israel in its relationship to YHWH establishes it as a religious cult within the context of its socio-political structure.¹²⁶² Gottwald underscores the uniqueness of the religion of Israel in comparison to the other A.N.E. cultures, on the basis of the different practice and religious outlook of Yahwism.¹²⁶³

The most distinctive issue is the object of worship. The narratives can be set out dichotomously as that which was or was not acceptable. Or more specifically it may be viewed as YHWH vs. every other god, idol, or thing that was worshiped. YHWH is identified as the primary object of Israel cult worship.¹²⁶⁴ Judgment *per se* is not involved in religion; but rather through the Israelite response to religious demands. Religion offers to Israel a manner to express its worship, which more often than not, is the catalyst that provokes divine judgment.

The narrative identifies several different expressions of worship. The most common is the sacrificial system. Furthermore, worship was set within a calendrical

¹²⁶² Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 67-68.

¹²⁶³ Ibid., 595.

¹²⁶⁴ Jg. 1:1; 2:4; 3:9, 15; 4:3; 5:1-31; 6:6, 36-40; 10:10, 12; 11:11, 30-31; 13:8; 15:18; 16:28; 20:26, 27; and 21:15. Also included are those references which specifically reflect Israel rejecting YHWH as their object of worship. Those areas where it is implied are not included. Cf. Jg. 2:12, 13; 3:7.

system. Nevertheless, despite the oblique references to the calendar, it would be difficult to use this as *prima facie* evidence to establish a sociological argument for divine judgment.

The same could be said about the place of worship. Prior to Israel crossing over the Jordan River, specific instruction was given concerning the place which would be acceptable for worship, as it would constitute the location where YHWH has chosen to cause His name to dwell.¹²⁶⁵ Yet, the command also dictated that sacrificial worship was not acceptable at any location they would choose.¹²⁶⁶ The entire passage in Deuteronomy 12 implies there would be a singular central sanctuary, *i.e.* the Mosaic Tabernacle. However it does not explicitly prohibit other locations, only those which YHWH did not choose to place His name there.

As part of the religious cult, apart from the central sanctuary, the erection of an altar for sacrificial worship was not prohibited. The altar is distinguished by its construction, whether it was earthen, stone, or bronze. The altar that is described in the book of Judges is the stone altar. However, the significant commands about the altar included restrictions requiring unhewn stones and not having any steps.¹²⁶⁷

There are three mentions of altars within Judges. In Ophrah, (*Yô'āš*) Joash had built a stone altar to *Baal* in the midst of a grove.¹²⁶⁸ Subsequently, this altar was destroyed by his son, Gideon who erected another one unto YHWH, which he named *YHWH-Shalom*.¹²⁶⁹ Whereas the first altar would have functioned primarily for a אב בית and the second one functioned for an individual, there is a corporate use where an altar was built and sacrifices offered following the civil war against Benjamin.¹²⁷⁰ Because of the language used in the text, (*'aśārāh 'a nāšīm*) “ten men” may be seen in light of the Jewish concept of a (*minyān*) which requires this number to constitute corporate worship.¹²⁷¹ Thus, the action of Gideon and his servants may reflect the worship of YHWH in the context of razing the pagan altar.

¹²⁶⁵ Dt. 12:11.

¹²⁶⁶ Dt. 12:13.

¹²⁶⁷ J.F. Drinkard, Jr., “Altar” *HBD*, 37-40. Ex. 20:24-26.

¹²⁶⁸ הַיִּזְבֵּחַ. Jg. 6:25.

¹²⁶⁹ “YHWH is peace.” Jg. 6:24-26.

¹²⁷⁰ Jg. 21:4.

¹²⁷¹ הַיִּזְבֵּחַ, עֲשָׂרָה, and מִנְיָן. This phrase only occurs twice in the bible: Jg. 6:27; and Ruth 4:2. Auld, “Gideon,” 265.

Of the three altars mentioned, the corporate altar was volitional and not in violation of the *Torah*. The altar built by Joash was a direct *Torah* violation and thus required razing by divine decree, as indicated in the Gideon narrative.¹²⁷² The erection of the new altar by Gideon may be viewed as a sign of YHWH's intervention and a change in the cycle of judgment from Midianite oppression because of the sin of Israel toward her deliverance.

Although various expressions of worship are present in the narrative, with the exception of repentance, they have little bearing upon our focus of divine judgment.¹²⁷³ In addition, the cult had certain individuals that were considered bona fide representatives of YHWH in the realm of religious activity. At Sinai, the tribe of Levi had been singled out as the main functionaries for perpetuity for the nation. A Levite of Bethlehem-Judah functioned as a priest for Micah of Mount Ephraim.¹²⁷⁴ Whether the Levite was of the priestly sub-clan of Kohath is unknown; yet, his religious function was improper considering the idolatrous items he officiated with and/or over for Micah and later for the Danites, as well as his consecration by someone other than a priest at the central sanctuary. Phinehas, another Levite is mentioned.¹²⁷⁵ However, his lineage is clearly defined as a Kohathite, acknowledging him not only to be a priest, but in this case the High Priest.

In the premonarchic period, the office of prophet is not well established. The narrative of Judges gives two instances of this office. The most well known is the prophetess Deborah.¹²⁷⁶ The other is an unidentified male prophet who delivered a divine oracle reciting YHWH's faithfulness and Israel's unfaithfulness, prior to the Gideon deliverance pericope.¹²⁷⁷

Jael serves an implicit cultic function whereby her tent, the location of Sisera's demise, is considered a sacred location. The tent becomes a religious sanctuary, when Jael is regarded as a cultic official of the ethnic group known as the Kenites.¹²⁷⁸ Albright,

¹²⁷² Ex. 20:3-5.

¹²⁷³ Jg. 1:1; 2:4; 3:9, 15; 4:3; 5:1-31; 6:6, 36-40; 10:10, 12; 11:11, 30-31, 34, 35; 13:7, 8; 15:18; 16:28; 20:26, 27; 21:21, and 23. See also the section on "Prayer," page 128.

¹²⁷⁴ Jg. 17:7-13.

¹²⁷⁵ Jg. 20:28.

¹²⁷⁶ Jg. 4:4.

¹²⁷⁷ Jg. 6:8.

¹²⁷⁸ S. Ackerman, 93.

places the “Kenite” distinction as a reference to the craft (of Hobab and his descendants) rather than ethnic lineage.¹²⁷⁹ Her marriage places her within a priestly aristocracy.¹²⁸⁰ Although no specific religious function is attributed to her in the narrative, the priestly connection provides a clue to two other related issues. One is the site of her tent at the oak of *Baş‘annîm*.¹²⁸¹ Because the term (*‘ēlôn*) “oak” (literally *terebinth*) is “appended with a surname [it] always refers to a holy tree.”¹²⁸² If this is a religious function, then the tree may be an element of the cult, in that “epiphanies of Yahweh or his messengers repeatedly take place under trees.”¹²⁸³ This creates a parallelism with Deborah sitting under a tree and a potential parallelism with the angel of YHWH visiting Gideon, in that it is a location where divine judgment is pronounced.¹²⁸⁴ The other connection is her location in Kedesh.¹²⁸⁵ This becomes important because of it being a cultic center of refuge.¹²⁸⁶ Consideration of its Hebraic meaning of (*qedeš*) “sanctuary” and its implied holiness underscores its usage.¹²⁸⁷ Yet, the author’s choice in placing Jael’s tent within the tribal allotment of Naphtali, in the city of Kedesh, with its Levitical inhabitants, sanctuary, and cult allows the reader to interpret it “as a sanctified haven.”¹²⁸⁸

Although not all of the cyclical elements are present in a religious functional examination, the narratives delineate covenantal adherence and disobedience, which at times involved divine judgment. The Yahweh cult was a stabilizing factor ordering life; it was not an authoritarian draconian system. Rather in this Yahwistic perspective

[It] succeeded in fashioning a relatively homogeneous symbolism in which variegated historical and social experience was appropriated, condensed, and widely disseminated

¹²⁷⁹ W.F. Albright, “Jethro, Hobab and Reuel in Early Hebrew Tradition,” *CBQ* 25 (1963), 7-9.

¹²⁸⁰ Ex. 2:16; Num. 10:29-31; and Jg. 1:16. This would be a Midianite aristocracy in which Moses’ father-in-law served as priest.

¹²⁸¹ The use of this location rather than the traditional Zaananim, is based on the emendations made in the section, “Error in Vocalization” in Appendix 1, “Listing of Textual Errors in Judges by Alteration,” page 712; and Appendix 4, “Translation of Emended Verses in Judges,” page 733. Jg. 4:11; and S. Ackerman, 96.

¹²⁸² חַלְוֵי. B. Mazar, “The Sanctuary of Arad,” 301.

¹²⁸³ Keel, *Goddesses and Trees, New Moon and Yahweh*, 49. Examples of this include Gen. 18:1, 4, 8; Jg. 6:11; 1 Sam. 22:6; and 1 Kg 19:5.

¹²⁸⁴ Jg. 4:5; and 6:11.

¹²⁸⁵ Kedesh is not important for Halpern, who views this geographical note as a scribal error in place of Tabor. See his, “The Resourceful Israelite Historian,” 394.

¹²⁸⁶ Josh. 21:32. Shechem was also a city of refuge, as well as a site with a sacred oak. Gen. 12:6; 35:4; Josh. 24:26; and Jg. 9:6.

¹²⁸⁷ חַלְוֵי. BDB, 873.

¹²⁸⁸ S. Ackerman, 98.

among the Israelite people, so much so that even when the public cult was not directly operative, its way of framing and interpreting national experience extended into large tracts of Israelite daily experience.”¹²⁸⁹

For anthropologists, religious function is based on a human society achieving its unity by its possession of certain values and practices which “influence behavior, and their integration enables the society to operate as a system.”¹²⁹⁰

Jael becomes a case in point to understand the sociological paradigm, because she has functional roles in religion as well as in hospitality, holy war, and as a woman. Her religious functionality as a religious specialist, especially from the perspective of Sisera ironically brings “unholy” into contact with “holy” in a cultic refuge, whereby the code of hospitality is transgressed along with the sanctioned haven. This betrayal of societal functions by the higher spiritual law of holy war exemplifies:

It is her privileged relationship with God that reveals to her the necessity of overturning the traditions associated with religious sanctuary and murdering Sisera in her tent-*cum*-shrine.¹²⁹¹

In examining the function of religion, it is the areas of dysfunction that highlight the negative phases of the cyclical pattern. In rejection of the covenant and YHWH, worship of anything other than Him or worship in a manner unacceptable renders those individuals in society dysfunctional. These dysfunctions remained in society until such time that the people cried out for deliverance because of the divinely permitted oppression.

The religious system did not make allowance for functional equivalents or alternatives to that which was prescribed in the *Torah*, thus any mutation was an act of transgression. The society functioned because of the Mosaic teaching and the cultic adherence to the prerequisites of Who was to be the object of worship, as well as how and when He was to be worshipped and in what manner. The author of Judges usually does not make any distinction as to whether the functions were manifest or latent; however, when Israel was responding to YHWH in true repentance, the manifest functions of both YHWH and Israel are clear.

¹²⁸⁹ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 70.

¹²⁹⁰ K. Davis and W.E. Moore, “Some principles of stratification,” *American Sociological Review* 10 (1945), 244.

¹²⁹¹ S. Ackerman, 102.

Function of Hospitality

The norms of Israelite society required hospitality to be offered within a prescribed context. When the circumstances dictated the need for this hospitality, it was incumbent upon the individual and/or the village to provide it. The protocol of Israelite hospitality is succinctly enumerated in the following table.¹²⁹²

TABLE 4
PROTOCOL OF HOSPITALITY

- (1) There is a sphere of hospitality which comprises a zone of obligation for both the individual and the village or town within which they have the responsibility to offer hospitality to strangers. The size of the zone is of course smaller for the individual than for the urban center.
- (2) The stranger must be transformed from potential threat to ally by the offer of hospitality.
- (3) The invitation can only be offered by the male head of household or a male citizen of a town or village.
- (4) The invitation may include a time span statement for the period of hospitality, but this can then be extended if agreeable to both parties, on the renewed invitation of the host.
- (5) The stranger has the right of refusal, but this could be considered an affront to the honor of the host and could be a cause for immediate hostilities or conflict.
- (6) Once the invitation is accepted, the roles of the host and the guest are set by the rules of custom.
 - (a) The guest must not ask for anything.
 - (b) The host provides the best he has available—despite what may be modestly offered in the initial invitation of hospitality.
 - (c) The guest is expected to reciprocate with news, predictions of good fortune, or gracious responses based on what he has been given.
 - (d) The host must not ask personal questions of the guest.
- (7) The guest remains under the protection of the host until he/she has left the zone of obligation of the host.

The problem occurs when the hospitality is either refused or is given improperly. Rather than portraying proper social customs, the author presents flagrant antisocial ritual behavior in regard to the code of hospitality, especially if Judges is viewed chiastically with the narratives of Jael and Sisera and the Levite with his concubine. Other examples of hospitality adherence include Gideon and Manoah both with the angel of YHWH, and Micah with his Levite/priest. Other obvious violations of this

¹²⁹² V.H. Matthews, "Hospitality and Hostility in Judges 4," *BTB* 21 (1991), 13-15.

hospitality code also included Gideon with the men of Succoth and Penuel, the men of Judah with Samson, as well as the aforementioned chiasmic issues of Jael and Sisera along with the Levite and his ill-fated concubine.

The functional analysis of the protocol of hospitality reveals its purpose imputed in the Israelite culture as a protection for both the host and the guest. It is an extension of the *Torah* that becomes both a protection as a functional requirement when it is heeded and a removal of protection as a subjective disposition when it is violated. Within the hospitality code, the legalistic provision of hospitality may be invalidated by a violation (seen sociologically as a dysfunction) by either party. The anti-social behavior that violates the societal norm of hospitality not only reflects on the honor of the party but becomes a literary element that the narrator uses to prepare the reader to understand and thus accept an otherwise unacceptable ending paralleling the negative apostasy and oppression cyclical elements in Judges.¹²⁹³ This in essence is the cyclical element of repentance that leads to deliverance.

For an individual to submit himself into the position of guest, creates a manifest function when he places himself in a position of vulnerability in total subordination to the host with the acceptance of hospitality.¹²⁹⁴ The societal dysfunction is when that code is violated. In retrospect, the violations of the hospitality code whether made by an individual or accepted by the other party may be characterized as a juxtaposition of doing that which was right in their own eyes.¹²⁹⁵ Each incident may be summarized in the responses of the individuals in chapter 19.

Even though the Levite refused to spend the night in a town which did not belong to Israel, neither he, the old host, nor the base fellows of Gibeah act in accordance with what is good and right in Yahweh's eyes.¹²⁹⁶

It is the same stubbornness found in the Benjaminites of chapter 20 that shows a response that needs correction, repentance, and deliverance to do "what is right in the eyes of Yahweh, so that the reader's perspective can be corrected."¹²⁹⁷

¹²⁹³ Matthews, "Hospitality and Hostility in Judges 4," 20.

¹²⁹⁴ M. Herzfeld, "'As in Your Own House:' Hospitality, Ethnography, and the Stereotype of Mediterranean Society," *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean*, (Ed.) D.D. Gilmore (Washington, DC: American Anthropological Association, 1987), 77.

¹²⁹⁵ Jg. 21:25.

¹²⁹⁶ Lasine, "Guest and Host in Judges 19," 41.

¹²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 46.

With regard to the hospitality code, there were obvious areas of adherence and violation. The social customs which were important to those in the A.N.E. environment which may have been considered important to the people and may have provoked societal animosity does not mean that they would warrant divine intervention by way of judgment. Only where the social taboos were bound up with the *Torah* and have emerged from the basis He has given does this suggest a judgment motif.

Function of Holy War

The idea that war can be holy or have a religious context is an incredible concept for the Western mind. Yet, in the Islamic world the idea of *jihad* or holy war is a viable tenet of faith.¹²⁹⁸ The Qur'an identifies *jihad* as much more than a religious obligation; but a form of business ensuring salvation.¹²⁹⁹ The idea is that war begins with *Allah*, and thus cannot be challenged.¹³⁰⁰ It is not surprising that in the A.N.E. "that from start to finish wars were waged in an atmosphere of religion, as though the battlefields were temples where gods and men met in religious self-neighbourhood."¹³⁰¹

ANCIENT NEAR EAST

During the premonarchic period, Israel was in no way unique among its neighbors when it came to engaging in battle with divine assistance or leadership. The technical term is (*milḥ^amōt YHWH*) "the wars of YHWH."¹³⁰² However, this term is not used in Judges. Rather, there is a *hapax locutio* describing this as (*milḥ^amōt K^ənā'an*) "the wars of Canaan."¹³⁰³ Those nations that entered into warfare with YHWH and Israel, either offensively or by default, had a similar cult theology in regard to their deity and warfare. The Moabite king Mesha honors *Chemosh* with laud and praise for divine help against his enemies.¹³⁰⁴ The Assyrian potentate Sargon gives similar homage to *Enlil*.¹³⁰⁵ In the Ugaritic *Baal* myth, the bloodshed imagery of the goddess *Anat* in war is vividly

¹²⁹⁸ **A** (*gihad*) جهاد.

¹²⁹⁹ Qur'an, *Surah al-Saff* 61:10-13.

¹³⁰⁰ Qur'an, *Surah al-Nisa'* 4:74-80.

¹³⁰¹ T. Fish, "War and Religion in Ancient Mesopotamia," *BJRL* 23 (1939), 399.

¹³⁰² מִלְחָמֹת יְהוָה. Num. 21:14.

¹³⁰³ מִלְחָמֹת כְּנָעַן. Jg. 3:1.

¹³⁰⁴ "The Moabite Stone," *ANET*, 320.

¹³⁰⁵ "Sargon of Agade," *ANET*, 267.

portrayed.¹³⁰⁶ A Hittite text acknowledges that the weather god of Hatti brought victory over Egypt.¹³⁰⁷ An Egyptian historical text from the walls of the Temple of Karnak ascribes victory over Megiddo to their god *Amon*.¹³⁰⁸ In a description of the Asiatic gods worshiped in Egypt, the pharaoh was compared to *Baal*: “His battle cry is like (that of) *Baal* in the heavens.”¹³⁰⁹

RITUAL OF WARFARE

Just as the neighboring cultures employed the concept of holy war, there are no real distinctive characteristics that are Israelite which are not also features of other nations of the region.¹³¹⁰ The constituent elements of holy war as outlined by von Rad (Table 5) are a composite of those rituals found throughout various biblical narratives.¹³¹¹ Jones notes that where the majority of these rites are present “holy war obviously had a cultic character.”¹³¹² Of these elements, all but the first and tenth items were practiced by the neighboring A.N.E. cultures.¹³¹³

Three distinct characteristics of Israel’s holy war have been identified. Firstly, Israel is encouraged by YHWH to fight more vigorously when outside their territory.¹³¹⁴ Because the nature of warfare in the premonarchic period involved either the conquest of the land or the removal of oppressive nations that were permitted into the land for the purpose of divine judgment, this element does not figure prominently. However,

¹³⁰⁶ *KTU*, 1.3.II.3-30. The *Ras Shamra* texts elucidate this massacre by *Anat*. J. Gray, “The Wrath of God in Canaanite and Hebrew Literature,” *JMEOS* 18 (1933), 9-19.

¹³⁰⁷ “The so-called second plague prayer of Mursilis II,” *Near Eastern Religious Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, (Ed.) Walter Beyerlin (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1978), 172.

¹³⁰⁸ “The Asiatic Campaigns of Thut-Mose III,” *ANET*, 237.

¹³⁰⁹ “The Egyptians and the Gods of Asia,” *ANET*, 249, quoted from “The Epigraphic Survey,” *Later Historical Records of Ramses III (Medinet Habu II, OIP*, ix, Chicago, IL, 1932), pls. 79:22; and 87:2-3.

¹³¹⁰ G.H. Jones, “The concept of holy war,” *The World of Ancient Israel Sociological, Anthropological and Political Perspectives: Essays of the Society for Old Testament Study*. (Ed.) Ronald Ernest Clements. (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 302.

¹³¹¹ G. von Rad, *Der Heilige Krieg im alten Israel* (The Holy War in Ancient Israel) [Ger.], (Zurich, Switzerland: Zwingli-Verlag, 1951); 4th ed., (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), 6-14.

¹³¹² Jones, 303.

¹³¹³ M. Weippert, “‘Heiliger Krieg’ in Israel und Assyrien. Kritische Anmerkungen zu Gerhard von Rads Konzept des ‘Heiligen Krieges im alten Israel,’” (“‘Holy War’ in Israel and Assyria. Critical Analysis of Gerhard von Rad’s Concept of the ‘Holy Wars in Ancient Israel.’”) *ZAW* 84 (1972), 485.

¹³¹⁴ F. Schwally, *Semitische Kriegsaltertümer. Der Heilige Krieg im alten Israel* (Semitic War Psalms: The Holy War in Ancient Israel), [Ger.], (Liepzig, Germany, 1901), 27ff, quoted in Jones, “The Concept of Holy War,” 318.

TABLE 5

ELEMENTS OF HOLY WAR

Prior to the Battle

1. The trumpet is sounded as a sign for the troops to assemble.¹³¹⁵
2. Pieces of animal flesh are sent among the people in the hands of messengers.¹³¹⁶
3. The assembled militia is consecrated.¹³¹⁷
4. Prior to battle, sacrifices are offered and an oracle from YHWH is sought.¹³¹⁸
5. The favorable reply from God with a declaration of victory is pronounced.¹³¹⁹

During the Battle

6. YHWH goes before Israel into battle, making it His battle with His enemies.¹³²⁰
7. YHWH causes panic to seize the enemy with fear.¹³²¹
8. YHWH causes the enemy to become faint-hearted.¹³²²
9. The battle is opened with a loud battle cry.¹³²³
10. In the battle, YHWH creates panic and terror among the enemies.¹³²⁴
11. The battle is brought to a conclusion with the ban on the location.¹³²⁵
12. Men and animals are killed and other possessions declared holy unto YHWH.¹³²⁶

After the Battle

13. The army disbands and the men return to their tents.¹³²⁷

¹³¹⁵ Jg. 6:34.

¹³¹⁶ 1 Sam. 11:7.

¹³¹⁷ Jos. 3:5; and Jg. 5:11.

¹³¹⁸ Jg. 20:23, and 26.

¹³¹⁹ Jos. 2:24; and Jg. 7:15.

¹³²⁰ Jg. 4:14; and 5:31.

¹³²¹ Jos. 2:8.

¹³²² Jos. 2:24.

¹³²³ Jg. 7:20.

¹³²⁴ Jos. 10:10; and Jg. 4:15.

¹³²⁵ Jos. 6:17.

¹³²⁶ Jos. 6:18-19.

¹³²⁷ Jg. 20:8.

there is one example of a battle outside the boundaries of Israel. Prior to the successful battle led by Jephthah against the Ammonites, he recounted the conquest of the Transjordan kingdoms.¹³²⁸ Secondly, when inside their territory divine involvement made fighting unnecessary.¹³²⁹ This is not demonstrated in Judges. The best example of this is the smiting of 185,000 Assyrians by the angel of YHWH.¹³³⁰ Thirdly, the idea of *blitzkrieg* with its surprise attack made sieges of cities unnecessary.¹³³¹ Gideon's encounter with the Midianites demonstrates this.¹³³²

HOLY WAR VS. PROFANE WAR

This distinction of whether a war was holy or profane is difficult to distinguish in the A.N.E. texts.¹³³³ The cultic nature of the war did not necessitate it being holy, as much as did the divine involvement and initiative with its genesis in the exodus from Egypt.¹³³⁴ One of the problems with using this type of nomenclature is that it may be imposing an ideological view upon the text which may not have been perceived by the Israelites in battle.

The question is: Did ancient Israel really know the category of holy wars as opposed to other wars that were not holy? The answer should be no.¹³³⁵

HOLY WAR. The criterion for establishing whether a war was holy is somewhat nebulous and vague; however, the basis for this *holy* classification is His "working through the miraculous co-operation of natural phenomena, or else through the activities of leaders and heroes. The only firm evidence is that it was immediately *post eventu* that a war became recognized as a Yahweh war."¹³³⁶ At times the punitive judgment of YHWH revealed Him as both protagonist and antagonist in relation to Israel. One of the significant characteristics of His involvement in a holy war in either role is the concept of

¹³²⁸ Jg. 11:19-23, and 32-33.

¹³²⁹ Jones, 318.

¹³³⁰ 2 Kg. 19:35.

¹³³¹ A. Glock, *Warfare in Mari and Early Israel*, unpublished diss. (Ann Arbor: MI: University of Michigan, 1968), 191-192, quoted in Jones, "The Concept of Holy War," 318.

¹³³² Jg. 7:19-23.

¹³³³ M. Weippert, 490.

¹³³⁴ R. Smend, *Yahweh War and Tribal Confederation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1970), Eng. Trans. of *Jahwekrieg und Stammesbund* (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), 26-42.

¹³³⁵ H.E. von Waldow, "The Concept of War in the Old Testament," *HorBT* 6 (1984), 36-37.

¹³³⁶ Jones, 311.

Übergabeformel, where either Israel is handed over to her enemies or the enemies are handed over to Israel.¹³³⁷ Several of the hero narratives show both the elements of YHWH in His judging realm contending for Israel in her repentance and obedience and in His adversarial role in her apostasy and disobedience.

YHWH AS CONTENDER FOR ISRAEL. The internal evidence of the narratives does not give fixed information about the level of involvement of YHWH, as the essence of the victory is attributed to Him. The holy war is first illustrated in the conquest narratives of Simeon and Judah where the elements of divine inquiry and response are given in regard to the Canaanites and Perizzites.¹³³⁸ The other tribal conquests the author mentions in chapter one do not identify the involvement of deity, although the implication is there in the opening verse of the chapter.¹³³⁹

One of the indications of divine involvement is the empowerment by the Spirit of YHWH, as in the case of Othniel against the Mesopotamians.¹³⁴⁰ The political assassination story of Eglon by Ehud is somewhat more dubious; yet the raising up of Ehud as a deliverer and the pronouncement of *Übergabeformel* constitutes holy war victory over Moab.¹³⁴¹ Sisera and his army experienced YHWH's action against his army and chariots through meteorological activity.¹³⁴² The use of a dream and its prophetic interpretation regarding Midian revealed the holy war element to Gideon and his host of three hundred men.¹³⁴³ That the interpretation of the dream came from a Midianite and was overheard by Gideon and his servant, demonstrated divine involvement to both the Midianites and the Israelites. The following war of Gideon in (*Qarqōr*) Karkor ascribed that victory would be given by YHWH, although the *Übergabeformel* is not explicitly present.¹³⁴⁴ The Ammonite war, with the empowerment of Jephthah by the Spirit of YHWH is similar in nature to the divine involvement in the case of Ehud. Though a vow

¹³³⁷ F. Stolz, *Jahwe und Israels Kriege: Kriegstheorien und Kriegserfahrungen im Glauben des alten Israels* (Yahweh and Israel's War: The war theory and war experience in the faith of ancient Israel), [Ger.], (*ATANT 60*: Zurich, Switzerland: Theologischer Verlag, 1972), 21-22.

¹³³⁸ Jg. 1:1-4, 8-10, and 17-19.

¹³³⁹ Jg. 1:1, and 23-25. The only positive results of warfare were by Judah, Simeon, and the house of Joseph.

¹³⁴⁰ Jg. 3:10.

¹³⁴¹ Jg. 3:15, and 28-29.

¹³⁴² Jg. 4:15-16, 23; and 5:20-21. See the section "Meteorological Activity," pages 299-300.

¹³⁴³ Jg. 7:13-22.

¹³⁴⁴ **ח** קרקר Jg. 8:7, and 10-11.

is made by Jephthah, the *Übergabeformel* or any other divine response is not recorded in the narrative.¹³⁴⁵ The clearest example of holy war is the civil war against Benjamin. Half of the elements of war mentioned in Table 5 are present in this civil war narrative, with the key evidence at the end of the second day of war with the *Übergabeformel*.¹³⁴⁶

The deliverance episodes with Samson are doubtful examples of holy war. The only divine links are the mention of his empowerment by the Spirit of YHWH, his miraculous strength, and the destruction of the temple to *Dagon*. Yet, in all of these events, it is a one man war and there is no mention of any divine pronouncement.¹³⁴⁷ Also questionable is the annihilation of the men of Jabesh-Gilead, even though the implication is that this was sanctioned by YHWH following the corporate repentance and worship at Bethel. Nonetheless, there is no divine command or acknowledgement that YHWH participated in this slaughter.¹³⁴⁸

YHWH AS ADVERSARY TO ISRAEL. The sin and rebellion to the covenant demonstrated by Israel was a self sentencing to divine judgment. There is the refusal of YHWH to drive out the enemies of Israel.¹³⁴⁹ When the anger of YHWH is present, a situation of reverse *Übergabeformel* is present with Mesopotamia, Moab, Midian, the Philistines, and the Ammonites.¹³⁵⁰ As an adversary, YHWH sells Israel into the hands of her enemy. With each of these oppressive nations fulfilling the divine prerogative of judgment, it should not have come as a surprise to Israel that YHWH would leave his role contending for Israel to become the chief adversary. Part of the concluding remarks of Moses was that the faithful obedience to YHWH and His *Torah* would result in blessings.¹³⁵¹ The converse is that their unfaithful disobedience would bring upon them curses.¹³⁵²

PROFANE WAR. The idea of a war being profane does not hold a negative connotation; rather that it is *ordinary* or *common* war, with its activities not involving deity. As indicated earlier, some of the prior examples may actually be profane wars

¹³⁴⁵ Jg. 11:29-33.

¹³⁴⁶ Jg. 20:35-46.

¹³⁴⁷ Jg. 13:25; 14:19; 15:14-16; and 16:28-30.

¹³⁴⁸ Jg. 21:10-11.

¹³⁴⁹ Jg. 2:3.

¹³⁵⁰ Jg. 2:14-15, 20-23; 3:8, 12; 6:1; 10:6-7; and 13:1.

¹³⁵¹ Dt. 28:1-14.

¹³⁵² Dt. 28:15-68.

rather than holy. There are a number of examples within the narrative that are identifiable as profane. They include the war between Abimelech and Gaal at Shechem, the Gileadites and the Ephraimites at the Jordan River, and the Danites and the people at Laish.¹³⁵³

Two other examples of profane wars exist, although the battles did not include any militia. However, it could be argued that these are examples of personal vendetta. The first example is the killing of 600 Philistines by Shamgar.¹³⁵⁴ The other is the great slaughter by Samson at Lehi of one thousand men.¹³⁵⁵

CONCLUSION

Holy war was a manifest function in premonarchic Israel. As Israel submitted to the terms of covenant, whether it was the hero military commander, the militia men, or those supporting the war effort there was a cognizant awareness that obedience brings the blessing and that blessing would materialize through victory. The prerequisites for this function and the divine deliverance resulting in peace were the cultic commands of *Torah*. Israel's failure to observe the *Torah* would result in holy war not being available as a functional part of their societal protection. The dysfunctional element was when YHWH assumed an adversarial role. This does not imply that there is dysfunction in deity; rather that when society was motivated toward covenantal disobedience, the cause and effect relationship, justified and mandated YHWH to enter this role. Ultimately, there was a functional equivalent to holy war. It was the cyclical element of peace. Yet, for Israel to conceptually function in that realm, which would not necessitate holy war, it meant a faithful covenantal adherence.

When the holy war, as an element of YHWH's judgment, is viewed within the premonarchic period it becomes clear that:

It was Yahweh who fought for Israel, not Israel which fought for its God. The holy war, in Israel, was not a war of religion. According to the ancient texts, the wars in the time of Josue and the Judges were not undertaken in order to spread belief in Yahweh, as the *jihad* is undertaken to spread the Moslem faith; nor was their object to defend a faith against a foreign religion.... In the Book of Judges, Israel is not fighting (directly) for its religious freedom, but for its existence as a people.¹³⁵⁶

¹³⁵³ Jg. 9:34-45; 12:4-6; 18:11, 16, and 27-28.

¹³⁵⁴ Jg. 3:31.

¹³⁵⁵ Jg. 15:8, and 14-16.

¹³⁵⁶ R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1961), 262.

Nonetheless, the idiomatic usage of (*hmm*) in the text does have a religious and theological significance.¹³⁵⁷ As a result, in a balanced view of the “holy war” idiom

[It] must conclude that there is nothing specifically biblical in the notion of military intervention on the part of the deity or in the motif of an ensuing panic. The *mysterium tremendum* of the power sublimated in the deity everywhere it evinces its destructive nature in battle, at the same time inspiring those fighting on the side of the deity with demonic frenzy.¹³⁵⁸

Function of Women

The androcentric ideological approach to interpreting scripture by design glosses over or ignores gender criticism.¹³⁵⁹ Clearly within the Judges narrative, the feminine role is neither subordinate nor absent. However, it is noteworthy that of the thirty-one individual and collective female figures which are addressed, all but four are nameless.¹³⁶⁰ The patriarchal system in the tribal period relegated the women to their primary roles of wife and mother. Recognizing that the sexual dimension existed and at times featured as a method of divine judgment, this examination is discussed in the following chapter along with feminist criticism. Nonetheless, other than their sexual role, were there societal roles where women functioned as an agent of judgment?¹³⁶¹

WIFE

Although some of the women in Judges functioned in multiple roles, the role of wife is fulfilled by six women and five collective groups of women. Three of the four women named in the narrative are wives. Whereas this functional role has validity in the societal structure and in the development of the narrative, it is in the spousal task that the judgment motif is relevant with the wives of Othniel, Gideon, and Samson.

The first woman introduced in the text is Achsah, the daughter of (*Kālēb*) Caleb.¹³⁶² Her status as an unmarried daughter is descriptive of her eligibility as a wife,

¹³⁵⁷ חָמָם.

¹³⁵⁸ H.P. Müller, “Hmm,” *TDOT* 3, 420-421.

¹³⁵⁹ M. Fander, “Historical-Critical Methods,” *Searching the Scriptures: Vol.1: A Feminist Introduction*, (Ed.) E.S. Fiorenza (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1993), 214-221.

¹³⁶⁰ The four named women are Achsah, Deborah, Jael, and Delilah. The other twenty seven nameless women (individuals or groups) are addressed with their scriptural reference in this section.

¹³⁶¹ A. Brenner in her scheme of organizing the material sociologically underscores her feminist approach by defining the female character as she is related to a male kin: father, son, or husband. Those that do not meet those criteria are included in special groupings of independent roles or spatial relationships. See “Introduction” *A Feminist Companion to Judges*, (Ed.) A. Brenner, (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 10.

¹³⁶² חָלָה. Jg. 1:11-13.

when she is the military prize given for *whoever* smites and takes control of Debir. The effectiveness of the judge Othniel, son of (*Q^onaz*) Kenaz in securing the victory over the village resulted in his being given Achsah as a reward.¹³⁶³ As a spoil of victory in an endogamous marriage, the function of this wife (to be) in her premarital status, becomes an object in the hand of YHWH to bring victory and judgment in the conquest. Yet, her name meaning “trinket” or “bangle” may even be a sexist indictment of her prophetic use as an ornament dangled before a warrior to bring victory over the Canaanite inhabitants.¹³⁶⁴

As either an epilogic note or a transition introducing the next narrative, the author stresses that Gideon fathered seventy sons from his many wives.¹³⁶⁵ The spousal reference takes a different form (*nāšîm*) literally meaning “women.”¹³⁶⁶ The procreative function is necessary for the subsequent pericope and portrays these “many women” not as wives but as a harem. The covenantal prohibition on adding wives places Gideon in violation of the *Torah* commands against polygamy and ultimately his offspring as an indirect object of YHWH’s judgment through Abimelech.¹³⁶⁷

The functional role of wife in the A.N.E. regards the period of betrothal to qualify the woman as both bride and wife. This was the case with Achsah and also with the Philistine woman betrothed to Samson.¹³⁶⁸ Her anonymity is a function of the story because of the important issue of her ethnicity. During the seven day marriage feast, Samson’s bride is called his wife. Although there are questions of trust and confidence between the couple, these elements which lead to the riddle and its constituent elements are important insofar as they provide the vehicle for judgment.¹³⁶⁹ Samson scornfully

¹³⁶³ חַבְרָה.

¹³⁶⁴ D.N. Fewell, “Deconstructive Criticism: Achsah and the (E)razed City of Writing,” *Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, (Ed.) G.A. Yee (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995), 133. The Arabic cognate (*a’kaš*) عكاس “tether” like a bait gives a similar Near East concept to the Hebrew meaning of “trinket”. See *BDB*, 747.

¹³⁶⁵ Jg. 8:30.

¹³⁶⁶ נָשִׁים. *BDB*, 21, and 675.

¹³⁶⁷ J.G. Butler, *Gideon: The Mighty Man of Valor: Bible Biography Series 5* (Clinton, IA: LBC Publications, 1998), 176-177. Dt. 17:17. Although Gideon was not a king, the people desired of him to be king. He did however function in the role of a leader of Israel and thus the specific royal prohibition would have been applicable.

¹³⁶⁸ Jg. 14:7, 10, 15-17, 20; 15:1-2, and 6.

¹³⁶⁹ The acts of judgment by Samson against the Philistines included the death of 30 men in Ashkelon and against nature with the destruction of the lion, the 300 foxes, and a plot of land. Jg. 14:6, 19; and 15:4-6. The Philistines meted out judgment against Samson’s wife and father-in-law. No further mention is made of the man who took the woman as a wife.

calls his weeping and nagging bride (*bʿeglātī*) “a heifer.”¹³⁷⁰ The text implies that the marriage was not consummated. Rather, the bride was given to Samson’s friend, which in turn created a chain of events that resulted in both the death of her and her father.¹³⁷¹

MOTHER

The natural progression of a woman as a daughter, a bride, and a wife leads to the function of motherhood, while not neglecting the wife’s responsibility of conjugal rights. Within the androcentric ideology of the A.N.E., “motherhood is patriarchy’s highest reward for women; it offers women one of the few roles in which they can achieve status in patriarchal society.”¹³⁷² Despite the presence of many mothers in the narrative, only Deborah and Sisera’s mother embody elements where judgment is observable.

In addition to her mention as a wife, Deborah is the first mention of a mother.¹³⁷³ Rather than the normal familial usage of the word referring to progeny, the poetic description is not in relation to the nuclear family but to the larger pan-tribal family of Israel. Whereas the narratives only briefly mention her capacity as wife and mother, her function as judge and prophetess are the ones highlighted. Her supremacy over Barak is seen in his reluctance to go to war without her help and assistance, “as the representative of the divine.”¹³⁷⁴ The epithet “mother in Israel” is found only twice in the bible and in both cases are in a military context.¹³⁷⁵ The traditional nurturing aspect of a mother is not seen; but rather a mother/military commander “who coerces her children to fight for what is rightfully theirs.”¹³⁷⁶ A structural analysis of the stanza containing this epithet with its prior stanza closely resembles a father-mother parallelism, whereby:

There is an equation between the activity of Yahweh and that of Deborah. The power of Yahweh, mythically described in the theophany, is historically revealed in the actions of an individual, specifically a woman.¹³⁷⁷

The concept of Deborah as a mother is reinforced by the author with the creation of a competition paradigm between her and the mother of Sisera in a binary setting of good

¹³⁷⁰ חַיָּה בְּעִגְלָתִי. Jg. 14:18.

¹³⁷¹ Bal, *Death & Dissymmetry*, 78-79.

¹³⁷² Exum, “Feminist Criticism,” 80.

¹³⁷³ Jg. 5:7.

¹³⁷⁴ Ackerman, 30.

¹³⁷⁵ Jg. 5:7; and 2 Sam. 20:19.

¹³⁷⁶ Fewell and Gunn, 403.

¹³⁷⁷ Coogan, 154.

versus evil.¹³⁷⁸ For Exum, this epithet highlights her role as an agent of judgment, in that she “is one who brings liberation from oppression, provides protection, and ensures the well-being and security of her people.”¹³⁷⁹

The first mention of a mother within a nuclear family is not within the Israelite community, but of the oppressive Canaanite enemy. This is the mother of Sisera, whose name is not included in the text.¹³⁸⁰ She is described as anxiously waiting along with her companions for the victorious return of her son with the spoils of victory. The effect of Sisera’s death upon his mother is not included in the narrative, for the function is to show the deliverance YHWH provided. Nonetheless, the painfulness of war and rebellion against YHWH is evident in its “lust for glory and victory [that] leaves a vulnerable world alone, grieving and unprotected—mothers without sons, wives without husbands, children without fathers.”¹³⁸¹

The function of the author highlighting this third woman in the story may have even greater significance if Sisera’s mother is not only his mother, but also the queen mother. There are several clues in the text that point to this royal position. Jabin is identified as the King of Canaan.¹³⁸² However, the commander Sisera should be seen as a king because of the plural use of “the kings of Canaan.”¹³⁸³ The song of Deborah could be making a posthumous remark about Sisera, including him in the kings commanded to listen.¹³⁸⁴ The song indicates that Sisera was a leader in the coalition of Canaanite kings opposing Israel.¹³⁸⁵ A textual emendation in Jg. 5:30 removes the confusion of the translation and identifies his mother with the term queen.¹³⁸⁶ As queen mother, she would have functioned as a regent in Sisera’s absence and this is demonstrated by her “looking out of the window” waiting for his return.¹³⁸⁷ The implication is that she “stands in a

¹³⁷⁸ F. van Dijk-Hemmes, “Mothers and a Mediator in the Song of Deborah,” *A Feminist Companion to Judges*, (Ed.) A. Brenner, (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 112.

¹³⁷⁹ J.C. Exum, “‘Mother in Israel’: A Familiar Figure Reconsidered,” *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, (Ed.) L.M. Russell (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1985), 85.

¹³⁸⁰ Jg. 5:28.

¹³⁸¹ Fewell and Gunn, 407.

¹³⁸² Jg. 4:2, 23, and 24.

¹³⁸³ Jg. 5:19.

¹³⁸⁴ Jg. 5:3.

¹³⁸⁵ Ackerman, 132.

¹³⁸⁶ See the section “Confusion of Letters,” in Appendix 1, “Listing of Textual Errors by Alteration,” page 699; and Appendix 4 “Translation of Emended Verses in Judges,” page 735.

¹³⁸⁷ Jg. 5:28.

religious continuum with Ugaritic and Israelite queen mothers, functioning like them as the human representative of the Canaanite mother goddess *Asherah*.”¹³⁸⁸ Although her name is absent from the text, Jewish legend identifies her as (*T^amak*) Themac.¹³⁸⁹

DAUGHTER

The third of the three primary familial designations for a woman is as a daughter to her parents. There are six examples of this function in the nuclear family, two of which are collective groups within Judges. There are five other collective groups of daughters mentioned. Yet, only two of these women serve this role to facilitate judgment.

As previously addressed, Achsah not only functioned as a wife to Othniel, but prior to that marriage, she was and remained the daughter of Caleb.¹³⁹⁰ As a daughter, she was given in marriage by her father. Later she received an extra parcel of land on cultivable soil with springs of water from her father, after she had made a request for it.¹³⁹¹ Her function as daughter enters the realm of the positive sector of the cyclical pattern of Judges, when the narrative is viewed allegorically.

Does Caleb represent God, Othniel Israel, Achsah the land? Isn't God's promise of the land conditioned upon a successful conquest? Or perhaps Othniel and Achsah represent the ideal Israel who was meant to be courageous, determined, and undaunted by the obstacles to which the real Israel fell prey.¹³⁹²

Ironically, the infamous mention of a daughter in the text is the nameless only child of Jephthah.¹³⁹³ The questions of how Jephthah's vow was fulfilled and of the virginity of his daughter are addressed separately.¹³⁹⁴ This unnamed daughter functioned within her domestic sphere of influence; yet, her sacrifice and the founding of an annual women's rite transcends her filial role such that she had “a decisive role in ancient

¹³⁸⁸ Ackerman, 135. For comparable texts involving other queens: (*'izebel*) אִיזְבֶּל Jezebel and (*Mikāl*) מִיכָל Michal, see 2 Kg. 9:30 and 2 Sam. 6:16.

¹³⁸⁹ *Aram*. אֲרָם. The Aramaic meaning is rendered as “hold fast.” *BDB*, 1069; and L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Bible* (Old Saybrook, CT: Konnecky & Konnecky, 1956), 522.

¹³⁹⁰ Jg. 1:11-15.

¹³⁹¹ L.R. Klein speaks of Achsah as a role model of propriety for women. She characterizes her by: 1) her resourcefulness, “provoking” her husband and then petitioning her father; 2) her sexuality as mandated within marriage and toward generation; 3) her respect towards an authoritative male figure, her father, “dropping down” before him when she makes a request of him; and 4) her acting through men rather than independently. See “A Spectrum of Female Characters in the Book of Judges,” *A Feminist Companion to Judges*, (Ed.) A. Brenner, (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 25.

¹³⁹² Fewell, “Deconstructive Criticism,” 140.

¹³⁹³ Jg. 11:34-40.

¹³⁹⁴ See the sections on “Vow” and “Jephthah Tradition,” pages 138-139.

Israelite cultic matters.”¹³⁹⁵ The narrative focuses upon Jephthah rather than upon his daughter, so little may be observed about her. Nevertheless, her loyalty and fidelity is demonstrated.

[She is] the supreme image of the perfect daughter, whose loyalty and submissiveness to her father knows no limits. She understands his predicament and the irrevocability of a vow once uttered to Yahweh. The text does not present her as the tragic obedient servant of Yahweh, but as the obedient daughter of her father.¹³⁹⁶

Because of her relationship to her father being a focal point in the narrative as a paragon of submission to paternal authority, the functional purpose of this daughter supercedes the loss of her life and her name in the text “because she is commemorated not for herself but as a daughter.”¹³⁹⁷

PÎLEGESĖ

The Hebraic term (*pîlegesĖ*) is used because concubine is not a good functional equivalent in English.¹³⁹⁸ This Hebrew loan word with its quadrilateral root is borrowed from the Philistine language.¹³⁹⁹ There are two instances in Judges where women function as a *pîlegesĖ*. The woman functions in the realm of a secondary wife.¹⁴⁰⁰ In the early Arabic culture, this type of marriage existed “in which the wife does not become the chattel or property of her husband, but is known as his *ṣadiqah*.”¹⁴⁰¹ Tribble makes a societal and gender distinction about the *pîlegesĖ*.

A concubine has an inferior status that places her beneath other females. Legally and socially, she is not the equivalent of a wife but is virtually a slave, secured by a man for his own purposes.¹⁴⁰²

In addition to Gideon’s many women (wives), his harem included an unnamed *pîlegesĖ* from Shechem.¹⁴⁰³ Her function was clearly for reproductive purposes and no

¹³⁹⁵ S. Ackerman, 109.

¹³⁹⁶ E. Fuchs, “Marginalization, Ambiguity, Silencing the Story of Jephthah’s Daughter,” *JFSR* 5 (1989), 41.

¹³⁹⁷ Exum, “On Judges 11,” *A Feminist Companion to Judges*, (Ed.) A. Brenner, (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 139.

¹³⁹⁸ פִּלְגֵשִׁתִּי. 2 Sam. 3:7; 5:13; 15:16; 16:21, 22; 19:6; 20:3; 21:11; 1 Kg. 11:3; 1 Chr. 2:46, 48; 3:9; and 2 Chr. 11:21.

¹³⁹⁹ C. Rabin, “The Origin of the Hebrew Word *PîlegesĖ*,” *JJS* 25 (1974), 360.

¹⁴⁰⁰ S. Ackerman, 236.

¹⁴⁰¹ صَدِيقَه. Modern Arabic has a similar use with this meaning of “female friend.” Burney, 265.

¹⁴⁰² P. Tribble, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (OBT 13: Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984), 66.

¹⁴⁰³ Jg. 8:31.

further comment is made other than she gave birth to Abimelech. Boling suggests that the naming formula of this son differs from the standard form in that this is a renaming of Abimelech by Gideon from whatever his mother may have called him.¹⁴⁰⁴

The other woman was the *pīlegeš* from Bethlehem-Judah.¹⁴⁰⁵ Immediately, philology betrays the text and intimates problems. The use of *pīlegeš* is problematic, as well as the repeated description of “young woman,” which sets up the story for this second-class wife to leave her husband.¹⁴⁰⁶ Another problem is the rendering of (*wattizneh*) “she played the harlot,” as in the KJV translation.¹⁴⁰⁷ The reading in the LXX^A is (*ōrgisthē autō*) “she was angry with him.”¹⁴⁰⁸ The emendation chosen removes the prostitution element because of scribal error and portrays the woman’s anger and rage with the Levite.¹⁴⁰⁹ Exum suggest an alternative reading that has elements of the two major positions, while the *pīlegeš*’ assertion of autonomy, a quasi female initiated divorce, is for the author tantamount to an act of harlotry.¹⁴¹⁰ For the author, the verb choice used to describe the response of the *pīlegeš* revealed “that she dared to leave her husband, a phenomenon which was frequently associated with immoral behavior” in the androcentric society.¹⁴¹¹ After being removed from her father’s house, the northward trek to the Levite’s home is mortally perilous. Her second class status is violated when her elderly Ephraimite host extends her availability for heterosexual rape to avoid xenophobic homosexual rape of his guest, the Levite. The woman is victimized by the gang rape of the Men of *Belial* in Gibeah and then left to die at the threshold of the host’s house. The status of the *pīlegeš* and also the Levite as recipients of hospitality (*sic*) is telling, insofar as “the literary tool of silencing the victim is at work.”¹⁴¹² The subsequent and superfluous dismemberment and dissemination of the dead *pīlegeš* serves an allegorical

¹⁴⁰⁴ The **ח** text reads (*wayyāšem ’et-šēmō*) אֶת־שְׁמוֹ “and he made his name” instead of the usual (*wayyiqra*) יִקְרָא “and he called.” Boling, *AB*, 162. See 2 Kg. 17:34; Neh. 9:7; and Dan. 1:7.

¹⁴⁰⁵ Jg. 19:1-30; and 20:4-6.

¹⁴⁰⁶ Jg. 19:3-6, and 8-9.

¹⁴⁰⁷ **ח** וַחֲזוּתָהּ. Jg. 19:2.

¹⁴⁰⁸ **Ⲅ** ὀργίσθη αὐτῷ. LXX quoted in Block, *NAC*, 523.

¹⁴⁰⁹ See the section “Confusion of Similar Words and Forms,” in Appendix 1, “Listing of Textual Errors in Judges by Alteration,” page 708; and Appendix 4, “Translation of Emended Verses in Judges,” page 744.

¹⁴¹⁰ Exum, “Feminist Criticism,” 84.

¹⁴¹¹ Y. Zakovitch, “The Woman’s Rights in the Biblical Law of Divorce,” *The Jewish Law Annual* 4 (1981), 39.

¹⁴¹² Jones-Warsaw, 177.

function of judgment revealing the spiritual death and fragmentation of premonarchic Israel in its rejection of *Torah* and ultimately of YHWH.

PROSTITUTE

Another of the functional roles that women fulfilled was as a (*zônāh*) “prostitute.”¹⁴¹³ There are three examples of this in Judges. The first is the mother of Jephthah by his father Gilead.¹⁴¹⁴ She remains nameless in the text. The half-brothers of Jephthah refer to her as a (*’iššāh ’aḥeret*) “strange woman.”¹⁴¹⁵ The function of a prostitute remains apparent; yet, in this narrative, she serves to create a bastard situation and the animosity between him and his kinsmen. This functional role is to be distinguished from other female roles because the financial independence associated with her sexual impropriety depicts her “as living outside the strictures of the patriarchal household.”¹⁴¹⁶

The traditional association of a prostitute has been Delilah. The text does mention a prostitute in Gaza with whom Samson had intercourse; however, it is a different woman.¹⁴¹⁷

The third example is of the Levite’s *pīlegeš*.¹⁴¹⁸ As addressed in the previous section, this portrayal of her as a prostitute is questionable.

LOVER/TEMPTRESS

This classification of Delilah is tenuous and is assigned because she does not fit into the other categories, despite the fact historical tradition has made her a harlot. If not in sexual action, the implication is she is “a whore at heart aware of the hero’s love for her and how his emotions may be manipulated to serve her greed and lust for power.”¹⁴¹⁹ The text does state that Samson loved this woman of (*Šōrēq*) Sorek.¹⁴²⁰ She is an antithesis to the other positive characterizations of women, in that her virtues were

¹⁴¹³ זונה **ו**.

¹⁴¹⁴ Jg. 11:1.

¹⁴¹⁵ אִשָּׁה אַחֶרֶת **ו**. Jg. 11:2.

¹⁴¹⁶ Ackerman, 227.

¹⁴¹⁷ Exum, “Feminist Criticism,” 80. Cf. Jg. 16:1.

¹⁴¹⁸ Jg. 19:1-2. See the preceding section “*Pīlegeš*,” pages 275-277.

¹⁴¹⁹ Vickery, 69.

¹⁴²⁰ שָׂרֵק **ו**. Jg. 16:4.

overcome with greed, deceit, and betrayal.¹⁴²¹ The sexual element of fornication is implied, although the text does not clearly substantiate it. The text does not provide any genealogical referent or familial tie with a patriarchal **בֵּית אָב**. This lack of information functions by showing this female protagonist as an independent entity who is not defined by male kinship.¹⁴²² Whereas the other three women are identified in anonymity by their functional roles, Delilah stands autonomous to male authority.¹⁴²³

MURDERER

The first reference of a female murderer is that of Jael, who also functions in other roles as mother and wife. The second reference is of the unnamed woman of Thebez.¹⁴²⁴ The Hebrew description of (*'iššāh 'aḥat*) “one woman” valorizes her single ability to destroy Abimelech.¹⁴²⁵ The regicide parallels that of Sisera, because in each situation the mortal wound was to the head, and that head belonged to a king.¹⁴²⁶ A second parallelism is the irony in the murder weapon. Just as a stone was used to murder the victims of Abimelech, a fitting retribution was the use of a stone to murder Abimelech.¹⁴²⁷ The woman of Thebez does not get the full credit for the homicidal act because before her single action could bring Abimelech to die, he calls upon his armor bearer to kill him and save him the historical embarrassment of dying at the hands of a woman.¹⁴²⁸ Even though her name is not mentioned, her activity of saving Thebez was not forgotten as paralleled with the death of (*'ūrîyāh*) Uriah the Hittite.¹⁴²⁹ The rhetoric of the story juxtaposes her as Abimelech’s nemesis and the parallelism with this anonymous solitary woman reveals a divine retribution of justice. Ackerman takes this story one step further by making comparisons between the woman and the manner of how the Canaanite warrior goddess

¹⁴²¹ Jg. 16:5-20.

¹⁴²² S. Ackerman, 231.

¹⁴²³ Ibid., 232.

¹⁴²⁴ Jg. 9:53.

¹⁴²⁵ אִשָּׁה אַחַת.

¹⁴²⁶ M. O'Connor, “The Women in the Book of Judges,” *HAR 10* (1986), 281.

¹⁴²⁷ Boogaart, 51. Jg. 9:5, and 53.

¹⁴²⁸ Jg. 9:54.

¹⁴²⁹ אִרְיָהּ. 2 Sam. 11:21.

Anat destroyed her male enemy *Mot* with a millstone.¹⁴³⁰ Even with the Ugaritic parallelism, the text ascribes the rendering of this judgment upon Abimelech to God.¹⁴³¹

COMPANIONS

Another group of unnamed women were the companions of Sisera's mother, who waited with her for the return of Sisera after the battle.¹⁴³² These companions are identified as (*ḥakmôt šārôṭeyhā*) "her wisest of princesses."¹⁴³³ The response of these wise women becomes a satirical device revealing their erroneous rapacious judgment. Filled with sexual irony, the womb that Sisera was to capture and penetrate is the one that captured and penetrated him.¹⁴³⁴ As antagonists to the story, these Canaanite companions function not in a sociological sense, but in a literary realm anticipating a mockery and fulfillment of the women's prophecy, even against themselves: "The Israelite army comes for its own plunder – a womb or two for every soldier."¹⁴³⁵

SUMMARY

The societal structure made little provision for the woman's autonomy and freedom from the hegemony of the father, brother, or husband.¹⁴³⁶ The primary roles of wife, mother, and daughter are designed for the perpetuity of the race. Of the functional roles present in the narrative, there were several that were not included by the author. These included the kinship roles of widow, grandmother, aunt, granddaughter, niece, and cousin. The singular reference of sister is in a Philistine context.¹⁴³⁷ A collective mention of three thousand men and women are included in the Samson short story as a sentence of death.¹⁴³⁸ The dysfunctional roles of *pîlegeš*, prostitute, and lover/mistress/temptress were aberrations of *Torah*. These were human methods of meeting human needs outside of the deity. During the premonarchic period, these dysfunctional roles were accepted as viable

¹⁴³⁰ Ackerman, 69-70; *KTU*, I.6.2.34, and I.6.5.15-16.

¹⁴³¹ Jg. 9:56-57.

¹⁴³² Jg. 5:29.

¹⁴³³ חַכְמוֹת שְׂרָוֹתַיָּהּ.

¹⁴³⁴ Bledstein, 41.

¹⁴³⁵ Fewell and Gunn, 408.

¹⁴³⁶ Ackerman, 225.

¹⁴³⁷ Jg. 15:2.

¹⁴³⁸ Jg. 16:27.

options within society. With the entrance of the hero figures as judges, oppression was removed, and peace was established. However, the author does not characterize any sweeping social reform that eradicates these societal dysfunctions.¹⁴³⁹ The question remains how thorough was the repentance that moved divinity to raise up a human deliverer.

Anonymity, although more frequently a deconstruction of the woman's role, "reflects a dehumanization of the individual in a Canaanized world."¹⁴⁴⁰ As a literary device, it "pronounces covert, albeit unmistakable, disapproval of those consigned to namelessness."¹⁴⁴¹ This loss of identity reveals disintegration of moral values and *Torah* responsibility individually and communally, since each man did what was right in his own eyes.¹⁴⁴²

In this patriarchal society, women derived their status based upon their male kinship roles to their father, their husband, and their sons. Female sexuality gave the woman social, economic, and military value by her reproductive function.¹⁴⁴³ Nevertheless, their functional success was dependent upon being taught and knowing the *Torah*.¹⁴⁴⁴

Moses recognized that men and women must hear and learn in order to practice and propagate the faith and culture. The book of Judges implies that the men who continued the tradition lacked Moses' understanding and failed to hear and learn this basic and profound precept.¹⁴⁴⁵

Conclusion

In order to examine the elements of divine judgment from a sociological viewpoint, four functions present in premonarchic Israel were chosen. This does not suggest that these were the only four functions nor does their order of inclusion equate a hierarchical value. The lines of demarcation are ambiguous as the A.N.E. society did not make the functional categories although they functioned within them.

¹⁴³⁹ One would expect that accompanying repentance, there would be some type of reform in the social structure and practice, as there was with King Josiah. 2 Kg. 23:4-30.

¹⁴⁴⁰ Block, *NAC*, 518.

¹⁴⁴¹ Brenner, "Introduction," 13.

¹⁴⁴² Jg. 21:25.

¹⁴⁴³ Jones-Warsaw, 173.

¹⁴⁴⁴ Dt. 31:12-13.

¹⁴⁴⁵ L.R. Klein, "The Book of Judges: Paradigm and Deviation in Images of Women," *A Feminist Companion to Judges*, (Ed.) A. Brenner, (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 70.

Issues such as birth and death were a part of the society and at times they served as the vehicle of divine judgment, as previously discussed. It is possible that these and other aspects of life, such as the role that religion played in marriage, succession of leadership, the execution of warfare, the tribal and pan-tribal oversight, inter- and intra-societal conflicts could also be discussed. However, a complete sociological analysis would make this research even more voluminous than it is. Where these societal elements become elements of judgment they are addressed elsewhere in the research.

One of the questions that remain is whether the concept of holy war within Israel was developed independently or it was part of the assimilation of other A.N.E. cultures. Other functional analyses could be made, such as the function of death/murder and political organization. To some degree the issue of death and murder pervades the narrative as well as this thesis throughout its pages; however, its sociological function as the result of divine judgment is not as great as its ethical and theological function in this examination.¹⁴⁴⁶ Likewise, the function of politics and government is more aptly addressed from a synchronic ideological perspective.¹⁴⁴⁷

Gottwald identifies a structural functionalism whereby the sociopolitical egalitarianism in the Israelite tribal confederacy is the overarching cultural entity and mono-Yahwism is a function of that tribalism.¹⁴⁴⁸ He further posits a reciprocal, and albeit more important awareness for the social viability of Israel.

[It] was dependably related to the innovative conceptual-institutional projection of Yahweh as the sole God of Israel, who motivates and sanctions the desired system of social relations by means of a cult with minimal command of political power and minimal consumption of communal wealth.¹⁴⁴⁹

This places Israel in the role of vassal with a functional dependence on her Sovereign. The variable factors in this cultic Yahwism are the covenantal activities of Israel which predicate the covenantal responses of YHWH in the form of judgment. For Gottwald, the sociological function of the cult community is exemplified when

Yahweh is the sole jealous *patron deity* working against divisiveness and waywardness in the ranks of his worshippers. In *Israel as a popular army*, Yahweh is *commander-in-chief*, 'a man of war,' arousing the faint-hearted and solidifying common military efforts. In *Israel as a customary and quasi-legal community*, Yahweh is *arbitrator and judge* pressing toward standardized practices in securing the integrity of the egalitarian

¹⁴⁴⁶ See the section on "Theological and Ethical Issues," pages 335-337.

¹⁴⁴⁷ For the anthropological discussion of political organization, see the section "Social Anthropology, pages 186-215.

¹⁴⁴⁸ Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 611.

¹⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 619.

community. In *Israel as a polity or realm of self-rule*, Yahweh is the ultimate and sole *sovereign*, the surrogate king, who guarantees the diffusion and decentralization of power within the several sovereign groups of the community.¹⁴⁵⁰

The varying hermeneutical models while examining the text and/or context of premonarchic Israel from a specific perspective need not be mutually exclusive. As with the approach of social-scientific criticism the links between the ancient Near East and the present provides the framework

Not only for integrating historical, archaeological, sociological, literary, and theological approaches as perspectival readings of texts, but also for raising ethical-political and religious-theological questions as constitutive of the interpretive process.¹⁴⁵¹

Thus, our investigation moves forward to integrate the historical meaning of YHWH's judgment.

¹⁴⁵⁰ Ibid., 615.

¹⁴⁵¹ F.S. Frick, "Sociological Criticism and Its Relation to Political and Social Hermeneutics: With a Special Look at Biblical Hermeneutics in South African Liberation Theology," *The Bible and The Politics of Exegesis: Essays in Honor of Norman K. Gottwald on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, (Eds.) D. Jobling, P.L. Day, and G.T. Sheppard. (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1991), 229.

Unanswered Questions in a Diachronic Perspective

Every hermeneutical approach has within its scope its own inherent limitations and exclusivity which either validates or invalidates its usage depending upon one's perspective. The traditional historical critical approaches thus far employed all fall short in that they leave little or no room for YHWH in history. Within the realm of social science criticism its sub-disciplines leave little room for the Hebrew bible texts. Yet, before the modern approach is explored which leaves little interest in historical concerns, there are some unanswered historical matters to pursue.

Historiography of Judges

The methodological approach of hermeneutics often is ideological in its focus to the exclusion of other related sub-disciplines. Whereas the burgeoning focus of biblical scholarship is directed toward a reading of the bible as literature, the diachronic multi-disciplinary approach of reading the bible as history should not be neglected provided objectivity is maintained. The historical analysis must by necessity involve the principle of analogy and utilize anthropological and sociological evidences so that

A proper definition of history would suggest that it consists neither of the totality of past people and events on the one hand, nor of what we contemporaries know (or think we know) about the past on the other, but of an ongoing conversation between the past and the present.¹⁴⁵²

The question at hand is which of the philosophical approaches to this historical study will be utilized. Certainly one of the fathers of history, Herodotus of Halicarnassus established the framework for writing with the cyclical view in the 5th Century BCE.¹⁴⁵³ The Medieval era historians adopted the providential view; whereas the philosophical approach was transformed to a progress view during the Renaissance.¹⁴⁵⁴ Each of these three approaches has validity in a religious historical discussion. This does not deny there

¹⁴⁵² J.M. Miller, "Reading the Bible Historically: The Historian's Approach," *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and their Application*, (Eds.) S.L. McKenzie and S.R. Haynes, rev. and exp. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 18.

¹⁴⁵³ For a detailed discussion on the history of the historians, specifically focusing on the Greek and Roman philosophers and their impact on later historians, see G.G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1997); and M.T. Gilderhus, *History and Historians: A Historiographical Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1992), 14-19. Gilderhus provides a substantial bibliography in each of his chapters.

¹⁴⁵⁴ D.V. Gawronski, *History Meaning and Method*, rev. ed. (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1969), 20-25.

are ideological, cultural, geographical, and socio-economic approaches.¹⁴⁵⁵ However, this historiography will synthesize the three main philosophical methodologies while examining history based on a literary motif. Based on the current form we have received of the book of Judges, our interest is not on rewriting a history of the premonarchic period; but examining the selected history presented by interpreting what has been written in the text. This historiography will be refined further by limiting it to the realm of judgment.

Bible as History

The primary evidence for this historiography is the text of Judges, which is selective in its treatment of history and may be considered as a "theocratic history."¹⁴⁵⁶ Yet, other evidences of external criticism are available which include archaeology, iconography, and epigraphy. As these were addressed in the previous section on Social Scientific criticism, they will only be reintroduced where necessary. The diplomatics endeavor in the field of paleography does not apply as an external source, because there are no known extant documents. Other areas for possible historical evidence may be found in heraldry, genealogy, numismatics, and chronology.¹⁴⁵⁷ The study of heraldry and numismatics are not applicable to the premonarchic period, whereas genealogy and chronology are addressed later.

The bible is not a history of Israel and neither is the book of Judges a history of the premonarchic period of the judges; rather, its accounts are historical in nature. Simply because the author and redactor were not writing a history of ancient Israel does not necessitate the need for an extreme ahistorical position of modern scholarship. A balanced scholarly approach concedes

¹⁴⁵⁵ Although not applicable to this discussion, the general principles of historiography and the pitfalls of the historians are examined in relation to histories written about India in several recent articles. See K.N. Panikkar, "Alternative Historiographies: Changing Paradigms of Power," *Jeevadhara* 32 (2002), 5-14; A.K. Giri, "Contemporary Challenges to the Idea of History," *Jeevadhara* 32 (2002), 15-31; S. Mohan, "Theorising History in the Context of Social Movements," *Jeevadhara* 32 (2002), 32-43; J. Arun, "Ethnographic Construction of Historiography: A Case Study of Dalits in Kancheepuram District," *Jeevadhara* 32 (2002), 44-59; and F. Wilfred, "Whose Nation? Whose History?" *Jeevadhara* 32 (2002), 60-80.

¹⁴⁵⁶ W.G. Dever, "Unresolved Issues in the Early History of Israel: Toward a Synthesis of Archaeological and Textual Reconstructions," *The Bible and the Politics of Exegesis: Essays in Honor of Norman K. Gottwald on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, (Eds.) D. Jobling, P.L. Day, and G.T. Sheppard (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1991), 196. Dever further classifies the historical reconstruction of the text as elitist in perspective and in its final redaction propagandist in nature.

¹⁴⁵⁷ For a discussion on how these external elements may be used in history writing, see R.J. Shafer, *A Guide to Historical Method* (Homewood, IL: The Dorsey Press, 1969), 116-120.

On the one hand, they proceed with confidence that the Bible preserves authentic historical memory. On the other hand, they recognize that the Bible is not a monolithic document, that its different voices reflect different perceptions of ancient Israel's history, that these perceptions usually are heavily influenced by theological and nationalistic interests, and that some of the biblical materials were not intended to be read as literal history in the first place. The historian's task, therefore, is to separate the authentic historical memory from its highly theological and often legendary context.¹⁴⁵⁸

From this definition, a balanced historical approach would first delineate that which is historical in the narrative and that which is not.¹⁴⁵⁹ As a result, modern conservative scholarship abandons the amphictyonic organization theory and dispenses with the question of the four-fold theories of Israel's emergence into Canaan in favor of a literal reading of the narrative dating the conquest at the end of the fifteenth century BCE.¹⁴⁶⁰ The opposing view, apart from epigraphic, iconographic, and archaeological finds, places the exilic and post-exilic eras as the basis for an Israelite history beginning at the ninth century BCE.¹⁴⁶¹ With the perspective of Polzin, the Judges narrative is part of the fulfillment of the reported speech section in the Deuteronomistic History, whereby "the central authority figure of the history is God and consequently, the prophets [judges] of God within the narrative who are described as reporting his words."¹⁴⁶²

Non-Historical Material

Admittedly, to classify the biblical material as either historical or non-historical is a daunting task which may cause some to question the veracity of the text if it is considered non-historical. To make this distinction does not negate the narrative; but

¹⁴⁵⁸ Miller, "Reading the Bible Historically," 22.

¹⁴⁵⁹ The histories which have been written are impacted by the critical schools within which these historians wrote. The documentary-hypothesis theory of the late 19th century was the *raison d'être* for J. Wellhausen's *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels*. In the mid 20th century, tradition history is the vehicle for Noth's *Geschichte Israels* whereas archaeology is the central focus in Bright's *A History of Israel*. The sociological aspect was the unifying aspect of Gottwald's *The Tribes of Yahweh*. Within the last twenty five years, the histories written have been forced to take into account sociological and anthropological findings often including studies in epigraphy and iconography, as well as archaeology. Yet, the cultural milieu of the modern biblical criticism is distinctly literary in its nature. Cf. Polzin's *Moses and the Deuteronomist*, the anthologies of J.H. Hayes and J.M. Miller in *Israelite and Judaeon History*, and A.R. Millard, *et.al.* in *Faith, Tradition, and History*.

¹⁴⁶⁰ J.J. Bimson, *Redating the Exodus and Conquest* (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1978), 35-237; and D.V. Edelman, (Ed.), *The Fabric of History: Text, Artifact, and Israel's Past* (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1991), 26-92.

¹⁴⁶¹ J. van Seters, *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), 209-354.

¹⁴⁶² Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist*, 21-22. He makes this statement based on an understanding that the redacted text of the Deuteronomistic Historian employs speech that is attributed to the narrator and that which is attributed to the individuals who form part of his history.

rather acknowledges other dimensions which are incorporated to accomplish the redactor's purpose and provide a unified corpus that is consistent with his theme.

As with many of these sub-disciplines, there are places where they overlap. In this instance it is with form criticism, which was dealt with earlier in this chapter. Nevertheless, where our earlier focus was upon genre identification, this section examines the legends and myths associated with Judges and their relevance to the divine judging motif. Traditionally, the non-historical literary modes have been legend, myth, and *märchen*. The work of form critic Sigmund Mowinckel provides the classification system used to delineate these legends.¹⁴⁶³ Because the line of demarcation between legend, myth, and *märchen* as well as historical narrative is unclear, genre assignment can be difficult. The model of German theologian H. Gressmann suggests "the primeval time was represented by myth, the older periods by legends, and recent events by historical narrative."¹⁴⁶⁴

LEGEND

The term legend is betrayed (*sic*) in popular English usage as that which is inauthentic and fiction because of how it was translated from the Latin *legenda*. Rather, its usage in literary criticism describes a story with elements of the fantastic, which are differentiated from the miraculous which pertains to the myth. The Hebraic term for the legend is (*haggādāh*) or the "retelling."¹⁴⁶⁵ The question that remains unanswered is whether the legends were derived from the Scripture or vice versa.¹⁴⁶⁶ Louis Ginzberg has collected an anthology of Jewish legends as they relate to the biblical stories. His work is utilized in examining these legends.

ETIOLOGICAL LEGENDS. The legends which have an etiological origin may be classified in four different categories: 1) natural phenomena; 2) persons or place names; 3) cult objects, practices, and places; and 4) culture heroes.¹⁴⁶⁷ The use of an etiology

¹⁴⁶³ S. Mowinckel, *The Old Testament as Word of God*. (Tran.) R.B. Bjornard (Oxford, England: Basil Blackwell, 1960), 86-106.

¹⁴⁶⁴ van Seters, 212. His assessment is based on Gressmann's *Mose und seine Zeit*, *FRLANT 1* (1913).

¹⁴⁶⁵ חַגְגָּדָה. *EHED*, 50.

¹⁴⁶⁶ Ginzberg, xiii.

¹⁴⁶⁷ R.N. Soulen and R.K. Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, 3rd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 101.

explains “present conditions by a past event, [therefore] they may be said to reflect ‘historical thinking.’”¹⁴⁶⁸

NATURAL PHENOMENON. The only thing that could be remotely described as a natural phenomenon in the Judges narrative would be the Kishon River and its flooding that aided Israel in battle against the army of Sisera. As it is a *wadi*, this phenomenon occurs almost instantaneously and miraculously with a heavy downpour of rain.¹⁴⁶⁹ Even though the Kishon was an instrument of judgment, its name does not correspond with a proper etiology of the action surrounding it.

PERSONS OR PLACE NAMES. There are eight instances of etiology in this category. All of these except one are place name etiologies. The first etiological place name is (*Hormāh*) Hormah.¹⁴⁷⁰ The conquest narrative identifies this etiology through paronomasia. The utter destruction of (*Ṣ²pat*) Zephath by Judah and Simeon resulted in this literary name change, reflecting the type of judgment executed in the recalling of its name.¹⁴⁷¹

The second location is Bochim. It is associated with the weeping of the people at the rebuke from the angel of YHWH.¹⁴⁷² Bochim, literally “weepers,” is likely to be a pseudonym for Bethel, due to the sacrifice motif.¹⁴⁷³ Using the same rationale, Moore associates it with Shiloh.¹⁴⁷⁴ The prophetic judgment by the divine messenger reflects one of the cyclical elements of judgment through oppression, whereas the Israelite response of weeping and sacrifice implies the cyclical element of repentance.

The only occurrence of an etiological personal reference is in the renaming of Gideon to Jerubbaal by his father.¹⁴⁷⁵ Gideon’s action of the razing of the altar of *Baal* and the *Asherah* did not constitute his renaming. Rather it was Joash’s response to the idolaters partially to protect his son and also to show the impotence of *Baal* that the

¹⁴⁶⁸ van Seters, 213. Another scheme involves the seven categories of etymological, ethnic, cultic, nature, political, legal, and sociological etiologies. Childs, “A Study of the Formula, ‘Until This Day,’” 284-290.

¹⁴⁶⁹ Jg. 5:21. See the section on “Meteorological Activity,” pages 298-299.

¹⁴⁷⁰ חֲרֻמָּה, meaning “devoted to destruction.” Jg. 1:17. *BDB*, 356.

¹⁴⁷¹ מִצְפָּת, meaning “watchtower.” See *SECB-HCD*, 101.

¹⁴⁷² Jg. 2:1-5. See the section on “Genre classification,” pages 116-117; and footnote 316.

¹⁴⁷³ Block, *NAC*, 112.

¹⁴⁷⁴ Moore, *Judges*, 58.

¹⁴⁷⁵ Jg. 6:28-32. See the section on Genre classification, page 117; and footnote 320.

renaming occurred. The etiological legend with the mythic elements of Gideon is the basis for the cyclical stage of deliverance against the Midianites.

A toponymic etiological note is connected to Jair, the Gileadite. The text states that he had thirty cities in the land of Gilead. This regional association was called (*Hawwōt Yā'ir*) Havvoth-jair.¹⁴⁷⁶

The next instance is the legend that ascribes to Samson the first victory over the Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey, while on his journey to Lehi. The legend says this was the same animal that Abraham journeyed with to (*Hār Mōrîyāh*) Mount Moriah.¹⁴⁷⁷ The legend and the biblical narrative diverge at this point, because the biblical account said it was a fresh jawbone.¹⁴⁷⁸ The naming of Ramath-Lehi is derived from the activity of Samson's deliverance of Israel from the Philistines.¹⁴⁷⁹

The biblical narrative concentrates on Samson's thirst being the crux of the story in which a spring was created in En-hakkore to satiate his apparently mortal thirst.¹⁴⁸⁰ The legend is more miraculous than natural, as "water began to flow from his own mouth as from a spring."¹⁴⁸¹ Nonetheless, the etiological designation stems from this miraculous event of a spring flowing after Samson had called out to YHWH in thirst.¹⁴⁸²

The next place etiology is (*Maḥ^anēh-Dān*) Mahaneh-dan.¹⁴⁸³ As part of the northern migration of the tribe of Dan, the six hundred warriors set out from their tribal allotment of Zorah and Eshtaol and encamped behind (*Qiryat-Y^o'ārîm*) Kirjath-jearim in the tribal area of Judah.¹⁴⁸⁴ In their encampment before moving northward, the place was named Mahaneh-dan. This could also be a subtle paronomasia meaning "the camp of judgment."

¹⁴⁷⁶ חַוּוֹת יָאִיר. Jg. 10:4.

¹⁴⁷⁷ הָר מוֹרִיָּה. Literally, the text of Gen. 22:2 refers to one of the mountains in the land of Moriah, without specifying it as Mount Moriah. There is a similar construct in Gen. 8:4 involving the mountains of Ararat, rather than identifying the resting place of the ark as Mount Ararat, according to tradition. Ginzberg, 523.

¹⁴⁷⁸ Jg. 15:15.

¹⁴⁷⁹ See the section on Genre classification, page 117; and footnote 322.

¹⁴⁸⁰ Jg. 15:18-19.

¹⁴⁸¹ Ginzberg, 523.

¹⁴⁸² See the section on Genre classification, page 117; and footnote 323.

¹⁴⁸³ מַחֲנֵה דָן, meaning "the camp of Dan." Jg. 18:11-12. BDB, 334.

¹⁴⁸⁴ קִרְיַת יְעָרִים, meaning "the village of the woods (or forest)." BDB, 420. Josh. 19:40-48 for the tribal allotment of Dan.

The final toponymic etiology is a reference to the rebuilding and renaming of (*Layiš*) Laish to Dan.¹⁴⁸⁵ As part of their continued conquest northward for tribal land, Laish was conquered and burnt with fire. The rebuilding and establishing of the new city of Dan was in honor of their tribal patriarch.

CULT OBJECTS, PRACTICES, AND PLACES. There are five etiological legends that fall under the category of cult objects, practices and places. The first of these is the singular reference of the palm tree of Deborah.¹⁴⁸⁶ There are only two biblical references where trees have been named.¹⁴⁸⁷ It is remarkable that in both instances it was in connection with a woman named Deborah.¹⁴⁸⁸ Yet, the distinction of this location where oracles were sought is that its appellation is attributed to the judge.

The Gideon narrative is replete with etiological legend. The next example is the penultimate event of this saga.¹⁴⁸⁹ From the victory that delivered Israel from the oppression of the Midianites ultimately its spoils became a snare to Gideon and his household. As payment for services rendered, Gideon requested only a golden earring from each of the soldiers. This amounted to 1700 shekels of gold which was melted down and fashioned into an ephod.¹⁴⁹⁰ The ephod was placed in Ophrah and became an idolatrous object for Israel, contributing toward their apostasy.

The vow of Jephthah and the unfortunate circumstances to which his daughter was subjected was the basis for a new cult practice.¹⁴⁹¹ Heretofore, the four day annual commemoration of Jephthah's daughter is not explicitly mentioned elsewhere in the biblical text. Nor are we aware of the details or rituals connected with this celebration. As earlier mentioned, the Greek legend of *Iphigenia* is the closest parallel; however, if a late date post-exilic redaction of the text is considered, it may still possibly precede the Greek counterpart, making the Hebrew legend older.¹⁴⁹² Another possibility rests with it

¹⁴⁸⁵ לַיִשׁ, meaning "lion." Jg. 18:27-29. BDB, 539. This place location has a possible emendation reflecting a meaning of "crushing." See Appendix 4, footnote 75, page 743.

¹⁴⁸⁶ Jg. 4:5.

¹⁴⁸⁷ The other reference is Gen. 35:8 and Deborah at Allon-bacuth. See the section on "Genre classification," pages 116-117; and footnote 315.

¹⁴⁸⁸ Schneider, 69.

¹⁴⁸⁹ Jg. 8:24-27.

¹⁴⁹⁰ The weight of the shekel has been established as 11.33 grams, which is equivalent to 0.4046 ounces. Thus, the total weight in gold would have been 687.82 ounces (42.99 pounds). See Y. Ronen, "The Enigma of the Shekel Weights of the Judean Kingdom," *BA* 59 (1996), 123.

¹⁴⁹¹ Jg. 11:34-40.

¹⁴⁹² See the section on "Jephthah Tradition," pages 138-139.

being obsolete Canaanite “cult-mythical material which by Israelite appropriation has been ‘historified’ and changed into an ethical-national direction.”¹⁴⁹³

The Micah pericopes explain the origination of cult objects used in both a personal and tribal context.¹⁴⁹⁴ In an effort to protect himself from his mother’s curse against the theft of her silver, Micah restored the stolen silver pieces to her.¹⁴⁹⁵ Although he made restitution because of fear of the curse, his sin is compounded by his mother’s dedication of the silver to YHWH to be used as an idolatrous graven and molten image. The making of these objects forms the basis for the household shrine which contained these images, *teraphim*, and an ephod. An unnamed son of Micah was consecrated as the priest of this cult location. Later, a Levite was hired to officiate over this shrine, until such time as he was kidnapped and the cult objects were stolen by the migrating Danites. This shrine was reestablished in the new city of Dan by the priest Jonathan and his descendants.

The remaining cult objects in the Judges narrative are not proper etiological references. Nonetheless, the text refers to the Mosaic tabernacle at Shiloh and the high priestly ministry of Phinehas before the Ark of the Covenant.¹⁴⁹⁶

CULTURE HEROES. The final category of etiological legends describes culture heroes who initiate or originate some thing, place, or activity. The only possible individual who might be considered as a culture hero would be the man from (*Lûz*) Luz who betrayed the city and revealed its entrance to the house of Judah.¹⁴⁹⁷ For his treasonous action, the lives of he and his family were spared. He immigrated to the land of the Hittites and built a city named Luz.

ETHNOLOGICAL LEGENDS. Within the Judges narrative there are no legends explaining the origin or characterizing traits of the nation, tribes, or cities.

HERO TALES. Those legends containing historical kernels compose the category of hero tales. There are seven instances of these tales. German theologians Gunkel and Gressmann identified these as *Heldensagen* or historical hero legends.

¹⁴⁹³ F.F. Hvidberg, *Weeping and Laughter in the Old Testament: A Study of Canaanite-Israelite Religion*, (Leiden, the Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1962), 103.

¹⁴⁹⁴ Jg. 17:1-5; 18:14-26, and 30-31.

¹⁴⁹⁵ Using the same formula as in the above footnote 1655, the total weight in silver stolen would have been 445.06 ounces (27.82 pounds). The weight of the silver used to make the graven image and molten image would have been 80.92 ounces (5.06 pounds).

¹⁴⁹⁶ Jg. 18:31; and 20:27-28.

¹⁴⁹⁷ *ח לז*, meaning “almond tree” or “depart.” Jg. 1:22-26.

OTHNIEL. The first judge mentioned in the narrative is Othniel, the son of Kenaz. Jewish legend clarifies that Othniel is an epithet, as was Jabez; whereas his real name was Judah.¹⁴⁹⁸ With that understanding, the conquest narrative of chapter one identifies him as an individual rather than a collective mention of one tribe.¹⁴⁹⁹ The legend valorizes him in regard to the *Torah*. He is said to have restored the seventeen hundred traditions of Moses that the people had forgotten. According to legend, the biblical request of Achsah for the extra land from her father Caleb was based on her complaint “that her husband’s house was bare of all earthly goods, and his only possession was knowledge of the *Torah*.”¹⁵⁰⁰

If Judah is another name for Othniel, then the biblical narrative corresponds with the legend attributing to him the victory over Adoni-bezek.¹⁵⁰¹ There is disagreement in the narrative over the destruction of Luz. The text credits this to the house of Joseph; whereas the legend places this within the reign of Othniel, though not necessarily denying a pan-tribal involvement.¹⁵⁰² The legend explains the secret entrance to Luz was by a hollow almond tree that led to a cave.¹⁵⁰³

The other story about Othniel was about his war with Cushan-Rishathaim. The Judges passage places this as the starting point of the forty year rule of Othniel and pictures him as a deliverer.¹⁵⁰⁴ The legend places the eight year occupation within the forty year period, but does not cast disparaging comments against Othniel, but commends him with being granted eternal life.¹⁵⁰⁵ The historical basis for this victory being in the context of the period of the judges is speculative as “it belongs in the context of the settlement of Judaeen clans in the land.”¹⁵⁰⁶ The inclusion of this narrative is important for Judah, so that a deliverer emerges at the onset of this paradigm.¹⁵⁰⁷

¹⁴⁹⁸ Ginzberg, 516.

¹⁴⁹⁹ Jg. 1:2-10, and 17-19.

¹⁵⁰⁰ Jg. 1:15. Ginzberg, 516.

¹⁵⁰¹ Jg. 1:4-7.

¹⁵⁰² Jg. 1:22-26.

¹⁵⁰³ This would be based on a paronomasia to the name Luz. See the earlier footnote 1497, on page 290. Ginzberg, 517.

¹⁵⁰⁴ Jg. 3:11.

¹⁵⁰⁵ Ginzberg, 517.

¹⁵⁰⁶ Mayes, “The Period of the Judges and the Rise of the Monarchy,” 311.

¹⁵⁰⁷ J.L. McKenzie, *The World of the Judges* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967), 121-122.

EHUD. The pericope of Ehud's deliverance is set against the backdrop of a Moabite oppression.¹⁵⁰⁸ The story itself is a theological crafting by the Deuteronomist so that the elements of apostasy, oppression, repentance, and deliverance are so interwoven with the political background "that it is difficult to extract an original literary stratum."¹⁵⁰⁹ The narrative suggests a trilateral confederacy between Moab, Ammon, and Amalek and the occupation of the city of palms, presumably Jericho. In that Ehud presented tribute to Eglon at his summer parlor near Gilgal and there is no mention of a crossing of the Jordan River, it may suggest "a strong foreign presence west of the Jordan."¹⁵¹⁰ This presence would have involved approximately ten thousand men in the Benjaminite area, as this was the number of Moabites killed in the joint action of the tribes of Benjamin and Ephraim under the leadership of Ehud.

DEBORAH. The next hero tale emerges because no one was found able to take the place of Ehud following his death. The legend states, with the apostasy of society an angel was sent by God saying:

Out of all the nations on earth, I chose a people for Myself, and I thought, so long as the world stands, My glory will rest upon them. I sent Moses unto them, My servant, to teach them goodness and righteousness. But they strayed from My ways. And now I will arouse their enemies against them, to rule over them, and they will cry out: "Because we forsook the ways of our fathers, hath this come over us." Then I will send a woman unto them, and she will shine for them as a light for forty years.¹⁵¹¹

The legend vilifies Barak as her ignoramus husband. The text identifies Deborah as the wife of Lappidoth.¹⁵¹² The legend explains that this is an epithet of Barak, who "in order to do something meritorious in connection with the Divine service, he carried candles at his wife's instance, to the sanctuary."¹⁵¹³

This theme of lights is important because in the legend Deborah made the candle wicks thick so they would burn long. God distinguished her because of this extra demonstration of light and made her a prophetess and a judge. In order to be above reproach, her ministry of judgment was moved outside under the tree "for it was not becoming that men should visit a woman in her house."¹⁵¹⁴ The legend states that

¹⁵⁰⁸ Jg. 3:12-30.

¹⁵⁰⁹ van Seters, 344.

¹⁵¹⁰ Mayes, "The Period of the Judges and the Rise of the Monarchy," 311-312.

¹⁵¹¹ Ginzberg, 520.

¹⁵¹² Jg. 4:4.

¹⁵¹³ Ibid., 520.

¹⁵¹⁴ Ibid.

following a corporate fast of seven days and public repentance of sin by Israel, she was raised up as a judge.

JAEL. The resourceful heroine Jael allures her prey into her tent, which already had been seductively prepared with a bed strewn with roses. The legend clothes her in a rich array of garments and jewels. She is described as unusually beautiful with the most seductive voice any woman has possessed.¹⁵¹⁵ The biblical narrative is silent about these areas.¹⁵¹⁶ The legend includes the immediate scene of Sisera's thirst.

He asked her for milk to drink, saying: "My soul burns with the flame which I saw in the stars contending for Israel." Jael went forth to milk her goat, meantime supplicating God to grant her His help: "I pray to Thee, O Lord, to strengthen Thy maid-servant against the enemy. By this token shall I know that Thou wilt aid me—if, when I enter the house, Sisera will awaken and ask for water to drink." Scarcely had Jael crossed the threshold when Sisera awakened and begged for water to quench his burning thirst. Jael gave him wine mixed with water, which caused him to drop into a sound sleep again.¹⁵¹⁷

This sign prompted Jael to request another sign about his sleeping which was answered before the wooden spike entered his temple. Sisera's last conscious words at his deathbed were "O that I should lose my life by the hand of a woman!"¹⁵¹⁸ To this Jael responded in mockery: "Descend to hell and join thy fathers, and tell them thou didst fall by the hand of a woman."¹⁵¹⁹ This deathbed conversation is not mentioned in the biblical text. The double use of two similar and successive signs in this legend may parallel with the Gideon story and his use of the fleece as a sign.

GIDEON. The Gideon hero tale is composed of many etiologies, mythical elements, the call narrative, his deliverance, and progeny.¹⁵²⁰ In his deliverance of Israel from Midianite oppression his warriors killed two of their princes, Oreb and Zeeb. The narrative states they were decapitated and their heads were brought to Gideon.¹⁵²¹ Because of the difficulty associated with transporting dead corpses to prove that someone had indeed been killed, for convenience sake the A.N.E. practice involved either cutting off the head or palm of the victim's arm. This type of identification process was used in

¹⁵¹⁵ Ibid., 521.

¹⁵¹⁶ Jg. 4:18.

¹⁵¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵¹⁸ Ibid., 522.

¹⁵¹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵²⁰ Jg. 6-8. These etiologies and myths are addressed in their respective sections.

¹⁵²¹ Jg. 7:25.

Ugarit, Mesopotamia, and Egypt.¹⁵²² It is significant that the text uses the word (*h^akap*) “palm” in the way that Ugaritic tablets use the word “palms” to commemorate *Anat*’s victory.¹⁵²³ The use of “palm” in the Hebrew text connotes defeat in battle; whereas the use of (*yād*) “hand” is attributable to the hand of the victor.¹⁵²⁴ The remaining two Midianite kings, Zebah and Zalmunna were killed subsequently by Gideon, after proving his capture of them to the men of Succoth and Penuel.¹⁵²⁵ Prior to their deaths, it was presumed by the men of Succoth and Penuel that the capture of these men would be verified by their dismembered hands; rather than as live captives.¹⁵²⁶

JEPHTHAH. The encounter of Jephthah and his negotiations with the Ammonites may be inspired by the defiance of Moab toward Moses.¹⁵²⁷ The possibility exists that the legend may have mutated and the Ammonites were confused with the Moabites.¹⁵²⁸ Literary critics have this position, because “the chief god of Moab, *Chemosh*, is here invoked (and not the Ammonite deity *Milcom*).”¹⁵²⁹ The first victory mentioned in this story would have pertained to Ammon and Gilead.¹⁵³⁰

SAMSON. The Samson short story is a collection of etiological and mythical events fused together as a composite to address the problem of Philistine oppression. The legendary accounts supplant the biblical narrative, with additional information. The superhuman strength of Samson was marked by the Spirit of God coming over him, and thus his hair would begin “to move and emit a bell-like sound, which could be heard far off.”¹⁵³¹ Despite his legendary strength and gigantic bodily size, the extrabiblical legend states he was maimed in both feet. Even so, he was able to uproot two great mountains and to make large strides of distance when the Spirit was upon him. As to his character, he was known for being unselfish and truthful. Nevertheless, his sensual pleasures

¹⁵²² C.H. Gordon and G.A. Rendsburg, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*, 4th ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997), 179, and 187. Other than amputation of the head or hands, the foreskins of the Philistines were produced as proof of their death to Saul (1 Sam. 18:25, and 27). The Libyans counted the phalli which had been amputated of their foes.

¹⁵²³ חַכָּם. Gordon and Rendsburg, 180; and *BDB*, 496-497.

¹⁵²⁴ יָד. *BDB*, 388-391.

¹⁵²⁵ Jg. 8:21.

¹⁵²⁶ Jg. 8:6, and 8.

¹⁵²⁷ Num. 21:10-25.

¹⁵²⁸ Burney, 299-302. Jg. 11:12-28.

¹⁵²⁹ Boling, *The Early Biblical Community in Transjordan*, 52.

¹⁵³⁰ Jg. 11:1-11.

¹⁵³¹ Ginzberg, 523.

dominated him such that “he who went astray after his eyes, lost his eyes.”¹⁵³² The Philistines sought the greater mastery over Samson in this blind state hoping for descendants of him with great stature and strength.¹⁵³³ However, the biblical text is silent about the matters of his imprisonment, other than his enslavement to grind grain.¹⁵³⁴ It should be noted that the “hair motif” present in the biblical account to which his strength is indirectly connected is a popular element within folklore.¹⁵³⁵

PROPER LEGENDS. There is some bit of fluidity in the distinction between hero tales and proper legends. Both are considered legendary; whereas the historicity and scriptural connection are more tenuous with the proper legends. There are four different examples of proper legends.

KENAZ. The opening verse of Judges introduces a query about engaging in a holy war with the Canaanites. Rather than provide the framework for the conquest annals that link the book with Joshua, Jewish legend identifies the first judge as Kenaz from the tribe of Caleb.¹⁵³⁶ This is a reference to the tribal patriarch Judah. The legend declares Kenaz had no male heir and thus departs from the biblical narrative, whereas Kenaz is described as the brother of Caleb and father of Othniel.¹⁵³⁷

The legend has points of similarity with other Judges narratives. In his initial conquest, Kenaz assembles an army of three hundred men to fight against the Amorites. Also, like Gideon, he asked for a sign.

Let this be the sign of the salvation Thou wilt accomplish for me this day: I shall draw my sword from its sheath, and brandish it so that it glitters in the camp of the Amorites. If the enemy recognize it as the sword of Kenaz, then I shall know Thou wilt deliver them into my hand; if not, I shall understand Thou has not granted my prayer, but dost purpose to deliver me into the hand of the enemy for my sins.¹⁵³⁸

¹⁵³² Ibid.

¹⁵³³ Ibid.

¹⁵³⁴ Jg. 15:21.

¹⁵³⁵ J.G. Frazer, *Folk-lore in the Old Testament: Studies in Comparative Religion, Legend, and Law* (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1923), 272-282. Frazer cites numerous legends from Europe and Asia that have parallels to Samson's superhuman strength connected to his uncut hair.

¹⁵³⁶ Ginzberg, 514.

¹⁵³⁷ Jg. 1:13.

¹⁵³⁸ Ibid.

And with that sign, the Amorites recognized him and engaged him in battle. The legend goes on to tell that the Spirit of YHWH came upon him and the 45,000 Amorites perished at his sword with the help of the angel Gabriel.¹⁵³⁹

Kenaz judged Israel for 57 years and was a contemporary of the two prophets Jabez and Phinehas, the son of (*'el'āzār*) Eleazar.¹⁵⁴⁰ Prior to his death, the Spirit of YHWH descended upon him and he beheld an eschatological vision describing a 7000 year earthly world followed by the Kingdom of Heaven. Whereas Kenaz became a judge by lot, he appointed Zebul to be his successor.¹⁵⁴¹

ZEBUL. The legend establishes Zebul as judge ruling for 25 years, who established a temple treasury at Shiloh that amounted to twenty talents of gold and 250 talents of silver. The significant elements of his leadership involved his admonition of the people to be God-fearing and *Torah* observant.¹⁵⁴² The biblical narrative does mention a Zebul, who served under Gideon/Jerubbaal; however this connection is tenuous to establish them to be one and the same.¹⁵⁴³

THEMAC. The mother of Sisera, according to legend was a sort of visionary. She had foreseen her son lying on the bed of a Jewish woman. However, her interpretative abilities were deficient, as she had expected him to return with Jewish captives and booty, based upon her oracle.¹⁵⁴⁴

IBZAN. Legend explains the lack of wisdom of this judge from Bethlehem. The biblical text provides little information about Ibzan, primarily highlighting the marriages of his children.¹⁵⁴⁵ As a contemporary to Samson's parents, Manoah and Zelalponit, Ibzan never invited them to any of his 120 wedding feasts, "because he thought that 'the

¹⁵³⁹ Ibid., 515. The Spirit of YHWH motif is discussed later in this section on page 346. The angel Gabriel is not found in the Judges narratives and is not identified until Dan. 8:16 and 9:21. However, the unnamed Angel of YHWH is a familiar character and is also discussed later in this section on pages 297-298. One of the points of divergence with Gideon is he fought with his 300 men; whereas, the 300 men of Kenaz fell asleep in the camp and he and the angel fought the enemy.

¹⁵⁴⁰ אֶלְעָזָר. Of these two men, the text cites Phinehas in Jg. 20:28. It is plausible that this could be the same Jabez of the tribe of Judah mentioned in 1 Chr. 4:9 placing him within the premonarchic era; however, because his genealogical record is absent no absolute chronology can be established. However, consistency with the other legends would equate Jabez with Othniel.

¹⁵⁴¹ Ibid., 516.

¹⁵⁴² Ibid.

¹⁵⁴³ Jg. 9:28ff. Although the similarity is present in Zebul following after Kenaz with the biblical Zebul serving under Gideon, based on the previous parallels, it is doubtful that this is the same individual.

¹⁵⁴⁴ Jg. 5:30. Ibid., 522. Also, note the earlier reference to her in footnote 1389, in the section on the "Function of Women," page 274.

¹⁵⁴⁵ Jg. 12:9.

sterile she-mule' would never be in a position to repay his courtesy."¹⁵⁴⁶ The legend shows him in a poor light, noting that all of his sixty children died in his lifetime; whereas, the son of Manoah and Zelalponit outlived them.¹⁵⁴⁷

MIRACULOUS/SUPERNATURAL

As fluid as the definition of legend has become, the defining reality of the term myth is even more ambiguous and in popular usage connotes fiction. Although this imaginative element provides the narrative with an epic form and experience within the cult, the usage of the term myth for classification will not be used. Rather, the miraculous or supernatural element will be highlighted in order to avoid the ambiguity and negative connotation of myth.

The contemporary approach of historiography is to explain or re-explain overt divine intervention in a biblical event within the confines of a natural expression for the given historical phenomenon rather than justify the supernatural event.¹⁵⁴⁸ The Judges narrative contains a number of these occurrences.

ANGEL OF YHWH. A theophany presents itself several times in the narrative with the phrase "the angel of the Lord."¹⁵⁴⁹ It alternatively may be re-explained and interpreted as the messenger of YHWH which diminishes the divine action. Yet, the pronouncement at Bochim by this character is theophanic in nature because of his own use of the first person singular pronoun reference to YHWH and the historic exodus event.¹⁵⁵⁰ The command to curse Meroz and its inhabitants may or may not have been a divine epithet.¹⁵⁵¹ The activity of this messenger is more involved in the Gideon pericope, with his appearance, conversation, sign, and disappearance.¹⁵⁵² The theophanic element

¹⁵⁴⁶ Ibid., 523. The reference of the sterile she-mule was toward Zelalponit. Ibzan only had 60 children; however, the 120 marriage feasts would have included two per marriage: one at the home of the bridegroom and the other at the home of the bride.

¹⁵⁴⁷ Jg. 16:31. Ibid., 523. Although this statement is not definitive, Samson was buried in his father's tomb; however, the text is silent about the death of his mother.

¹⁵⁴⁸ Miller, "Reading the Bible Historically," 18-19.

¹⁵⁴⁹ Jg. 2:1, 4; 5:23; 6:11, 12, 20, 21, 23; 13:3, 6, 9, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, and 21.

¹⁵⁵⁰ Jg. 2:1-5.

¹⁵⁵¹ Jg. 5:23.

¹⁵⁵² Jg. 6:11-22.

is present at three points.¹⁵⁵³ In a similar instance with the wife of Manoah, the angel of YHWH appeared, gave a prophetic birth announcement about Samson, and disappeared. This event was repeated with the addition of a miraculous disappearance in connection to an offering by fire. At first Manoah does not recognize the divine element and refers to the individual as (*'iš hā' lōhîm*) "the man of God."¹⁵⁵⁴ It has been suggested that the theophanic appearance also was accompanied by an impregnation of the woman with the superhuman (*hann²pilîm*) "Nephilim" abilities being the result.¹⁵⁵⁵

One question that remains unanswered is whether or not the angel of YHWH represented is a singular entity reappearing at these different times or this is a classification of angels represented by different messengers.

SPIRIT OF YHWH. With four of the judges (Othniel, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson) there is a recurring formulaic phrase that identifies (*wathî 'al-X rūaḥ YHWH*) "the Spirit of YHWH came upon X" prior to some activity of divine deliverance or empowerment.¹⁵⁵⁶ Whereas the phrase is only used once with the first three judges, it is used on four different occasions with Samson.

METEOROLOGICAL ACTIVITY. The epinicionic ode of Deborah poetically recounts supernatural elements in the Israelite victory against the Canaanites. The natural elements of (*hakôkâbîm*) "the stars" and the "Kishon River" possibly could be more than figurative language should there have been some cataclysmic action involving meteorites and a flooding river.¹⁵⁵⁷ Jewish legend describes this activity as God aiding Israel with all the fiery hosts of heaven and water.

When Sisera's troops sought relief from the scorching fire of the heavenly bodies in the coolness of the waters of the Kishon, God commanded the river to redeem its pledge.

¹⁵⁵³ Jg. 6:12, 14, and 21. The angel states, "YHWH is with you." This reference identifies Him as deity. The narrative intimates the angel is YHWH, with the command to deliver Israel. Finally, the disappearance of the angel in connection with the offering may be put forth as evidence.

¹⁵⁵⁴ אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים. Jg. 13:6, and 8. He is still referred to as a human by Manoah in verse 11.

¹⁵⁵⁵ הַנְּפִלִים. Note that this is the plural form, whereas the singular would be נָפֵל (*n²pil*) "fallen ones." BDB, 658. Gen. 6:4. M.Z. Brettler, *The Book of Judges* (London: Routledge, 2002), 44-49. There are similarities between this and the Noah pericope at the point of the cohabitation of divine beings, the birth of superhuman offspring and the connection between the name Noah and Manoah. Cf. Reinhartz, 25-37; S. Ackerman, 181-207; and R.S. Hendel, "Of Demigods and the Deluge: Toward and Interpretation of Genesis 6:1-4," *JBL* 106 (1987), 13-26.

¹⁵⁵⁶ וַתְּהִי עַל-X רוּחַ יְהוָה. Jg. 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19; and 15:14.

¹⁵⁵⁷ הַכּוֹכָבִים. Jg. 5:20-21.

And so the heathen were swept down into the Sea by the waves of the river Kishon, whereat the fishes in the Sea exclaimed: "And the truth of the Lord endureth forever."¹⁵⁵⁸

Historically, the Kishon River flooded in April 1799 in which many Arabs died in the battle of Tabor.¹⁵⁵⁹ The activity of the use of dew in the sign of the fleece and the ground in its converse applications contrasts two subsequent and different weather patterns in the phenomena to Gideon.¹⁵⁶⁰

NATURAL ELEMENTS. Two different natural elements are expressed in a supernatural way. The element of fire within the context of a sacrificial offering at an altar is present in the Gideon and Samson narratives along with the angel of YHWH who is connected to the manifestation. In the Gideon event, the offerings were placed upon a rock altar and once they were touched by the staff of the angel, fire sprang up from the rock consuming the offering and simultaneously the angel disappeared.¹⁵⁶¹ A similar occurrence is present in the Samson birth narrative with the difference being Manoah offering the young goat as a sign of hospitality at first which became a burnt offering and grain offering instead. Like the previous incident, the angel of YHWH disappeared, but this time ascending in the flame of the altar in a manner in which Manoah and his wife could observe.¹⁵⁶² Another similarity is the offering was made on the rock with no mention of a fire being kindled. Although it can not be definitively suggested that the angel also caused fire to spring forth out of the rock, the narrative does introduce additional information in that the angel performed wonders while the two watched.¹⁵⁶³ The other natural element that is mentioned in the book is YHWH splitting open a spring of water from the hollow place at Lehi following the prayer of Samson.¹⁵⁶⁴

SUPERNATURAL STRENGTH. The exploits of Samson are the hallmark of his deliverance activity of Israel from the Philistines. The narrative identifies the use of supernatural prowess and ability with his killing of the lion, the killing of thirty men in Ashkelon, the catching of three hundred foxes and tying them tail to tail with torches, the ruthless killing of the Philistines at the (*Sela* ' *êṭām*) "rock of Etam" breaking free from

¹⁵⁵⁸ Ginzberg, 521.

¹⁵⁵⁹ Halpern, *The First Historians*, 89.

¹⁵⁶⁰ Jg. 6:37-40.

¹⁵⁶¹ Jg. 6:21.

¹⁵⁶² Jg. 13:20.

¹⁵⁶³ Jg. 13:19.

¹⁵⁶⁴ Jg. 15:19.

being bound with two new ropes, the killing of one thousand men with the jawbone of a donkey, and the killing of over three thousand Philistines by pulling down the two pillars of the temple of *Dagon*.¹⁵⁶⁵ Although it is not explicit in the text, the slaughter of the 600 Philistines by Shamgar with an ox goad makes the supernatural element plausible.¹⁵⁶⁶

OTHER. There are three remaining items which cannot be classified in some grouping category. The first involves a Midianite having a dream about a loaf of barley bread, which was interpreted in the hearing of Gideon.¹⁵⁶⁷ The second was the fulfillment of the dream when YHWH set the sword of one Midianite against another throughout their army.¹⁵⁶⁸ The dream of itself is not supernatural, but a natural phenomenon most people experience; however, that the dream had immediate prophetic significance and fulfillment would move it out of the category of natural and into the realm of supernatural. The third incident was the sending of an "evil spirit" by God between Abimelech and the men of Shechem.¹⁵⁶⁹

MÄRCHEN

The literary genre of the folk tale does not appear within the narratives of Judges.

Historical Material

All of the historical material has its limitations because the Hebraic authors have written "their history in the light of their relationship to Yahweh, which meant writing it from the point of view of their own guilt and expiation."¹⁵⁷⁰ The external evidences of archeological and philological sciences have in many cases corroborated the text and verified the historical facts in the narrative. Yet, in a historiographical perspective certain theological filters are apparent.¹⁵⁷¹ For Gottwald it is socio-economics. For Noth it is his amphyctionic organization. For Bright it is archaeology. Should the

¹⁵⁶⁵ חִסְלֵעַ עִיטָּם. Jg. 14:5-6, 19; 15:4-5, 7-8, 14-17; 16:3, and 28-30.

¹⁵⁶⁶ Jg. 3:31.

¹⁵⁶⁷ Jg. 7:13.

¹⁵⁶⁸ Jg. 7:22.

¹⁵⁶⁹ Jg. 9:23.

¹⁵⁷⁰ W. Keller, *The Bible as History*, 2nd rev. ed., (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1981), 23.

¹⁵⁷¹ For a succinct review of the ideological filters of the primary 19th and 20th Century historians and their historiographies, see J.M. Sasson, "On Choosing Models for Recreating Israelite Pre-Monarchic History," *JSOT* 21 (1981), 3-24.

approach of history be the much debated question of Israel's entry and conquest of the land, its tribal confederation, the basis of the documentary hypothesis, or the post-exilic filters of the Deuteronomistic historians/redactors? Another methodological problem is whether the bible should prove history or that history should prove the bible. That problem is further elucidated in trying to find a common ground between literature and archaeology.

Archaeology is either forced by the literature-oriented historian to say things that archaeology cannot say, which seems to have been the basic attitude of the "Albright school" (and which has received its fair amount of criticism); or, archaeology is simply ignored by these historians, or at least most of its potential contribution to history, as was the case in the scholarly tradition inaugurated by Alt and Noth.¹⁵⁷²

For our purposes, we are examining the bible as a primary literary source for history which often has external scientific validation.¹⁵⁷³ A history is a retelling of the event by another, who often was not present, and who is expressing some specific theme. As previously addressed in the section on redaction criticism, the Deuteronomist used certain theological themes to unify the stories. In order to stay within the scope of this research, this historiographical approach examines the narratives of Judges from the perspective of why and how YHWH was testing Israel.¹⁵⁷⁴ Ultimately, theology cannot be removed from a causal analysis because it is an integral part of the paradigmatic structure and political tension.

THEOLOGY

Whether one wants to accept that the history of the premonarchic period was written as a polemic for the monarchy is not as crucial for Judges as it is to accept that this history which would include the conquest of Canaan cannot be divorced from the Patriarchal narratives. Of those, the calling of Abram and the Abrahamic Covenant form the basis for a Judges history.¹⁵⁷⁵ Traditional Jewish belief ascribes the fulfillment of covenantal blessing to its people, land, and *Torah*. This theological perspective

¹⁵⁷² E.A. Knauf, "From History to Interpretation," *The Fabric of History: Text, Artifact, and Israel's Past*, (Ed.) D.V. Edelman (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1991), 40. Knauf provides a list of resources that critically assesses both the Albrightian and Altian-Nothian approaches.

¹⁵⁷³ D.V. Edelman suggests that the task of the ancient Israelite historian begins with the text, moves to any extant extrabiblical texts deemed potentially relevant utilizing the methods available in literary criticism, and then the artifactual evidence. See her "Doing History in Biblical Studies," *The Fabric of History: Text, Artifact, and Israel's Past*, (Ed.) D.V. Edelman (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1991), 21-24.

¹⁵⁷⁴ Jg. 3:1-4.

¹⁵⁷⁵ Gen. 12:2-3; and 15:18-21.

acknowledges the full blessing of YHWH is only present when the people Israel, in obedience to *Torah* are dwelling (possessing) the land of Israel. For the Deuteronomist, the initial chapters of Judges addresses the problem of why Israel through Joshua was not able to drive out all the nations and through the subsequent chapters of Judges, he examines the implications of its answer.¹⁵⁷⁶

REASON FOR YHWH'S TEST. The central character in Judges is not the judges nor is it the oppressive nations; rather it is YHWH, the divine judge who used the oppressive nations to judge Israel. Likewise, the proponents of the book as a monarchal polemic fall short in seeing the failure of Israel based on the absence of a human king. The epilogue frequently records the absence of a king and supports the basis for the anarchy that occurred.¹⁵⁷⁷ Nevertheless, was the intent of YHWH that Israel be a monarchy with a human king or a theocracy with a divine king?¹⁵⁷⁸

The *Torah* had been given to Israel. The tribe of Levi had been singled out to teach and enforce *Torah*.¹⁵⁷⁹ Within the Levites, the clan of Kohath had been chosen with a priestly lineage to minister unto YHWH and represent Him before the people.¹⁵⁸⁰ Nonetheless, even with these cultic elements, the males had the physical reminder of their covenant with YHWH through circumcision.¹⁵⁸¹ Apparently, after the deaths of Moses and Joshua, these elements were not enough to keep Israel in fidelity with YHWH and His covenant.¹⁵⁸² What would return Israel to covenantal obedience?

The author reveals this covenantal disobedience had permeated all of the societal levels; yet in only one instance did Israel explicitly confess "we have sinned."¹⁵⁸³ At some points the text is general rather than specific in the sin. Yet, the author clearly restated the condition of Israel in seven different occasions that the nation "did evil in the sight of YHWH."¹⁵⁸⁴ There is no hierarchy of sins or textual designation of venial and mortal sins. If the Decalogue is taken as the foremost of the commandments, then the

¹⁵⁷⁶ Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist*, 148.

¹⁵⁷⁷ Jg. 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; and 21:25.

¹⁵⁷⁸ Dt. 17:14-20; and 1 Sam. 8:4-22.

¹⁵⁷⁹ Num. 3:5-13; and Dt. 18:1-5.

¹⁵⁸⁰ Lev. 8-9; Num. 3:27-32; 4:1-20; and 17:1-11.

¹⁵⁸¹ Gen. 17:10-14.

¹⁵⁸² Dt. 31:16-30; Josh. 23:1-16; and Jg. 2:6-13.

¹⁵⁸³ Jg. 10:15. There are other references that would imply that this confession was made in connection with other acts of contrition and repentance.

¹⁵⁸⁴ Jg. 2:11; 3:7, 12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; and 13:1.

internal evidence in Judges reveals violations of almost all of them. The Micah pericope is one of the most flagrant whereby eight of the Ten Commandments are violated.¹⁵⁸⁵

DECALOGUE VIOLATIONS. The first of the Ten Commandments is the most grievous sin, of having other gods besides YHWH.¹⁵⁸⁶ It was in this violation that Israel excelled above them all. In some instances, it was *Baal* who was worshipped and served.¹⁵⁸⁷ In others it included the gods of *Ashtaroth*, *Baal-Berith*, and gods of the people of Canaan, Aram, Sidon, Moab, Ammon, and the Philistines.¹⁵⁸⁸ Regardless of which foreign god was served, Israel “forsook YHWH.”¹⁵⁸⁹

The second commandment prohibited the making of idols and worshipping them.¹⁵⁹⁰ This command was violated several times in the text.¹⁵⁹¹ As a corollary to this, the commandment required Israel to love YHWH and keep His commandments.¹⁵⁹² The Judges narrative reveals Israel “turned aside from His commandments” and “transgressed the covenant.”¹⁵⁹³ Furthermore, they “did not listen to His voice” or “remember YHWH.”¹⁵⁹⁴ Transgression could be imputed in their failure to listen to the judges as failure to listen to YHWH, since they were His representatives.¹⁵⁹⁵

The third and fourth commandments about not taking the name of YHWH in vain or the observance of the Sabbath were not explicitly violated based on the internal evidence.¹⁵⁹⁶ However, the absence of any mention of the Sabbath may correspond to their failure to observe it properly. The fifth commandment centered on the honoring of parents.¹⁵⁹⁷ A dishonoring of the parents of the previous generation is evident in their

¹⁵⁸⁵ E.A. Mueller, *The Micah Story: A Morality Tale in the Book of Judges* (SBL 34: New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2001), 3. This of course is Mueller’s interpretation of the Decalogue, whereas the verifiable infractions may actually be less.

¹⁵⁸⁶ Ex. 20:3.

¹⁵⁸⁷ Jg. 2:11; 3:7; 6:25, 28, 30, 32; 8:33; 10:6, and 10.

¹⁵⁸⁸ Jg. 2:12, 13, 17, 19; 3:7; 8:33; 9:27; 10:6, and 16.

¹⁵⁸⁹ Jg. 2:12; 10:7, and 10.

¹⁵⁹⁰ Ex. 20:4-6.

¹⁵⁹¹ Jg. 8:27; 17:3-5; 18:14, 17-18, and 30-31.

¹⁵⁹² Ex. 20:6.

¹⁵⁹³ Jg. 2:17; and 20.

¹⁵⁹⁴ Jg. 6:10; and 8:34.

¹⁵⁹⁵ Jg. 2:17.

¹⁵⁹⁶ Ex. 20:7-11.

¹⁵⁹⁷ Ex. 20:12.

failure to follow the commands of YHWH as did their parents.¹⁵⁹⁸ More specifically, the violations may be seen in (*Yeṭer*) Jether, Abimelech, and Samson.¹⁵⁹⁹

The sixth commandment prohibited murder.¹⁶⁰⁰ Death pervades the Judges narrative; yet, (*tirṣāḥ*) murder referred to an “illegal” killing rather than a legal (*sic*) killing through warfare.¹⁶⁰¹ Therefore, the apparent murder as part of military conquest or a divine deliverance through a judge, as in the example of Ehud and Eglon would not constitute the prohibition.¹⁶⁰² The various instances of death and the moral, ethical, and theological issues are discussed later.¹⁶⁰³ Nonetheless, this commandment was violated by Abimelech twice. The first instance was through fratricide and the other through the arson of the tower of Shechem killing about one thousand men and women.¹⁶⁰⁴ The other instance was in the death of the Levite’s *pīlegeš* through rape by the men of Gibeah.¹⁶⁰⁵

The seventh commandment prohibited adultery.¹⁶⁰⁶ This violation involved the sexual intercourse between one married individual and another (who may or may not have been married). As earlier discussed, it is plausible that Jael and Sisera had engaged in intercourse committing adultery against Heber.¹⁶⁰⁷ The other clear examples of this included the best man (*sic*) in Samson’s wedding to the Timnite woman.¹⁶⁰⁸ Although this falls into a double sin category, there are instances of adultery through harlotry with Gilead, Samson with the harlot of Gaza, and potentially Samson with Delilah.¹⁶⁰⁹ There is some question as to whether the *pīlegeš* had legitimate conjugal rights with the man or whether this sexual liaison was in fact adulterous against the proper wife. If this is the case, there are examples of this with Gideon and with the *pīlegeš* of the Levite from

¹⁵⁹⁸ Jg. 2:17.

¹⁵⁹⁹ יֶתֶר. Jg. 8:20; 9:5; and 14:1-5.

¹⁶⁰⁰ Ex. 20:13.

¹⁶⁰¹ חֲרָצָה. BDB, 953; and G. Ashby, *Go Out and Meet God: A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 92.

¹⁶⁰² Jg. 3:21-25.

¹⁶⁰³ See the section on “Death/Murder,” pages 335-336.

¹⁶⁰⁴ Jg. 9:5, and 49.

¹⁶⁰⁵ Jg. 19:25-26.

¹⁶⁰⁶ Ex. 20:14.

¹⁶⁰⁷ Jg. 5:27.

¹⁶⁰⁸ Jg. 14:20.

¹⁶⁰⁹ Jg. 11:1; 16:1, and 4.

Ephraim.¹⁶¹⁰ Further, there is evidence of polygamy, which though not listed as a sin, would question whether sexual relations with additional wives constituted adultery against the first wife. If this is the case, there is an example of this with Gideon.¹⁶¹¹

The eighth commandment prohibited theft.¹⁶¹² This sin was committed through robbery by the men of Shechem waiting in ambush for those passing by on the road.¹⁶¹³ Micah stole eleven hundred pieces of silver from his mother.¹⁶¹⁴ Later in that episode, the Danites stole the graven image, molten image, the ephod, and the *teraphim* of Micah.¹⁶¹⁵

The ninth commandment prohibited bearing false witness against another.¹⁶¹⁶ The context of this violation was in regard to legal proceedings.¹⁶¹⁷ The modern interpretation “Thou shalt not lie!” is not implied in this text. There are several instances of lying in the text; however, these are mentioned later. Otherwise, this commandment does not appear to have been violated in Judges.

The tenth commandment was a prohibition against coveting.¹⁶¹⁸ The only example of this is the implied Danite coveting of Micah’s idols and cultic objects.¹⁶¹⁹

OTHER TORAH VIOLATIONS. In addition to the violations listed above, there were other commandments which Israel was guilty of breaking. One of the primary violations that precipitated the testing of Israel by YHWH may have been the failure to drive out and utterly destroy the seven nations in the Promised Land.¹⁶²⁰ The Judges conquest narrative paralleling the account in Joshua describes the nations and city-states that were not dispossessed from the land.¹⁶²¹ The archeological evidence parallels the biblical

¹⁶¹⁰ Jg. 9:31; and 19:2.

¹⁶¹¹ Jg. 9:30.

¹⁶¹² Ex. 20:15.

¹⁶¹³ Jg. 9:25.

¹⁶¹⁴ Jg. 17:2.

¹⁶¹⁵ Jg. 18:17, 18, 20, and 24.

¹⁶¹⁶ Ex. 20:16.

¹⁶¹⁷ R.L. Honeycutt, Jr., *The Broadman Bible Commentary: Exodus*, rev. ed., (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1973), 400.

¹⁶¹⁸ Ex. 20:17.

¹⁶¹⁹ Jg. 18:17, 18, and 20.

¹⁶²⁰ Dt. 7:1-2.

¹⁶²¹ Jg. 1:19, 21, 24-25, and 27-35.

evidence that there was no conquest in the central highlands region.¹⁶²² The ideological perspective of Israel's inability to dispossess the Canaanites makes this a covenant violation. However, there is a contrary position by Y. Kaufmann reflecting that there is no sin in the non-expulsion of the Canaanites, because that expulsion "is a divine objective and the non-expulsion is conceived as a divine punishment and not as a sin of the Israelites."¹⁶²³ For Kaufmann, this inability to drive out the Canaanites is actually an unwillingness to drive them out, which seems to betray his logic and should likewise be considered egregious.¹⁶²⁴ This prohibition also involved not making covenants with them. However, YHWH's indictment is that they disobeyed and failed to raze the pagan altars.¹⁶²⁵ The prohibition did not allow for intermarriage with these nations.¹⁶²⁶ Israel was unfaithful to this prohibition also.¹⁶²⁷

Aside from these violations, there was transgression in matters of the cult. The priests within the cult were required to be of the Aaronic dynasty and lineage.¹⁶²⁸ This was violated by Micah when he consecrated one of his sons to be priest over the family shrine.¹⁶²⁹ The Nazarite vow had certain requirements and prohibitions.¹⁶³⁰ In the case of Samson, the vow was chosen for him at his conception. Yet, he transgressed the vow in touching the dead and in having his hair shorn.¹⁶³¹ Until the period of the judges, Israel had been without a human king. The *Torah* had predicted that Israel would ask for a king.¹⁶³² Although it could be argued that a human kingdom rather than a theocratic heavenly kingdom was a sin; yet, the permissive will of YHWH allowed for it. However, the transgression involved Abimelech being chosen as king.¹⁶³³ It was the men of Shechem who chose him rather than YHWH. Further, it could be considered a violation

¹⁶²² For example, the evidence at Shechem (*Tell Balāṭa*) reveals no destruction levels from the thirteenth to twelfth centuries BCE. Ahlström, *The History of Ancient Palestine from the Paleolithic Period to Alexander's Conquest*, 348; and Wright, *Shechem*, 78.

¹⁶²³ Kaufmann, 68.

¹⁶²⁴ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹⁶²⁵ Jg. 2:2.

¹⁶²⁶ Dt. 7:3.

¹⁶²⁷ Jg. 3:6; and 14:2-3.

¹⁶²⁸ Num. 18:1; and Dt. 18:3.

¹⁶²⁹ Jg. 17:5.

¹⁶³⁰ Num. 6:1-21.

¹⁶³¹ Jg. 18:19.

¹⁶³² Dt. 17:14-20.

¹⁶³³ Jg. 9:6; and 16.

because he was half-Israelite and half-Shechemite, violating the command against the king being a foreigner. The cult prohibited the ritual killing of children for sacrifice.¹⁶³⁴ Although there is divided debate over this example, the possibility exists that Jephthah violated the command, if in fact; he sacrificed his daughter to fulfill his vow.¹⁶³⁵

In addition to the sexual sin of adultery, and prostitution which is later addressed, homosexuality is a sin of abomination.¹⁶³⁶ The sons of *Belial* in Gibeah were not guilty of this offense because the homosexual act did not occur; however, their intentions of sodomy with the Levite were made known.¹⁶³⁷ As a result of these plans being foiled, these men raped the Levite's *pīlegeš* instead.¹⁶³⁸ Neither the Levite nor his Ephraimite host are without blame. The old man offered his virgin daughter and the Levite's *pīlegeš* for them to ravish. The Levite freely gave his *pīlegeš* to them to be raped. Technically, there is no *Torah* violation as rape only applied to a virgin, which the *pīlegeš* was not.¹⁶³⁹ Nonetheless, the principle of rape is present and *halakhically* there is culpability.

Falsehood and lies are considered breaches in the covenant.¹⁶⁴⁰ Clearly there was a lie between Jephthah and the men of Ephraim regarding the fight with the Ammonites.¹⁶⁴¹ Samson acted deceitfully and lied to Delilah.¹⁶⁴² The Levite in his retelling of the facts of the outrage in Gibeah distorted the truth and falsified his testimony to the congregation.¹⁶⁴³ The revenge of Samson in response to the Philistines after his wife had been given away resulted in the destruction of a field of grain by fire.¹⁶⁴⁴ The *Torah* gives instruction regarding the loss of property by fire.¹⁶⁴⁵ The distinction here is the fire was actual arson, involving the cruel deaths of three hundred

¹⁶³⁴ Lev. 18:21; and 20:2-5. The specific prohibition was against human sacrifice to *Molech*; although it can be viewed in a larger sense to any cult ritual killing.

¹⁶³⁵ Jg. 11:39.

¹⁶³⁶ Lev. 18:22; and 20:13.

¹⁶³⁷ Jg. 19:22-24.

¹⁶³⁸ Jg. 19:24-25.

¹⁶³⁹ Ex. 22:16-17; and Dt. 22:25-29.

¹⁶⁴⁰ Lev. 19:11.

¹⁶⁴¹ Jg. 12:1-2. At first glance, the lie would seem to be with the men of Ephraim; however, from the context it is difficult to tell which one is the guilty party. Nonetheless, the narrative does imply that the lie has occurred.

¹⁶⁴² Jg. 16:7, 10, 11, 13, and 15.

¹⁶⁴³ Jg. 20:5.

¹⁶⁴⁴ Jg. 15:4-5.

¹⁶⁴⁵ Ex. 22:6.

foxes. Even though this particular act against the animals regarding cruelty or loss of life is not mentioned, the principle of harming another man's animals is mentioned.¹⁶⁴⁶ The only prohibition against cruelty to animals is found in the *Talmud*.¹⁶⁴⁷ What is obvious is that restitution of the lives of the animals was not made.¹⁶⁴⁸ Of course, the technicality that might abrogate his responsibility would be these were not domestic animals and it was an act of judgment against an enemy nation. In fact, if each of the 613 commandments were reviewed, there would be overlap of covenantal transgression at several points.

NEW TESTAMENT VIOLATIONS. Although the New Testament writings are outside the premonarchic period, its teachings and commandments would have been in the mind of YHWH and would have been a further extension of the *Torah*. There is no specific command against betrayal; however, its practice was prophesied as a characteristic of the end times.¹⁶⁴⁹ Samson was betrayed by his bride during their betrothal and then later by Delilah.¹⁶⁵⁰

Surprisingly, the *Torah* did not specifically prohibit prostitution, although it does give examples of its presence in society.¹⁶⁵¹ The Holiness Code only prohibited the father from turning his daughter into a harlot and not him visiting one.¹⁶⁵² The only other *Torah* related command was against male and female cult prostitution.¹⁶⁵³ Ethical admonitions are given warning against prostitution in Proverbs; but, not prohibitive commands.¹⁶⁵⁴ With the writings of Paul, the command against prostitution is encapsulated in the requirement to flee immorality.¹⁶⁵⁵ This command is straightforward in

¹⁶⁴⁶ Ex. 22:9-13.

¹⁶⁴⁷ *Yoma* 28b. The specific prohibition was given to the sons of Noah and included idolatry, immorality, blasphemy, murder, cruelty to animals, and theft.

¹⁶⁴⁸ Lev. 24:18, and 21.

¹⁶⁴⁹ Mt. 24:10.

¹⁶⁵⁰ Jg. 14:17; and 16:18.

¹⁶⁵¹ Gen. 38:15-26. The example is of Judah and his daughter-in-law (*Tāmār*) תָּמָר Tamar. Upon discovering she was pregnant, he desired that she be killed by burning. This story is full of evidence of sin by deception, harlotry, incest, adultery, and the withholding of the Levirate third born son (*Šēlāh*) שֵׁלָה Shelah.

¹⁶⁵² Lev. 19:29.

¹⁶⁵³ Dt. 23:18-19.

¹⁶⁵⁴ Prov. 2:16; 5:3; 6:24; 23:27-28; and 29:3.

¹⁶⁵⁵ 1 Cor. 6:15-18.

Ecclesiasticus.¹⁶⁵⁶ Gilead, Samson, and the Levite's *pīlegeš* were all involved in this type of sexual activity.¹⁶⁵⁷

NATIONS USED IN YHWH'S TEST. The sins outlined above reveal a significant breach in the Mosaic Covenant. YHWH could in no way ignore the infidelity of Israel. Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 clarify the blessings of obedience and the curses of disobedience. Thus, the context of the covenant required a response from YHWH. Israel was not prepared to be disciplined by foreign nations; yet, it was the action of Israel that provoked the anger of YHWH.¹⁶⁵⁸ He responded by giving them into the hands of plunderers who plundered them. This is reinforced with the parallel response of Him selling them into the hands of their enemies. The result of His action through other nations was a fulfillment of the divine mission and since "Israel was no match for them [empowered by YHWH]—they could not stand."¹⁶⁵⁹ The crux of the problem for Israel was when they went out to battle or to their normal life, they were severely distressed because it was the hand of YHWH that was against them (*lʾrāʾāh*) for evil.¹⁶⁶⁰ The activity of YHWH is thus a justified response because He is enforcing what He had spoken (*dibber YHWH*) and sworn (*nišbaʿ YHWH*).¹⁶⁶¹ Further justification may be found because the evil that YHWH instituted against them was preceded by the evil Israel had done in His sight.¹⁶⁶²

The Abrahamic Covenant gives the first geographic boundaries for Israel and identifies ethnic groups to dispossess. The Genesis passage is mirrored in Judges by including the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, and Jebusites. This is later restated in Deuteronomy with the command to destroy these same nations, plus an additional two more.¹⁶⁶³ The Judges passage includes the Hivites; however, the Gergashites are omitted, although that does not necessitate that they were not considered as an enemy to dispossess.

¹⁶⁵⁶ Ecclus. 9:3-9; and 19:2.

¹⁶⁵⁷ Jg. 11:1; 16:1; and 19:2.

¹⁶⁵⁸ Jg. 2:12, 14, 20; 3:8; and 10:7.

¹⁶⁵⁹ Block, *NAC*, 127. Jg. 2:14.

¹⁶⁶⁰ לַרְעָה. Jg. 2:15.

¹⁶⁶¹ דִּבֶּר יְהוָה, "the word of YHWH" and נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה, "the oath of YHWH."

¹⁶⁶² Jg. 2:11; 3:7, 12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; and 13:1.

¹⁶⁶³ Dt. 7: 1.

The problem of conquering and possessing the land that Israel faced is compounded by the absence of divine aid. Heretofore, YHWH had covenanted to drive out the nations.¹⁶⁶⁴ Now, because of sin, YHWH refused to drive out the remaining nations in the Promised Land, which had not been conquered during the era of Joshua.¹⁶⁶⁵ As a result, these enemy nations became the instrument of testing Israel. The test involved whether Israel would be faithful to the covenant and YHWH, through His commandments.¹⁶⁶⁶ Further, this test enabled the generations of the children of Israel to learn war.¹⁶⁶⁷ The nations being left to test Israel is somewhat problematic because it does not suggest that the cycle of covenantal fidelity and infidelity began in the premonarchic era of the judges; but, that it was apparent to YHWH during the time of Joshua and before his death.¹⁶⁶⁸ Otherwise, the foreknowledge of YHWH understood Israel's propensity to sin and incorporated the use of these nations into His plan. The question is whether to see this testing of Israel as positive or negative. The divine purpose was not to alienate Israel because of disobedience but rather to bring Israel back into covenantal relationship through repentance. Thus, the two-fold reasoning gives "an entirely positive purpose to the presence of the nations and mitigate[s] the notion that they function as a punishment."¹⁶⁶⁹ However, for the Deuteronomist, the cyclical activity of this period "is an unrelieved picture of Israel's continual disobedience to the way of the LORD" that presents a recurring pattern of punishment/mercy rather than disobedience/repentance.¹⁶⁷⁰

NATIONS INSIDE THE PROMISED LAND. The conquest narrative of Joshua identifies the land that remained to be conquered.¹⁶⁷¹ This area is reflected in Map 5.¹⁶⁷² The geographical account in Joshua corresponds with the conquest narrative of Judges. The limit of Israelite control is reflected in Map 6.¹⁶⁷³ There are actually two different types

¹⁶⁶⁴ Ex. 23:20-33. This included the agency of the Angel and YHWH being an adversary to Israel's enemies and driving them out by fear and with hornets.

¹⁶⁶⁵ Jg. 2:21-23.

¹⁶⁶⁶ Jg. 2:22; and 3:4.

¹⁶⁶⁷ Jg. 3:1-2.

¹⁶⁶⁸ Jg. 2:23.

¹⁶⁶⁹ van Seters, 342.

¹⁶⁷⁰ Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist*, 155.

¹⁶⁷¹ Josh. 13:2-6.

¹⁶⁷² Aharoni and Avi-Yonah, 69.

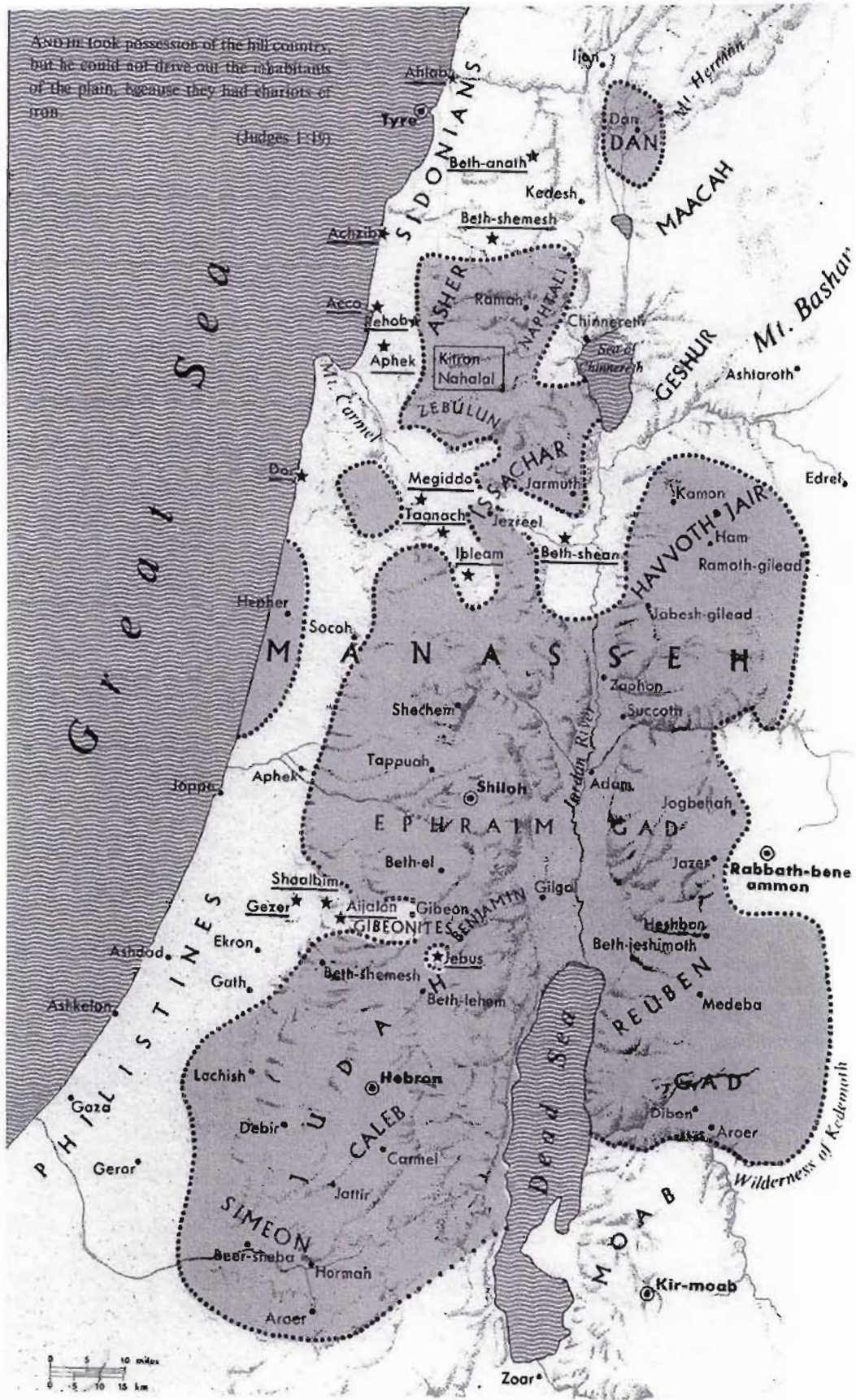
¹⁶⁷³ *Ibid.*, 68.

MAP 5

THE UNCONQUERED LAND



MAP 6
THE CONQUERED LAND



of enemy nations that remained unconquered. The first is the city-state and the other is the regional confederation/nation/kingdom. The mentioning of the city-states is primarily relegated to Judges 1.¹⁶⁷⁴ These are the cities in which the tribal conquests were not engaged or proved ineffective. These cities and people included the Jebusites of Jerusalem, Beth-shean, Taanach, Dor, Ibleam, Megiddo, Gezer, Kitron, Nahalol, Acco, Sidon, Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, Rehob, Beth-shemesh, Beth-anath, Aijalon, and Shaalbim.¹⁶⁷⁵ In addition, Judah was unable to drive out the inhabitants of the valley because the enemy had iron chariots.¹⁶⁷⁶ The failure of the tribes to conquer these cities is specified in Table 6.

TABLE 6
CITIES NOT CONQUERED BY ISRAEL

Tribes	Judges	People	Cities
Benjamin	1:21	Jebusites	Jerusalem
Manasseh	1:27	Canaanites	Beth-Shean, Taanach, Dor, Ibleam, Megiddo
Ephraim	1:29	Canaanites	Gezer
Zebulun	1:30	Canaanites	Kitron, Nahalol
Asher	1:31-32	Canaanites	Acco, Sidon, Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, Rehob
Naphtali	1:33	Canaanites	Beth-Shemesh, Beth-Anath
Dan	1:34-35	Amorites	Aijalon, Shaalbim

The independent fiefdoms were not the instrument of YHWH in the testing of Israel; however, that did not remove them from the possibility of a temporary confederation with the existing nations. The nations within the geographic territory of Israel included the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Jebusites, and the five city-state confederation of the Philistines.

The term Canaanites could refer to any independent city-state within Canaan or possibly to some regional alliance. The Canaanite civilization in the Iron I era was fortified city-states ruled by a king, of which “the most powerful city-states of the epoch included (from north to south) Hazor, Megiddo, Beth-shan, Shechem, Gezer, and Jerusalem.”¹⁶⁷⁷ Apart from the chapter one conquest narrative, the primary Canaanite oppression was the twenty year occupation by Jabin, king of Hazor. This oppression was led by Sisera, the captain of Jabin’s army. The dating of this war is somewhat precarious.

¹⁶⁷⁴ Bright, 134-135.

¹⁶⁷⁵ Jg. 1:21, 27, 29, 30, 31, 33, and 35.

¹⁶⁷⁶ Jg. 1:19.

¹⁶⁷⁷ M. Grant, *The History of Ancient Israel* (London: Phoenix, 1997), 17.

The towns of Hazor, Megiddo, and Taanach are mentioned in the narrative. Thus, the event would have occurred prior to the destruction of these towns. Megiddo was destroyed around 1130 BCE.¹⁶⁷⁸ Taanach was destroyed about five years later.¹⁶⁷⁹ It is posited that Hazor was destroyed at the end of the Late Bronze II period. That would place this battle of Sisera within the proper century, before these cities were later destroyed.¹⁶⁸⁰ The historical context of this battle with Sisera must be deduced through the prose account because “there exist no even approximately datable historical allusions in the Song [of Deborah] which would enable us to put the battle within its proper context.”¹⁶⁸¹

One of the admonitions and indictments against Israel was in regard to the polytheistic Canaanite idolatry. As a result, that which they did not destroy based on the divine command became a snare to them.

Each locality and settlement and craft and aspect of life had its own deities. They included minor gods, to whom ordinary men and women liked to attach themselves, as protectors of their interests. But there were also high gods, with universal aspects, although their omnipotence and domination over humankind seemed diminished by the rival existence of their fellow divinities.¹⁶⁸²

The Hittites are only mentioned twice in Judges.¹⁶⁸³ The first reference is to the treasonous man from Luz who escaped and built a new city in the land of the Hittites. There is no indication that the initial Luz was a Hittite city. The other reference is that the Israelites dwelt among them. The Hittites are first mentioned in connection with the Abrahamic covenant as a land that Israel would possess.¹⁶⁸⁴ Potentially they could be the descendants of (*Hēṭ*) Heth, the son of Canaan.¹⁶⁸⁵ The origin of this non-Indo-European people is obscure. Yet, the philological equivalent of the Hittites is derived from Ḫatti,

¹⁶⁷⁸ Y. Yadin, “Megiddo,” *EAEHL*, III, 850.

¹⁶⁷⁹ P. W. Lapp, “Ta’anach by the Waters of Megiddo,” *BA* 30 (1967), 8.

¹⁶⁸⁰ B. Maisler, “Beth She’arim, Gaba, and Harosheth of the Peoples,” *HUCA* 24 (1952-1953), 75-84.

¹⁶⁸¹ A. D. H. Mayes, “The historical context of the battle against Sisera,” *VT* 19 (1969), 355. Mayes suggests that the battle should be seen as occurring shortly before the Philistine defeat of Israel at Aphek, with the victory of Israel recorded in the Song of Deborah motivating a Philistine response.

¹⁶⁸² Grant, 21-22.

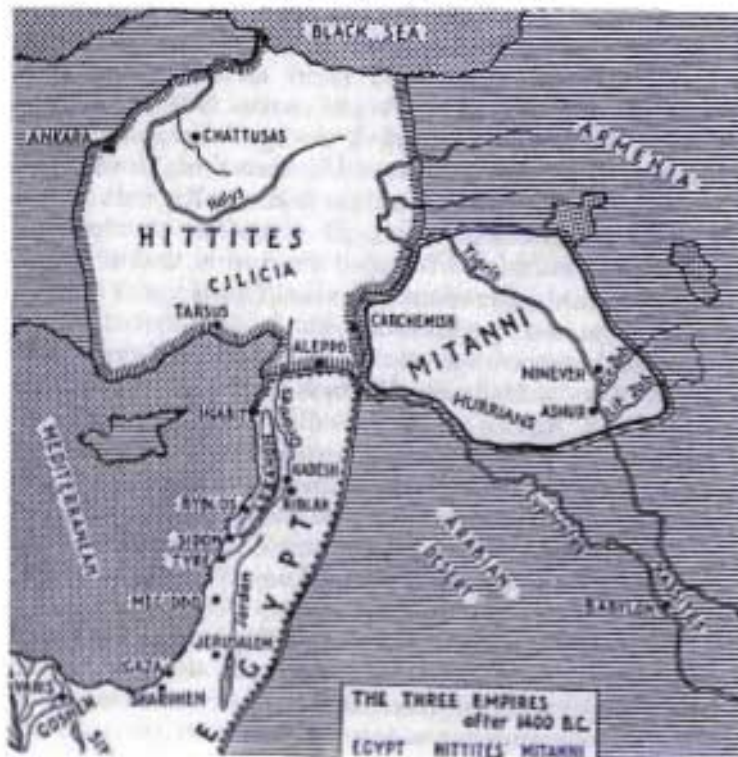
¹⁶⁸³ Jg. 1:26 and 3:5.

¹⁶⁸⁴ Gen. 15:20.

¹⁶⁸⁵ **ח** **הֶת**. Gen. 10:15; and 23:10. The pericope of the purchase of the burial site by Abraham from (*‘eprôn*) **עֶפְרוֹן** Ephron makes the context of his Hittite lineage plausibly connects him as being one of the (*b’ne-Hēṭ*) **בְּנֵי-הֶת** sons of Heth.

where their empire expanded from Ḫattusas (Boghazköy) in Anatolia.¹⁶⁸⁶ There is some disagreement as to whether the ancient Hittite nation dwelling primarily in the region of Turkey may be the same people present in the Levant. The Middle Bronze era gave Egypt control of Canaan northward to Aleppo as reflected in Map 7.¹⁶⁸⁷ However, with the decline of Egypt that followed, the Hittites could have easily assumed control of the northern Levant, when the Hittite king Mursilis I captured Yamkhad (Aleppo).¹⁶⁸⁸ A chronology of the Hittite kings of this period is presented in Table 7.¹⁶⁸⁹ They maintained control of Syria until 1200 BCE when the Sea Peoples brought the Hittite empire to a sudden and violent end.¹⁶⁹⁰

MAP 7
THE HITTITE EMPIRE



¹⁶⁸⁶ Bright, 65. See also H.A. Hoffner, "The Hittites and the Hurrians," *Peoples of the Old Testament Times*, (Ed.) D.J. Wiseman (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1973), 197-228; and O.R. Gurney, *The Hittites* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, Inc., 1952).

¹⁶⁸⁷ Keller, 112.

¹⁶⁸⁸ Bright, 66.

¹⁶⁸⁹ For the chronology used to make this table, see Gurney, 218.

¹⁶⁹⁰ I. Singer, "Western Anatolia in the Thirteenth Century B.C. According to the Hittite Sources," *AS 33* (1983), 216-217.

TABLE 7
CHRONOLOGY OF THE HITTITE KINGDOM

Hittite King	Reign
Šuppiluliumaš I	1380 – 1340 BCE
Arnuwandas II	1340 – 1339 BCE
Mursilis II	1339 – 1306 BCE
Mutwatalliš	1306 – 1282 BCE
Mursilis III	1282 – 1275 BCE
Ḫattušiliš	1275 – 1250 BCE
Tudhaliyas IV	1250 – 1220 BCE
Arnuwandas III	1220 – 1215 BCE

The Amorites are mentioned eleven times in Judges.¹⁶⁹¹ Initially, the Amorites were stronger than the tribe of Dan and thus they retained control of the valleys. However, this situation changed with them becoming tributaries to the house of Joseph. Nonetheless, they were not driven out of the land or conquered, because they were one of the test nations. Prior to the time of Jephthah's deliverance, the Amorites were confederate with the Philistines and the Ammonites and had been a part of eighteen years of oppression. Even before this, there is an unstated period of oppression in which YHWH reminds Israel they had been delivered, although this could refer to the conquest led by Moses against Sihon.¹⁶⁹² The Amorites predate Abram, as they are the descendants of (*Hām*) Ham, through Canaan.¹⁶⁹³

The name "Amorite" is related to Akkadian *Amurru*, "the west," which could designate a direction, region, or people. The heartland of the Amorites (*Amurru*) described in Mesopotamian texts was located in northern Syria, between the western Euphrates and the Khabur and Balikh rivers.... By the seventeenth century BC the term *Amurru* was increasingly used to designate central and southern Syria, and by the fifteenth century "the Kingdom of Amurru" denoted a realm in the mountains of northern Lebanon and eventually could be used of the mountainous region farther south as well.¹⁶⁹⁴

The Perizzites are mentioned only three times in the narrative.¹⁶⁹⁵ The first two references identify them being defeated in a war by Judah. The third is the general listing of the nation with the others in the area, reflecting that they will be used to test Israel. As a people, their presence in Canaan dates back to the arrival of Abram, when their land

¹⁶⁹¹ Jg. 1:34-36; 3:5; 6:10; 10:8, 11; 11:19, and 21-23.

¹⁶⁹² Num. 21:21-32.

¹⁶⁹³ חם ארץ. Gen. 10:6; and 15-16.

¹⁶⁹⁴ Block, *NAC*, 107.

¹⁶⁹⁵ Jg. 1:4-5; and 3:5.

was promised by YHWH through covenant.¹⁶⁹⁶ Archaeological evidence corresponds to the biblical narrative regarding a state of coexistence “based on complementary economic systems and agreements regarding water and grazing rights.”¹⁶⁹⁷ Bright posits that the Perizzites are a non-Semitic people who are possibly Indo-Aryans; however, this identification is not made with any certainty.¹⁶⁹⁸

The Jebusites dwelt in Jebus, which later was named Jerusalem. The references to these people and to its city included the inability of Benjamin to dispossess them, their inclusion in the test nations list, and as a city where the Levite refused to spend the night.¹⁶⁹⁹ The first mention of a Jebusite is in the genealogical record of Ham, as the son of Canaan.¹⁷⁰⁰ The land of the Jebusites was included in the Abramic covenant.¹⁷⁰¹ That the Jebusites remained in control of Jebus during the premonarchic period is because the city was not captured until the time of David.¹⁷⁰²

The Philistine pentapolis was the second major internal force that Israel contended against.¹⁷⁰³ The brief note of Judah’s conquest and possession of Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ekron is problematic.¹⁷⁰⁴ The internal evidence gives no other information as to how they were conquered or the duration of their occupation, which would have been limited because of the Philistine control of these cities, later mentioned in the Samson narratives.¹⁷⁰⁵

The extent to which the Philistines exercised control over Israel during the time of Shamgar is difficult to ascertain. Based on the Shamgar deliverance story, six hundred of their numbers were killed by him. Possibly it could have been part of the Sea People’s entrance into the land and conquest from the north.¹⁷⁰⁶ As earlier discussed, the

¹⁶⁹⁶ Gen. 15:20.

¹⁶⁹⁷ A. Zertal, “‘To the Land of the Perizzites and the Giants’: On the Israelite Settlement in the Hill Country of Manasseh,” *From Nomadism to Monarchy: Archaeological and Historical Aspects of Early Israel*, (Eds.) I. Finkelstein and N. Na’aman (Jerusalem, Israel: Israel Exploration Society, 1994), 67.

¹⁶⁹⁸ Bright, 115.

¹⁶⁹⁹ Jg. 1:21; 3:5; and 19:10-11.

¹⁷⁰⁰ Gen. 10:15-16.

¹⁷⁰¹ Gen. 15:21.

¹⁷⁰² 2 Sam 5:6-10.

¹⁷⁰³ Jg. 3:3, 31; 10:6, 7, 11; 13:1, 5; and 14:1-16:30.

¹⁷⁰⁴ Jg. 1:18.

¹⁷⁰⁵ Jg. 14:19; 16:1, and 21. Ekron is not mentioned elsewhere in Judges.

¹⁷⁰⁶ B. Mazar, “The Philistines and Their Wars with Israel,” *World History of the Jewish People, Vol. 3: Judges – 1st Series: Ancient Times*, (Ed.) B. Mazar (London: W.H. Allen, 1971), 324-325.

etymology behind Shamgar's name is not Hebrew. Instead, his Canaanite origins may be reflected in being named after the Canaanite goddess *Anath*.¹⁷⁰⁷ As a result, this line of reason suggests Shamgar was a Canaanite chieftain, which might make him potentially an oppressor of Israel prior to the time of the Canaanite battle of Sisera.¹⁷⁰⁸

The primary period of oppression was the forty year period of 1124-1084 BCE that the Philistines harassed Israel.¹⁷⁰⁹ The extent of their activity and oppression during the time of Samson's deliverance is not indicated in the text.

The Philistines were a people group of warlike bands from the Aegean Sea region who migrated into the southern part of the coastal plains of Canaan in the second half of the twelfth century BCE.¹⁷¹⁰ The vacuum created by the decline of the Egyptian dominance in Canaan precipitated a climate whereby the political and military strength of the pentapolis confederacy could be established unimpeded.¹⁷¹¹ These "People of the Sea" (*Peleset*) were originally from either Cyprus or Crete.¹⁷¹² This geographical determination is scholarly conjecture, because archaeological excavations from Crete have not produced any material evidence "nor have any Philistine inscriptions been recovered from any area of occupation which might disclose their origins."¹⁷¹³ The bible later identifies them coming from (*Kaptôr*) Caphtor.¹⁷¹⁴

The Philistines of the premonarchic period should not be confused with the people of the same name during the patriarchal period.¹⁷¹⁵ The pentapolis included three states along the coast: Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Gaza. They were possibly established there as

¹⁷⁰⁷ A. van Selms, "Judge Shamgar," *VT* 14 (1964), 301-303.

¹⁷⁰⁸ A. Alt, "Megiddo im Übergang vom kanaänischen zum israelitischen Zeitalter" (Megiddo in the Transition from the Canaanite to Israelite Period), *ZAW* 62 (1944), 67-85.

¹⁷⁰⁹ Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 149. Jg. 13:1.

¹⁷¹⁰ A. Alt, "Formation of Israelite State in Palestine," *EOTHR* (Oxford, England: Basil Blackwell, 1996), 173.

¹⁷¹¹ A. Malamat, "The Egyptian Decline in Canaan and the Sea Peoples," *World History of the Jewish People, Vol. 3: Judges – 1st Series: Ancient Times*, (Ed.) B. Mazar (London: W.H. Allen, 1971), 23.

¹⁷¹² פְּלִשְׁתִּים. Grant, 67.

¹⁷¹³ R.K. Harrison, "Philistine Origins: A Reappraisal," *Ascribe to the Lord: Biblical & Other Studies in memory of Peter C. Craigie*, (Eds.) L. Eslinger & G. Taylor (*JSOT Supp* 67; Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988), 17-18.

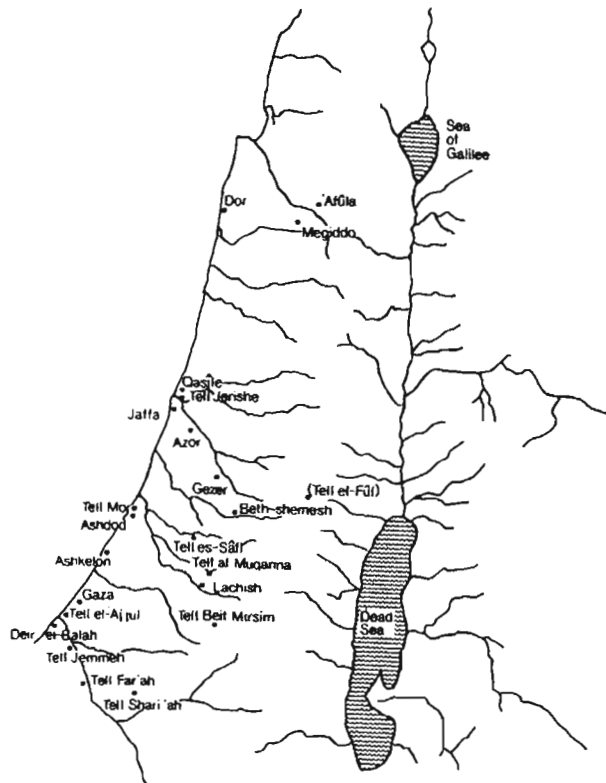
¹⁷¹⁴ כַּפְתּוֹר. Amos 9:7. Caphtor has been identified as Crete.

¹⁷¹⁵ This is based on a position that the earlier Philistines originated in Canaan, migrated to the Aegean and then several centuries later returned. See T.D. Proffit, III, "Philistines: Aegeanized Semites," *NEASB* 12 (1978), 7-10.

mercenaries in garrisons to protect the Egyptian frontier.¹⁷¹⁶ As such, this might explain why the Philistines are not included in the Merneptah Stele as one of the maritime nations conquered by Ramses.¹⁷¹⁷ The other two city-states of Ekron and Gath were further inland.¹⁷¹⁸ The Philistines, while primarily concentrated along the southern coastal plain were present in the hill country, as reflected in Map 8.¹⁷¹⁹ The Philistines assimilated some of the cultic Canaanite elements. As with the Canaanites, the idolatry of the Philistines permeated and affected Israel.

The gods of Aegean origin whom they had brought to the country were given the names of Canaanite deities. These included *Dagon* – formerly Mesopotamian – who became their chief god, with Ashdod as his main centre; *Baal*, worshipped at Ekron as *Baalzebul*, the prince (mockingly transformed by the Israelites into *Baalzebub*, Lord of the flies); and the goddess *Ashtoreth*.¹⁷²⁰

MAP 8 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES WITH EVIDENCE OF PHILISTINE (SEA PEOPLE) OCCUPATION



¹⁷¹⁶ E.E. Hindson, *The Philistines and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1971), 19.

¹⁷¹⁷ Harrison, 16.

¹⁷¹⁸ G.E. Wright, "Fresh evidence for the Philistine story," *BA* 29 (1966), 78-84.

¹⁷¹⁹ Graham, 32.

¹⁷²⁰ Grant, 69.

NATIONS OUTSIDE THE PROMISED LAND. The narrative reveals the testing of Israel by the nations included the Hivites and Sidonians.¹⁷²¹ However, there is no mention of them ever engaging the Israelites. The Hivites were possibly of Mitanni origin.¹⁷²² The Sidonians were more than a city-state people, as this Phoenician center at times involved Sidon, Tyre, and other regions of Phoenicia. However, the commercial expansion did not occur until the eleventh century BCE.¹⁷²³

Instead, there were seven nations not mentioned in Judges as being a part of the test, who ultimately were used to test Israel. These were the Mesopotamians, Moabites, Ammonites, Midianites, Amalekites, sons of the East, and the Maonites. The internal politics of the region do not enter into the narrative of Judges. From the perspective of the author, these external affairs with its neighbors were almost irrelevant to Israel's history.¹⁷²⁴ Even with the later oppressions of the Assyrians and Babylonians resulting in the exile of Israel and the dissolution of the monarchy, the histories of these nations except where it intersects Israel are absent in the biblical material.

The first nation mentioned that oppressed Israel was by means of the invasion by Cushan-Rishathaim of Aram Naharaim, which is often called Mesopotamia. It is possible this location may be identified as *Kushan-rôm* of northern Syria, based on the annals of Rameses II.¹⁷²⁵ The names *Naharin* and *Nahrma* are present in both Egyptian and Akkadian texts as early as the fifteenth century BCE.¹⁷²⁶ The name "Aram" appears even earlier in a text of Naram-Sin.¹⁷²⁷ In the Egyptian texts, this name "designates a people and not a land [whereas, the people,] the Aramaeans (*Aramu*) appear for the first time in an inscription of Amenhotep III from *Kôm el-Hēṭān*, and then later in Papyrus Anastasi III from the reign of Merneptah."¹⁷²⁸

¹⁷²¹ Jg. 3:3, and 5.

¹⁷²² Schultz, 90.

¹⁷²³ N. Jidejian, *Sidon Through the Ages: With a Foreword by Maurice Dunand* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar El-Machreq Publishers, 1971), 28.

¹⁷²⁴ Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 158.

¹⁷²⁵ M.F. Unger, *Israel and the Aramaeans of Damascus: A Study in Archaeological Illumination of Bible History* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1980), 40-41, and 134-135.

¹⁷²⁶ A. Malamat, "The Aramaeans," *Peoples of Old Testament Times*, (Ed.) D.J. Wiseman (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1973), 140.

¹⁷²⁷ Unger, *Israel and the Aramaeans of Damascus*, 39.

¹⁷²⁸ S. Ahituv, *The Origin of Early Israel-Current Debate: Biblical, Historical, and Archaeological Perspectives: Irene Levi-Sala Seminar*, 1999, (Eds.) S. Ahituv and E.D. Oren (Beer-Sheva 12: Beersheva, Israel: Ben Gurion University of the Negev Press, 1998), 136.

The identity of Cushan-Rishathaim is dubious; however, it may be an epithet for Aššur-uballiṭ regarding his invasion in 1358 BCE.¹⁷²⁹ Another possibility based on the Kassite onomasticon, would make him *Kašša-rīša*t, a ruler of the Kassites in Mesopotamia.¹⁷³⁰ Another plausible explanation would be as an epithet for an Aramean usurper, Irsu who seized the Egyptian throne.

Seemingly, Cushan Rishathaim conquered the Israelite tribes while on his way to Egypt, and Israel's deliverance by Othniel followed the expulsion of the invaders from Egypt by Set-nakt. It seems unlikely that Cushan Rishathaim would have transversed the lengthy distance from Aram Naharaim only to subjugate a few tribes in the south of Palestine. His military campaign is more readily explained if its ultimate goal was Egypt and if the war with Israel was only of secondary importance.¹⁷³¹

For a chronology of the Mesopotamian kings of this period see Table 8.¹⁷³²

TABLE 8
CHRONOLOGY OF THE MESOPOTAMIAN KINGDOM

Mesopotamian King	Reign
Aššur-uballiṭ	1365 – 1330 BCE
Adad-nirari I	1307 – 1275 BCE
Tukulti-Ninurta I	1244 – 1208 BCE
Aššur-nirari III	1203 – 1198 BCE
Aššur-rēši-iši I	1133 – 1116 BCE
Tiglath-pileser I	1115 – 1077 BCE

The next external nation to oppress Israel was Moab.¹⁷³³ Eglon, the king of Moab oppressed Israel for a period of eighteen years. This story is problematic in history because neither the Moabite Stone nor any other extant records reveal any king by his name. That Moab existed as a kingdom or that they exerted influence upon premonarchic Israel during this time is not in question. However, the question is upon the name of Eglon, which may be a literary convention based on the sacrificial and scatological themes at the enemy's expense. Because of the history of hostilities and antagonism between Israel and its eastern neighbor Moab, the story does not reflect a specific Moabite king; but more broadly "the context of Israelite-Moabite relations."¹⁷³⁴ Instead,

¹⁷²⁹ Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 162.

¹⁷³⁰ C.J. Ball, "Cushan-rishathaim (Judg. iii. 7-11), *ExpT* 21 (1910), 192.

¹⁷³¹ Malamat, "Cushan Rishathaim and the Decline of the Near East," 235.

¹⁷³² For the chronology used to make this table, see Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 152-153.

¹⁷³³ Jg. 3:12-30.

¹⁷³⁴ Brettler, *The Book of Judges*, 32. Previous hostilities included the incident with (Bil'ām) בִּלְעָם Balaam and his oracles as well as the idolatrous worship at (Ba'al P^o'ôr) בַּעַל פְּעֹר Baal of Peor. Num. 22-25.

through political satire, the pericope “functions as a literature of attack that mocked the enemy neighbor Moab.”¹⁷³⁵ Egyptian records show the name Moab being used in royal documents from the reign of Rameses II.¹⁷³⁶

Ammon was one of the Transjordanian nations raised up against Israel.¹⁷³⁷ The eighteen year Ammonite oppression ended in 1106 BCE with Jephthah’s defeat of Ammon, which was three hundred years after the conquest of Sihon.¹⁷³⁸ The internal evidence does not reveal the name of the king of the sons of Ammon of which political ambassage was made to attempt a peaceful diplomatic resolution.¹⁷³⁹ The political speech of an anti-Moab address was adapted for the present anti-Ammonite context.¹⁷⁴⁰ There is no extant evidence to identify the Ammonite king.¹⁷⁴¹ There were two battles. The first involved the attack of the Ammonites against the Gileadites, in which Gilead was unsuccessful. This led to the call of Jephthah that ultimately delivered Israel from this oppression. The battle began after Jephthah and his army moved southward crossing the (*Naḥal Yabbōq*) Jabbok River with the Ammonites being slaughtered at twenty cities in the Gadite territorial allotment.¹⁷⁴²

The Midianite oppression is only mentioned during the time of Gideon.¹⁷⁴³ This seven year oppression resulted in Israel being greatly impoverished in agriculture and animal husbandry because of the lightning style Arabic (*gazô*) raids.¹⁷⁴⁴ It has been dated within the decade of 1190-1180 BCE.¹⁷⁴⁵ The ambiguity of the text does not answer the

¹⁷³⁵ M.Z. Brettler, “Never the Twain Shall Meet? The Ehud Story as History and Literature,” *HUCA* 62 (1991), 302.

¹⁷³⁶ Aḥituv, 136.

¹⁷³⁷ Jg. 3:13; 10:6-9, 11, 17, 18; 11:4-6, 8, 12-15, 27-33, 36; and 12:1-3.

¹⁷³⁸ Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 148.

¹⁷³⁹ Jg. 11:12-14, and 28.

¹⁷⁴⁰ It is suggested that this is a post-exilic scribal composition which has been added to the story by a redactor. Cf. M. Wüst, “Die Einschaltung in die Jiftachgeschichte: Ri. 11:13-26” (Putting the Jephthah history into the context of that time: Jg. 11:13-26), *Biblica* 56 (1975), 464-479.

¹⁷⁴¹ The first identifiable Ammonite king was (*Nāḥāš*) נַחֲשׁ Nahash (ca. 1030-1000 BCE), as reflected in 1 Sam. 11:1-12. For a brief discussion on the history of the Ammonite monarchy, Cf. J.M. de Tarragon, “Ammon,” *ABD* 1:195.

¹⁷⁴² הַנַּחֲשׁ יַבְבֹּק. Jg. 11:32-33.

¹⁷⁴³ Jg. 6:1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 11, 13, 14, 16, 33; 7:1, 2, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 23, 24, 25; 8:1, 3, 5, 12, 22, 26, 28; and 9:17.

¹⁷⁴⁴ غَزْو. E.J. Payne, “The Midianite Arc in Joshua and Judges,” *Midian, Moab and Edom: The History and Archaeology of Late Bronze and Iron Age Jordan and North-West Arabia*, (Eds.) J.F.A. Sawyer and D.J.A. Clines (*JSOT Supp.* 24: Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1983), 163.

¹⁷⁴⁵ Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 166.

question of whether this was a constant domination or was seasonally motivated.¹⁷⁴⁶ Not unlike the Moabite oppression, this oppression also had a trilateral confederacy between the Midianites, Amalekites, and (*b²nê-Qedem*) the sons of the East.¹⁷⁴⁷ The narrative suggests numerous nomadic entrances and exits from across the Jordan River by which the tribal nations could prey upon Israel by means of their camels.

In the 11th century B.C. the camel appears in cuneiform texts and reliefs and from then on is more and more frequently mentioned. This must be about the time of the Gideon story. Doubtless such marauding attacks with animals that had until then been regarded as wild must have come as a frightful shock.¹⁷⁴⁸

Accordingly, the bedouinization of this era is not inconsistent with the chronology of archaeology. The presence of the Midianites is corroborated with archaeological finds of pottery at *Tel Māsōś* dated to the Iron I period.¹⁷⁴⁹ Also, a Midianite-style bowl was unearthed at *Tel Jedur*.¹⁷⁵⁰ However, these sites near Beersheba and Hebron respectively are further south than would have been reflected in the Gideon narrative. Nevertheless, the excavations at *Tell Balāṭa* provide material remains from Late Bronze II and Iron I, at stratum XI.¹⁷⁵¹ This corresponds to the time before the destruction of Shechem circa 1075 BCE.

Amalek has a presence in several of the narratives; however the internal evidence does not show them acting independently as a nomadic oppressor.¹⁷⁵² The primary mention of their oppression is in axis with the Midianites and the Sons of the East. Nonetheless, they did ally themselves with the Moabites until the deliverance by Ehud. The genealogy of the Amalekites is presented with Amalek being born of the union of

¹⁷⁴⁶ Mayes, "The Period of the Judges and the Rise of the Monarchy," 315.

¹⁷⁴⁷ בְּנֵי קֵדָם וְ.

¹⁷⁴⁸ Keller, 173. The domestication of the camel did not enter the Levant until the end of the Bronze Age. As a result, its presence is not noted in any Mari or Egyptian texts of the time. The earlier biblical references to the tame camel, as in the case of Rebecca (Gen. 24:10), were scribal errors when the animal represented were donkeys.

¹⁷⁴⁹ V. Fritz, "Die kulturhistorische Bedeutung der früheisenzeitlichen Siedlung auf der *Hirbet el-Mšāš* und das Problem der Landnahme" (The cultural historical meaning of the pre-historic period settlement of *Hirbet el-Mšāš* and the problem of the land grabbing), *ZDPV* 96 (1980), 121-135.

¹⁷⁵⁰ S. Ben-Arieh, "Tell Jedur," *Eretz-Israel* 15 (1981), 115-127.

¹⁷⁵¹ E.F. Campbell, J.F. Ross, and L.E. Toombs, "The Eighth Campaign at Balāṭa (Shechem)," *BASOR* 204 (1971), 15.

¹⁷⁵² Jg. 3:13; 5:14; 6:3, 33; 7:12; 10:12; and 12:15.

(‘ēśāw) Esau’s son (ʿēlīpaz) Eliphaz and his *pīlegeš* (Timna’) Timna.¹⁷⁵³ From his patriarchal side, he would be considered one-quarter Edomite and one quarter Hittite from his paternal grandmother (‘ādāh) Adah.¹⁷⁵⁴ The Amalekites were hostile toward Israel throughout their history from the time of Moses into the monarchic era. The wilderness victory of Joshua over Amalek suggested that “YHWH will have war against Amalek from generation to generation.”¹⁷⁵⁵ The *Torah* commanded Israel to blot out the memory of Amalek, once they had possessed the land of Canaan.¹⁷⁵⁶

The Sons of the East (or Easterners) are present only in connection with the Midianite oppression with Israel.¹⁷⁵⁷ The Hebraic nomenclature *b²nē-Qedem* has two potential meanings. It could refer to the combined forces of Midian and Amalek as a descriptive appositive. Otherwise, it may have been “a vague gentile label used by Westerners to denote the nomadic groups that migrated about the Arabian Desert, often raiding the settled communities of the Transjordan and, as opportunity provided, of Cisjordan.”¹⁷⁵⁸ Nonetheless, this designation of Bedouins was not a proper name.

The Maonites are the last of the nations mentioned.¹⁷⁵⁹ The entrance of this people group into the text without any other substantive reference has caused speculation that this is a scribal corruption of the Midianites, based on the LXX (*Madiam*).¹⁷⁶⁰ Geographically, Maon may be associated with the modern city of Ma‘ân, Jordan, which is approximately 30 km ESE of Petra.¹⁷⁶¹ However, with this location, they may be associated with the (*M²ûnîm*) who dwelt in this area along with the Midianites possibly being “a confederate or dependent group.”¹⁷⁶²

One of the nations that is conspicuously absent from the Judges narrative is Egypt. The other contiguous nation that is missing is Edom. In neither instance, does it appear

¹⁷⁵³ חַי וְעֵשָׂו אֶלְיָאֵז וְתִמְנָה. Gen. 36:12.

¹⁷⁵⁴ חַי וְעֵשָׂו אֶלְיָאֵז. Gen. 36:2.

¹⁷⁵⁵ Ex. 17:16.

¹⁷⁵⁶ Dt. 25:17-19.

¹⁷⁵⁷ Jg. 6:3.

¹⁷⁵⁸ Block, *NAC*, 252. This term is also found elsewhere in the bible. Gen. 29:1; Job 1:3; Isa. 11:14; Jer. 49:28; and Ezek. 25:4.

¹⁷⁵⁹ Jg. 10:12.

¹⁷⁶⁰ Μαδιαιμ. *BHS*, 421.

¹⁷⁶¹ معان. Burney, 298.

¹⁷⁶² חַי וְעֵשָׂו אֶלְיָאֵז. Block, *NAC*, 347; and E.A. Knauf, “Meunim,” *ABD* 4:802.

that they were involved in any oppression against Israel during the premonarchic period of Judges.

The hero narratives with the cyclical elements of the apostasy of Israel, its discipline through foreign nations, its repentance, and the raising up of a deliverer suggest certain artificiality in the book of Judges. Largely, the oppressive nation is raised up to punish the errant Israel and then through the deliverance of a judge disappears altogether from the narrative: Mesopotamia by Othniel, Moab by Ehud, Canaan by Deborah and Barak, Midian by Gideon, Ammon by Jephthah, and Philistia by Samson. It is significant that each major judge combats a different and separate enemy.¹⁷⁶³

PREMONARCHIC ISRAEL. The possibility must be considered that YHWH, through His permissive will, allowed premonarchic Israel to become an oppressive nation to itself at its tribal levels. The Judges narratives give four examples of this internal tribal judgment. What is significant is that Ephraim is a central figure in all but one of these events. Subsequent to the deliverance from Ammonite oppression by Jephthah an intra-tribal conflict occurred between the tribe of Ephraim and the *משפחה* of Gilead within the tribe of Gad.¹⁷⁶⁴ The Ephraimites were angered against Jephthah for not being included in the warfare against the Ammonites. The conflict heightened until the Gileadites controlled the fords of the Jordan River. A pronunciation test question was used to reveal a regional dialect and thus the Ephraimites were detected and ultimately 42,000 were killed.¹⁷⁶⁵

The narrative of the Danite migration reveals another intra-tribal conflict between the tribe of Dan and the *בית אב* of Micah within the tribe of Ephraim.¹⁷⁶⁶ Six hundred armed men of Dan kidnapped a Levite and robbed the cultic items from Micah's shrine. Then, the Ephraimites pursued after Dan to recover their goods.

The verb, *zā'aq*, which the NIV translates expansively as "called out your men to fight," means "to call for help, to summon (the militia), to raise a battle cry." The choice of this verb seems deliberate, linking the present cry of Micah to previous cries of the Israelites to Yahweh because of their oppression. Ironically, this time the oppressors are not foreign enemies sent in by Yahweh to punish Israel for her apostasy; they are fellow apostate Israelites.¹⁷⁶⁷

¹⁷⁶³ Ramsey, 76. The only possible exception might be Shamgar in his singular deliverance of 600 Philistines.

¹⁷⁶⁴ Jg. 12:1-6.

¹⁷⁶⁵ G.A. Rendsburg, "The Ammonite Phoneme /T/," *BASOR* 269 (1988), 73-79.

¹⁷⁶⁶ Jg. 18:14-26.

¹⁷⁶⁷ Block, *NAC*, 507-508.

However, because of the overwhelming numbers of the Danite army the men of Ephraim returned home empty handed and the battle was averted.

The next internal conflict is the internecine war with Benjamin.¹⁷⁶⁸ Through a series of inappropriate actions and responses by the Levite, his *pīlegeš*, her father, and the Ephraimite host the outrage at Gibeah occurred. The individual sins connected with this event have already been discussed, as well as the violations of the hospitality code. Nonetheless, the Levite's unnecessary lodging at Gibeah became the catalyst for his deceptive testimony before the assembled congregation that included 400,000 soldiers from all of the tribes, less Benjamin. The narrative describes the battle in three separate campaigns against the 26,700 warriors from Benjamin. The first and second campaigns resulted in the deaths of 22,000 and 18,000 men, respectively from the Israelite confederation; whereas there is no mention of any Benjaminite casualty in these campaigns. The third campaign involved the strategy of ambush and deception, resulting in an Israelite casualty of thirty men; however, because the strategy was successful, the Benjaminites lost 25,100 men in the battle. If the numbers in the text can be regarded as accurate rather than round figures, the total casualties numbered 65,130 men.

The final internal struggle is the conclusion of the Benjaminite saga.¹⁷⁶⁹ Because of a vow made to YHWH at Mizpah, it became apparent that no men from Jabesh-Gilead had participated in the confederacy against Benjamin. A representative 12,000 men from Israel were sent to Jabesh-Gilead and everything and everyone in the town were destroyed with the exception of 400 virgin girls. Thus, the final conflict represented a confederate Israel against a town in the territory of Gad.

GENEALOGY

Another discipline that may be helpful in ascertaining the historicity of the premonarchic era is genealogy. The book of Judges does not contain any proper genealogical lists. Nonetheless, there are identifiable areas of lineage. The narrative gives the two generation (father-son or father-daughter) lineages of Othniel, Achsah, Joshua, Ehud, Shamgar, Barak, Joash, Gideon, Jether, Jotham, Abimelech, Gaal, Jephthah, Abdon, and Samson.¹⁷⁷⁰ The narrative also gives the three generation

¹⁷⁶⁸ Jg. 20:1-48.

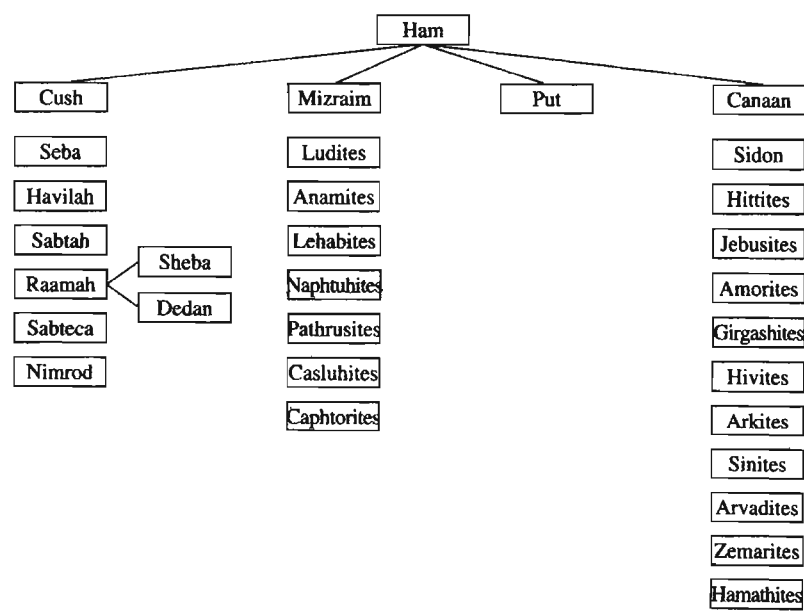
¹⁷⁶⁹ Jg. 21:5-12.

¹⁷⁷⁰ Jg. 1:12-13; 2:8; 3:9, 15, 31; 4:6, 12; 5:1, 6, 12; 6:11, 29; 7:14; 8:13, 20, 29, 31, 32; 9:1, 26, 30, 31, 35; 11:1; 12:7, 13, 15; 13:24; and 14:2.

(grandfather-father-son) lineages of Tola, Jonathan, and Phinehas.¹⁷⁷¹ Furthermore, the narrative identifies the ancestral origins of Heber and the men of (חֲמֹר) Hamor.¹⁷⁷²

In addition to the brief lists of the lineages of the judges and a few others in the text, it is noteworthy to consider the ancestral genealogies of the oppressors of premonarchic Israel. As reflected in Figure 75, of the nations outlined as those who would be used to test Israel and those who the text identifies as oppressing Israel, eight of these are immediate descendants of Ham, one of which was his son Canaan.¹⁷⁷³ The genealogical Table of Nations is not without its problems, especially where it concerns the scribal gloss about the Philistines.¹⁷⁷⁴ The gloss has a bearing on the Judges narrative, because whereas the early post-diluvians understood who the (Kasluḥîm) Casluhim were, the later readers have an amplified explanation in order to discern that after his death, the name of the descendants of Casluhim changed to the Philistines.¹⁷⁷⁵ It is conjectured that the priestly gloss was inserted to give historical information about the origins of the

FIGURE 75
HAM'S DESCENDANTS



¹⁷⁷¹ Jg. 10:1; 18:30; and 20:28.

¹⁷⁷² חֲמֹר. Jg. 1:16; 4:11; and 9:28.

¹⁷⁷³ Matthews, *NAC*, 444. Gen. 10:6-20.

¹⁷⁷⁴ Gen. 10:14.

¹⁷⁷⁵ פְּלִשְׁתִּים.

Philistines at a time when they were a threat to Israel.¹⁷⁷⁶ The remaining nations that tested Israel are Semitic, with only a close connection between the Ammonites and Moabites, as the descendants of Lot.¹⁷⁷⁷

CHRONOLOGY

The establishing of a verifiable history relies upon evidence. Chronology fixes the date and timing necessary to place the narratives in their A.N.E. context and becomes an integral part of this evidence.

Chronology is the backbone of history. Absolute chronology is the fixed central core around which the events of nations must be correctly grouped before they may assume their exact positions in history and before their mutual relationships may be properly understood.¹⁷⁷⁸

The simple addition of the years presented in the text is problematic to harmonize. The information given totals a period of 410 years (Table 9).¹⁷⁷⁹ Yet, there are two passages that do not outline a time frame. There is no reference to how long Shamgar judged.¹⁷⁸⁰

TABLE 9
INTERNAL CHRONOLOGICAL DATA IN JUDGES

Judgment Period	Years
Israel serves Cushan-rishathaim	8
Deliverance by Othniel; the land rests	40
Israel serves Eglon	18
Deliverance by Ehud; the land rests	80
Oppression by Jabin	20
Deliverance by Deborah and Barak; the land rests	40
Oppression by Midian	7
Deliverance by Gideon; the land rests	40
Abimelech reigns over Israel	3
Tola judges Israel	23
Jair judges Israel	22
Oppression by the Ammonites	18
Jephthah judges Israel	6
Ibzan judges Israel	7
Elon judges Israel	10
Abdon judges Israel	8
Oppression by the Philistines	40
Samson judges Israel	20
Total	410

¹⁷⁷⁶ Harrison, 12-15.

¹⁷⁷⁷ Gen. 19:36-38.

¹⁷⁷⁸ E.R. Thiele, "The Chronology of the Kings of Judah and Israel," *JNES* 3 (1944), 137.

¹⁷⁷⁹ Dalglish, 380. Jg. 3:8, 11, 14, 30; 4:3; 5:31; 6:1; 8:28; 9:22; 10:2, 3, 8; 12:7, 9, 11, 14; 13:1; 15:20; 16:31. The harmonization of this data is presented by Rowley, *From Joseph to Joshua*, 87.

¹⁷⁸⁰ Jg. 3:31.

In addition, the oppression by the Sidonians and Maonites is absent.¹⁷⁸¹ The problem becomes apparent when the period must find its place in relation to other Hebrew Bible events. There are two primary dates that become the boundaries regarding what should be included in this period. The elapsed time of 480 years between the exodus and the fourth year of Solomon's reign makes the given chronology questionable.¹⁷⁸² The internal chronology is questionable due to the 300 year reign of Israel at the time of Jephthah.¹⁷⁸³ Obviously, an overlapping judgeship period is necessary to mathematically calculate the 480 period (Table 10).¹⁷⁸⁴

TABLE 10
OTHER INTERNAL CHRONOLOGICAL DATA
IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

Other Historical Periods	Years
Period of Wandering in the Desert	40
Period of Joshua and the Elders	x
Eli judges Israel	40
Samuel judges Israel	20 + y
The reign of Saul	z
The reign of David	40
Four year's of Solomon's reign	4
Total	144 + x + y + z

The compression of chronology approach does not pose a problem because the geographical or tribal judgment was not a pan-Israelite event, but a regional one. The internal evidence includes information about years of oppression and peace; however it does not address how long it took for the slide into apostasy after each cycle. Further, the concurrent judging approach brings into question whether the text is historiographical and includes every judge of the period or whether there are other unmentioned judges with

¹⁷⁸¹ Jg. 10:12. Cf. Ridall, 107.

¹⁷⁸² 1 Kg. 6:1. The 480 chronology is not without question either. Burney's chronology places the period at 534 years (Burney, li). Cf. D.L. Washburn, "The Chronology of Judges: Another Look," *BSac* 147 (1990), 414. Recognizing the imperfection in his chronology, Washburn suggests a concurrent ruling to help reduce the actual period of the 410 years to real time. He places three periods of co-regency (Shamgar with Deborah), (Samson, Jephthah, Gideon and Abimelech), and (Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, Jair, and Tola together).

¹⁷⁸³ Jg. 11:26. D. Faiman, "Chronology in the Book of Judges," *JBQ* 20 (1992), 32-33. Faiman approaches chronology from the position of the leaders and the oppressors. He absorbs some of the years of oppression into the years of rest, making the years of rest the focal issue along with a 55 year rule for Joshua.

¹⁷⁸⁴ Num. 32:13; Jg. 2:7; 1 Sam. 4:18; 7:2, 15; 13:1; 1 Kg. 2:11; and 6:1. The harmonization of this data is presented by Rowley, *From Joseph to Joshua*, 87-88. Simple algebra reveals the number of years presented in the two aforementioned tables, $410 + 144 + x + y + z$ years is well in excess of 480 and would require reconciling them with overlapping periods.

the inclusion of twelve judges being a literary device connecting the judges to the twelve tribes.¹⁷⁸⁵ Because of the nature of the concluding chapters of Judges 17-21 being considered a redacted appendix, the chronologies do not place these stories within the framework characterized in the main hero narrative section (chapters 3-16).¹⁷⁸⁶

Another possibility using the same internal evidence works from the three hundred year period that Israel lived in Ammonite territory.¹⁷⁸⁷ As a result, Faiman introduces a two-fold chronology with Jephthah being the center point. Table 11 presents the first period and Table 12 presents the second period equaling the all important 480 years.¹⁷⁸⁸ The chronology is not based on including each element of a cyclical pattern but on that time when someone was judging Israel. The Faiman chronology with its limited reign of Samuel and Saul appears to be a revision of Moore's chronology, in which the latter more cogently had increased the Samuel and Saul era to focus on Samuel as judge during the reign of Saul and to reduce the Joshua period (Table 13).¹⁷⁸⁹

TABLE 11
INTERNAL CHRONOLOGICAL RULERSHIP
FROM THE EXODUS TO JEPHTHAH

Historical Periods	Years
Moses ruled	40
Joshua ruled	55
Othniel ruled	40
Ehud ruled	80
Deborah ruled	40
Gideon ruled	40
Tola ruled	23
Jair ruled	22
Total	340

¹⁷⁸⁵ Washburn, 416-417.

¹⁷⁸⁶ Ibid., 425.

¹⁷⁸⁷ For a survey of the different approaches of the chronological question, see J.H.J. Peet, "The Chronology of the Judges – Some Thoughts," *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 9 (1982-1983), 161-181.

¹⁷⁸⁸ Num. 32:13; Jg. 3:11, 30; 5:31; 8:28; 10:2, 3; 12:7, 9, 11, 14; 15:20; 18:31; 1 Sam. 4:18; 13:1; 1 Kg. 2:11; and 6:1. The only scriptural reference that is omitted is that of Joshua, where only his age at death is known according to Jg. 2:8. However, mathematically, a 55 year period of ruling after the exodus is plausible making him a 15 year old (*na'ar*) נַעַר at the time of the exodus. Ex. 33:11. Table 11 is from the chronology of Faiman, 33. The harmonization of this data in Table 12 is presented by Faiman, 84. Yet, the question comes with the combined total of six years reflecting the period of Samuel and Saul, of which there was obvious overlap between them.

¹⁷⁸⁹ Moore, xlii. Num. 32:13; Jg. 2:7; 3:11, 30; 5:31; 8:28; 10:2, 3; 12:7, 9, 11, 14; 13:1; 1 Sam. 4:18; 7:2, 15; 1 Kg. 2:11; and 6:1. Obviously missing is the Abimelech period. The eighty years that remain belong to the period of Joshua and to Samuel, of which it is known that mathematically ($y \geq 20$) years because of 1 Sam. 7:2, 15.

TABLE 12
INTERNAL CHRONOLOGICAL RULERSHIP
FROM JEPHTHAH TO THE TEMPLE

Historical Periods	Years
Jephthah ruled	6
Ibzan ruled	7
Elon ruled	10
Abdon ruled	8
Samson ruled	20
Eli ruled	40
Samuel ruled	4
Saul ruled	2
David ruled	40
Solomon ruled	3
Total	140

TABLE 13
INTERNAL CHRONOLOGICAL RULERSHIP
FROM THE EXODUS TO THE TEMPLE

Historical Periods	Years
Period of Wandering in the Desert	40
Period of Joshua and the Elders	x
Period of Othniel	40
Period of Ehud	80
Period of Deborah and Barak	40
Period of Gideon	40
Period of Tola	23
Period of Jair	22
Period of Jephthah	6
Period of Ibzan	7
Period of Elon	10
Period of Abdon	8
Period of Samson	20
Period of Eli	40
Period of Samuel	y
Period of David	40
Period of Solomon until the Temple	4
Total	400 + x + y

Within the last five years, the methodology behind the chronological question has been seriously challenged. The debate hinges upon the Iron Age low chronology based upon the initial Philistine settlement and the absence of monochrome pottery in Southern Canaan.¹⁷⁹⁰ Nonetheless, the issue of solving the chronological dating questions and placing them within their historical context is unaddressed as they are beyond the

¹⁷⁹⁰ S. Bunimovitz and A. Faust, "Chronological Separation, Geographical Segregation, or Ethnic Demarcation? Ethnography and the Iron Age Low Chronology," *BASOR* 322 (2001), 1-10.

scope of this research.¹⁷⁹¹ However, what can be discerned is the exact chronology in the stereotyped formulas is not part of the author's purpose, whereas it becomes a literary device to convey the idea that "the results of God's work through His servants was a long period (generation?) of rest."¹⁷⁹²

ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN TEXTS

The external evidence found among A.N.E. texts by comparative analysis corroborates the Judges narrative.¹⁷⁹³ The events related in A.N.E. texts often reflect the sphere of divine activity. These actions may be related in cases of the natural elements or historically through military or political incidents. Judges gives examples of this through holy war, as earlier discussed. The divine action usually is mediated through some human act. This divine activity which is abundantly present in Mesopotamian texts shares a commonality with its other A.N.E. counterparts.

The idea of historical events as divine actions is not restricted to certain types of texts. Just as they come from the most different periods of ancient Mesopotamian history, so they represent the most different categories: historical texts, hymns, prayers and rituals.¹⁷⁹⁴

EGYPTIAN TEXTS. By the time of the Middle Bronze age, the Egyptian documents began to reflect certain political and demographic changes; whereas the Egyptians "knew the land as *Rṯnw* and its inhabitants mostly as 'mw, [they] began to use new names: Ḫuru and Canaan, Amurru, Aram, Se'ir and Edom, Moab and Israel."¹⁷⁹⁵ The victory stele erected by Pharaoh Merneptah (1207 BCE) is important because of its mention of Israel.

¹⁷⁹¹ Dates for the beginning of the Judges era include: 1360-1350 BCE, Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 148; and 1373 BCE, S. Warner, "The Dating of the Period of the Judges," *VT* 28 (1978), 455-463. For other treatments of this chronological problem see: Cundall, *TOTC*, 28-33; Faiman, 31-40; Garstang, 51-66; Moore, xxxvii-xliii; W.M.F. Petrie, *Egypt and Israel* (London: Murray, 1911), 50-63; and Rowley, *From Joseph to Joshua*, 57-108.

¹⁷⁹² The example of the early Judges period with Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, and Gideon is given. "So the land had rest [*wattišqōf*] forty years" (Jg. 3:11; 5:31; and 8:28). The fourth usage has the same expression in 3:30; however the number is doubled to eighty years. It would be highly unusual (though not impossible) to have had identical regnal periods. See Armerding, 46.

¹⁷⁹³ W.W. Hallo, "Compare and Contrast: The Contextual Approach to Biblical Literature," *The Bible in the Light of Cuneiform Literature: Scripture in Context III*, (Eds.) W.W. Hallo, B.W. Jones, and G.L. Mattingly (*ANETS* 8: Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1990), 1-30.

¹⁷⁹⁴ B. Albrektson, *History and the Gods: An Essay on the Idea of Historical Events as Divine Manifestations in the Ancient Near East and in Israel (ConBibOT 1)*: Lund, Sweden: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1967), 34.

¹⁷⁹⁵ Aḫituv, 136.

Despite the different interpretations of the text, “no one has proved that ‘Israel’ in the Merneptah stele should be regarded as a place name rather than an ethnic term.”¹⁷⁹⁶

The issue of covenantal responsibility becomes a point of judicial indictment against Israel because of the specific requirements set forth which they either ignored and/or violated. Accordingly, Deuteronomy 28 sets forth the provisions for blessing and those for the cursing of Israel based on its covenantal response. The blessing and cursing document has its parallel in a treaty between the Hittites and the Egyptians during the reign of Rameses II (circa 1280 BCE).

As for the words which are on this tablet of silver of the land of Ḫatti and of the land of Egypt—as for him who shall not keep them, a thousand gods of the land of Ḫatti, together with a thousand gods of the land of Egypt shall destroy his house, his land, and his servants. But, as for him who shall keep these words which are on this tablet of silver, whether they are Ḫatti or Egyptians, and they are not neglectful of them, a thousand gods of the land of Ḫatti, together with a thousand gods of the land of Egypt, shall cause that he be well, shall cause that he shall live, together with his houses, and his land, and his servants.¹⁷⁹⁷

ASSYRIAN TEXTS. One of the categories assigned to the ancient texts is “Display Texts.” This category would be further divided in regard to whether it related to a military conquest or not. Thus, the conquest narrative of Judges chapter one is contemporary with Assyrian military records.¹⁷⁹⁸ The Song of Deborah narrative that relates to Themac, the mother of Sisera, who was waiting for him to return to her with spoil from the battle against Israel has its parallel in Tablet III in the Assyrian version of the Epic of Gilgamesh.¹⁷⁹⁹ The mother of Gilgamesh addresses her deity regarding her son.

Why having given me Gilgamesh for a son, with a restless heart didst thou endow him?
And now thou didst affect him to go on a far journey, to the place of Humbaba, to face an
uncertain battle, to travel an uncertain road! Until the day that he goes and returns, until
he reaches the Cedar Forest, until he has slain the fierce Humbaba, and has banished from
the land all the evil thou dost hate.¹⁸⁰⁰

Just as the Song of Deborah has its meteorological elements as part of the divine arsenal of warfare, there is an Assyrian parallel ascribed to the god *Ashur*.

¹⁷⁹⁶ Hess, “Early Israel in Canaan,” 134. See the section, “Archaeological Sites outside Israel” on page 245 for the translation of that part of the stele.

¹⁷⁹⁷ “Egyptian Treaty: The Treaty Between the Hittites and Egypt,” *ANET*, 2nd ed., 200.

¹⁷⁹⁸ A.K. Grayson, “Histories and Historians of the Ancient Near East: Assyria and Babylonia,” *Orientalia* 49 (1980), 152-153.

¹⁷⁹⁹ Jg. 5:28-30.

¹⁸⁰⁰ “The Epic of Gilgamesh,” *ANET*, 2nd ed., 81.

From the gate of heaven I am swooping down. I will cast them down; I will let fire devour them. You shall remain standing between them. I will remove them from you; I will chase them off into the mountains. I will rain fire-stones down upon them. I will present your enemies as a sacrifice. With their blood I will fill the river. May men see it and praise me, that I am *Ashur*, the Lord of the gods.¹⁸⁰¹

UGARITIC TEXTS. Clay tablets which were excavated in the 1930s from ancient Ugarit include fragments of the legend of King Keret, whose reign was in the fourteenth century BCE. Although this was before the Iron I era, the text makes references similar to the Gideon narrative and its description of the Midianite nomads.

Like the locusts that dwell on the steppe, like grasshoppers on the border of the desert. March a day and a second; a third, a fourth day, a fifth, a sixth day—Lo! At the sun on the seventh; thou arrivest at Udum the Great, even at Udum the Grand. — Now do thou attack the villages; harass the towns. Sweep from the fields the wood-cutting wives, from the threshing floors the straw-picking ones; sweep from the spring the women that draw, from the fountain those that fill.¹⁸⁰²

Conclusion

The theological content of Judges and the cyclical pattern of change within premonarchic Israel becomes the driving force for the Deuteronomist rather than presenting a succinct historical record of the period. This cyclical cult pattern, which is addressed extensively in chapter five, becomes a literary scheme highlighting the stylistic literary tradition of the A.N.E. Thus, the past is recorded “in terms of periods of order and chaos (*Heil und Unheil*).¹⁸⁰³ Ultimately, the redactors have capitalized on this concept as it relates to the fidelity and infidelity of premonarchic Israel toward YHWH and the covenant. Instead of history, the events portrayed in the book of Judges are reduced to a theological interpretation of the Deuteronomist and his Yahwistic sphere of influence. The conjunction of the tradition of the tribal heroes with the list of judges became a point of fusion whereby the influence of the judges was extended with a greater importance to the tribes as hero deliverers. Their charismatic leadership thus helped to establish a framework for liberating Israel from its apostasy.¹⁸⁰⁴ For the Deuteronomist,

¹⁸⁰¹ For this text, “K 2401: Oracles of the goddess Ištar of Arbela addressed to the King, Esarhaddon,” see J.A. Craig, *Assyrian and Babylonian Religious Texts: Being Prayers, Oracles, Hymns, etc. / Copied from the original tablets preserved in the British Museum and autographed by James A. Craig* (Assyriologische Bibliothek 13: Leipzig, Germany: J.C. Henrichs, 1895), 22-23.

¹⁸⁰² “The Legend of King Keret,” *ANET*, 2nd ed., 144.

¹⁸⁰³ Ahlström, *The History of Ancient Palestine from the Paleolithic Period to Alexander's Conquest*, 375. Some examples of this in Near Eastern prophetic texts include R.D. Biggs, “More Babylonian ‘Prophecies,’” *Iraq* 29 (1967), 117-132; and A.K. Grayson and W.G. Lambert, “Akkadian Prophecies,” *JCS* 18 (1964), 7-30.

¹⁸⁰⁴ Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History*, 42-44.

when Israel was in a repentant state, the historiography of Judges highlights a common feature among these deliverers:

They did their warlike deeds to protect the Israelite territory against foreign encroachments, not by virtue of an authority given to them by their own tribe, or which was previously provided for in the constitution for special cases, but on the strength of the sudden appearance of a personal gift and power which was regarded in Israel simply as a charisma, a free gift of Yahweh to the individual, and which therefore swept the populace along with it.¹⁸⁰⁵

Even though there is some ambiguity with the chronology of the period, there is no reason to abandon the historical traditions incorporated in the narrative. Yet, for some, the narratives are only legends and sagas, which should not require placement within a two hundred year period of Israel's prehistory. Thus, they reject the premise that the interval between 1200 and 1000 BCE should be regarded as an historical epoch.¹⁸⁰⁶

Theological and Ethical Issues

The Judges narrative while portraying the societal conditions of premonarchic Israel and giving the reader historiographical information also raises certain historiosophical issues with a theological and ethical value which the reader at the very least, must address at a subconscious level or consciously struggle to give incarnational meaning. The majority of these issues, including those related to sexual sin and other covenantal violations are addressed specifically as they relate to other sections of this research.¹⁸⁰⁷ Yet, because of the different hermeneutical methodologies some theological concerns are not addressed within that discipline because they do not fulfill the needs of that type of critical analysis. Some of these unaddressed questions that have ethical and theological significance include the motifs of death and murder, tribal favoritism, and divine involvement.

Death/Murder

As explained later in chapter five, one of the *leitwords* that the reader is confronted with in Judges is "death." In its substantive and verbal forms there are 38 references, which make it the thirteenth most frequently used word. Mortality as a motif

¹⁸⁰⁵ Alt, "The Formation of the Israelite State in Palestine," 178. An exception to this would be the mercenary hiring of Jephthah.

¹⁸⁰⁶ Lemche, *Early Israel*, 416-417.

¹⁸⁰⁷ The areas of sexual sin present in Judges include homosexuality, rape, adultery, fornication, and prostitution. The discussion of the areas of covenantal violation were previously addressed in the section "Reason for YHWH's Test," pages 302-309.

is primarily expressed outside of its normal biological function. The only exceptions are the death notice about Joshua and the elders and in the concluding death formula of the judges.¹⁸⁰⁸ A related theme includes the burial notice.¹⁸⁰⁹ That death and dying have eternal theological ramifications is not denied; however, the immediate concern is with the incidences of death where life has been terminated through the agency of another, which is both a theological and ethical concern. Surprisingly, the cognates of (*rāṣaḥ*) “murder” are not found in Judges.¹⁸¹⁰ Neither are the modern legal terms of homicide or suicide in the text. Other than the pejorative term “die” there are two terms dominating the narrative. The first term is present in the forms of (*hārag*) “kill.”¹⁸¹¹ The other term used is (*nākāh*) “smite.”¹⁸¹² Also, the author used infrequently the terms (*šāḥat*) “slaughter” and (*hālāl*) “slay.”¹⁸¹³

As would be expected, the majority of the death references are within the context of war. As the heroes were delivering Israel from their oppressors this context allowed for the enemies to be placed under the ban, that is (*hērem*).¹⁸¹⁴ It would seem that this is a reckless and callous annihilation of lives. Yet, the narrator guides the reader to understand that these enemies were to be dispossessed from the land and that action through warfare is theologically acceptable. In addition, there were incidences of murder by homicide. Yet, the death notices also involved cases of suicide and human sacrifice.

Being removed from the premonarchic period by several millennia, the ethical issues in Judges concerning life and death are bothersome. Even more than the presence of these events depicted is the essential absence of any editorial comment. Death is a normal human function. War and the casualties associated with it are inevitable. These items can be justified and the reader moves on without any moral bewilderment. But, the societal condition was bereft with dysfunctional responses of homicide, assisted suicide, suicide, child sacrifice, and acts of torture. Although the author introduces these acts, it is not important for him to pass judgment on the theological and ethical concerns. Rather

¹⁸⁰⁸ Jg. 1:1; 2:8, 10, 19, 20; 3:11; 4:1; 8:32; 10:2, 5; 12:7, 10, 12, and 15. Samson is not included in this list because his death was not due to natural causes.

¹⁸⁰⁹ Jg. 2:9; 8:32; 10:5; 12:7, 10, 12, 15; and 16:31.

¹⁸¹⁰ **ח** **רָצַח**. BDB, 953-954.

¹⁸¹¹ **ח** **הָרַג**. BDB, 246-247. Jg. 7:25; 8:17, 18, 19, 20, 21; 9:5, 24, 45, 54, 55, and 56.

¹⁸¹² **ח** **נָכַח**. BDB, 645-646. Jg. 1:4, 5, 10, 17; 3:29, 31; 9:44; 14:19; 15:15; and 20:45.

¹⁸¹³ **ח** **שָׁחַט** and **חָלַל**. BDB, 319, and 1006. Jg. 12:6; and 16:24.

¹⁸¹⁴ **ח** **חָרַם**. BDB, 356.

they illustrate the anarchy and abandonment of *Torah* observance. Even with the reader's dilemma of coming to grips with an ethical solution, the author underscores that divine judgment is operating. Sometimes it is judgment against the oppressive nation. At others it is an overt Israelite societal judgment. For the Deuteronomic Historian, it is more important to create an awareness of the need of a new leadership paradigm through historical rhetoric and leave his readers to wrestle with the didactic elements of ethics. Thus, it is not surprising that the motif of favoritism would also be present in the text.

Tribal Favoritism

Of all the tribes mentioned in Judges, there is a distinct positive characterization of the tribe of Judah despite its limited appearance in the narratives, whereas on the other hand, the other tribes do not receive this favorable treatment. Because Judah does not appear in the pre-Deuteronomic corpus, with the exception of a remote instance with some men of Judah in connection to Samson, the redactor included the introductory and epilogic material as a framework that emphasized Judah. The motivation for this by the Deuteronomist, as earlier addressed, is to underscore the polemic value of a Davidic monarchy. The structure of the Deuteronomistic introduction allows for a dichotomous presentation of Judah and its confederates in juxtaposition to the House of Joseph and the other northern tribes.

Theologically, there is no problem in presenting one tribe in a better light than the other tribes. However, the ethical concern is how favoritism of Judah to the exclusion of the others can be justified. This is not problematic for the Deuteronomic Historian, who can illustrate examples of younger brothers being favored over the eldest brother in contravention of cultural inheritance norms.¹⁸¹⁵ The clearest example of this is in the divine statement, "Yet I have loved Jacob; but I have hated Esau."¹⁸¹⁶ Whereas this is the divine pronouncement of the favoritism of the twin brothers, the earthly pronouncement of their grandfather about their father also had the same theological implication because in each case this "was the one through whom God's purposes would be worked out both in the promised land and through the promised people."¹⁸¹⁷ Of the tribes, Levi has a distinctive cultic role; however, the prophetic monarchic distinction belonged to Judah

¹⁸¹⁵ Examples of this would include Isaac rather than (*Yišmā'ē'l*) יִשְׁמָעֵאל Ishmael, Joseph rather than Reuben, and Ephraim rather than Manasseh. Gen. 21:12; 48:14, 22; and 49:3-4.

¹⁸¹⁶ Mal. 1:2b-3a.

¹⁸¹⁷ Briscoe, 216.

and the narratives do not define the rationale YHWH employed in making this choice. What ethically seems inappropriate with an apparent unequal balance between tribes is not theologically aberrant and with this underlying principle, the Deuteronomic Historian emphasizes Judah to prepare the reader for the later monarchal era through the Davidic Dynasty, which ultimately will be realized in the Messianic rule of the Son of David.

Divine Involvement

The third area which elicits questions for the reader is the apparent inconsistency of character in which the narrator describes actions relating to deity. Already, we have introduced the apparent divine approval of violence and cruelty that results in death. Yet, rather than focus on this element of violence as a main topic it can be subjected to a discussion on divine involvement. Further, there is the question of the Holy Spirit and His presence through profane behavior.

THROUGH VIOLENCE

Each of the narratives has elements that overlap into different perspectival filters. This is true where violence is concerned. These narratives have been addressed in regard to the motif of death; however, what has not been succinctly addressed is how the narrator reports divine activity through violent means. This usage of violence must serve an editorial purpose. One suggestion is this portrayal of violence has a two-fold function: "1) to establish and legitimize Hebrew authority; and 2) to regenerate and renew the vitality of the nation during the judicial era."¹⁸¹⁸ If this is the case, then both functions find their fulfillment in the editorial guidelines previously established of signs and leadership.

The ethical consideration is the infliction of torture upon another person. If there was only one indication of this in the text, then it might be considered as a remote event. However, that there are four examples of this in the Judges narrative does reflect that this practice does feature within premonarchic Israelite society. The first instance involved Adoni-bezek.¹⁸¹⁹ Before his capture by Judah, he had amputated the thumbs and large toes of seventy Canaanite kings. Within the context of the *Lex talionis*, Adoni-bezek was attributively punished by having his thumbs and large toes cut off.

¹⁸¹⁸ Bowman and Swanson, 61.

¹⁸¹⁹ Jg. 1:5-7.

The second instance was perpetrated by Gideon.¹⁸²⁰ In his pursuit after Zebah and Zalmunna, he and his soldiers were hungry as a result of their battle efforts. Gideon had made a request of the elders of Succoth for loaves of bread for his army. After they refused his request, Gideon promised that he would discipline them after he had captured Zebah and Zalmunna. He fulfilled his threat by thrashing their bodies with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers. The torture was not limited to the elders; but, it also was administered to the men of Succoth.

The remaining instances occur within the Samson narratives. The first one is a little tenuous because it related to animals. In an amazing feat, Samson was able to capture three hundred foxes and tie them tail to tail in 150 pairs.¹⁸²¹ This torture has the added dimension of cruelty to animals when they were bound in an unnatural way and then torches that were tied to their tails were set ablaze. Although the narrator does not give the reader the final disposition of the animals, the clear implication is that they would have died by fire. It would seem that a degree of retribution was returned to Samson for this cruelty to the innocent foxes after his capture by the Philistines. The obvious element of torture involved the Philistines gouging out both of his eyes.¹⁸²² In his blindness, as a prisoner he was required to grind grain and then later to amuse the Philistines who would mock him.¹⁸²³

THROUGH PROFANE BEHAVIOR

The various acts of violence, though problematic for the reader can be distanced because of historiographical time. However, the idea of YHWH, who is present in the current dimension, as He was in the premonarchic era working through the central characters who showed profaned behavior has immediate theological application to our generation. Even a cursory understanding of the divine attribute of holiness implies that in His "separate-ness" YHWH does not contaminate that holiness with the unholy. However, despite the very nature of the sinful condition of man the gap between the holy and unholy is somehow bridged. The closest antonymic equivalent for the Hebrew concept of (*qāḏôš*) would be "profane." Thus, through the usage of judges who

¹⁸²⁰ Jg. 8:16.

¹⁸²¹ Jg. 15:4-5.

¹⁸²² Jg. 16:21.

¹⁸²³ Jg. 16:21, and 23-25.

exemplified profane behavior inconsistent with the *Torah*, the reader might question whether YHWH is thus guilty by association.

It is true that the Holy Spirit came upon certain figures and following that empowerment they acted contrary to the nature of YHWH. Jephthah following his spiritual enduement made a vow, engaged in a victorious battle, and submitted to fulfill his vow of sacrificing his daughter as an offering. Samson, also with this same divine gifting engages in illicit sexual activity, guerrilla warfare, and other violent acts to man, animal, and property. These activities by judges acting on behalf of YHWH because of the “explicit and repeated references to divine involvement in the person and the process by which the task shall be accomplished suggests divine endorsement of these activities.”¹⁸²⁴

Then, there is a corollary of how YHWH would endorse a marriage to an unbeliever (non-Israelite) and that being justified by a motive of stirring up strife against the Philistines. The *Torah* forbids this type of exogamous relationship, so why would YHWH support it?¹⁸²⁵ Plausibly this could be answered by understanding this fell under the category of permissive will instead of sovereign will. Israel would be delivered from the Philistine oppression. However, divine providence used the carnal responses of Samson, with his self-centered willful spirit to be drawn into the situation by his own lusts. Providence used what was available through the circumstances. YHWH was not violating Himself or *Torah*, because acting through Samson’s parents, the proper marital pattern was proposed.¹⁸²⁶ Knowing that Samson was bent upon his own desire, YHWH empowered him through that desire punishing the Philistines and bringing a measure of deliverance to Israel.¹⁸²⁷ Nevertheless, even with the divine sanction of violence through Samson, the net result is the deliverer is dead, the leadership authority is not established, and Israel has not been renewed in its covenantal relationship with YHWH.¹⁸²⁸

¹⁸²⁴ Bowman and Swanson, 62.

¹⁸²⁵ Dt. 7:3.

¹⁸²⁶ Jg. 14:3.

¹⁸²⁷ G.L. Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), 165-166.

¹⁸²⁸ Bowman and Swanson, 69.

THROUGH SUPRAHUMAN MEANS

It is not surprising to see humans as divine functionaries. Nor is it theologically disconcerting to see an angelic intervention in human life. Judges presents accounts of several angelic visitations. Even a demonic presence portrayed in the text is an acceptable convention recognizing the sinful state of humanity. The problem surfaces when the evil spirit is the direct agency of YHWH, sent, and working at His behest. As the means of prophetic fulfillment to Jotham's prophecy an evil spirit was sent between Abimelech and the men of Shechem.¹⁸²⁹ This does not have to imply demonic possession; however, the effect of demonization was experienced. The narrator justifies this action as direct retribution for the violence Abimelech and his accomplices caused through murder. The problem lies with the theological distinction made in our doctrinal understanding of angelology and demonology. Angels have a positive functional role as divine servants. That does not necessitate that demons would have an opposite role, despite the antagonistic role given them in scripture. In their created role, demons are in essence angels who have fallen from their original state.¹⁸³⁰ Nevertheless, that does not place them outside the realm of divine employ.¹⁸³¹ Within the Hebrew bible narratives

[S]upernatural evil beings are referred to or described which, when examined, are found to correspond to demons among other [especially Egyptian, Arabic, Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian] peoples. In some cases it is possible to trace a definite connexion between the Old Testament conception and its pagan prototype.¹⁸³²

At times in the narratives, these suprahuman beings are named as (*hann^hhāšīm hašš^hrāpīm*) "fiery serpents" and (*hašš^h'irim*) "goat demons."¹⁸³³ Demons may primarily be classified as either theriomorphic or anthropomorphic based on the form they assume.¹⁸³⁴ However, the Judges passage gives this demon no identifiable name other than calling it an evil spirit. A distinction here is made between the subordinate demon and Satan, who also must ultimately submit to divine authority. Unfortunately, the narrator in Judges only introduces the evil spirit as a divine agent and explains the reason

¹⁸²⁹ Jg. 9:23.

¹⁸³⁰ As prince of the demons, Satan's fall from his position as arch-angel is generally accepted as the position for establishing a doctrine that the angels that followed him assumed this new spiritual role as demons. Isa. 14:12-20; Mt. 12:24; and Rev. 12:4.

¹⁸³¹ YHWH used demons to fulfill His will in the life of King Saul and the Apostle Paul. 1 Sam. 16:14; and 2 Cor. 12:7.

¹⁸³² E. Langton, *Essentials of Demonology: A Study of Jewish and Christian Doctrine, Its Origin and Development* (London: Epworth Press, 1949), 35.

¹⁸³³ הַשֵּׁרִיפִּים הַשֵּׁרִיפִּים; הַשֵּׁרִיפִּים; and הַשֵּׁרִיפִּים. Lev. 17:7; and Num. 21:6.

¹⁸³⁴ Langton, 35.

for his use. Why something from the unseen spiritual realm would be used is one of those unanswered questions. What we can know is that the resources at YHWH's disposal are vast and though they may at times appear as a choice contradictory to the divine nature, we must understand that His peculiar judgment will be meted out to accomplish His divine purpose.

So how can one rationalize the manner in which YHWH worked through men and especially in those times when He was in the person of the Holy Spirit? The divine presence active in a life need not denote divine approval of a specific lifestyle. This would be to confuse YHWH's grace, through his temporary non-judgment of sin in that life as approval of sin. Ultimately, we must accept that "in God's sovereignty the Holy Spirit came on men for particular tasks, and this enduing was not necessarily proportionate to one's spirituality."¹⁸³⁵ YHWH used frail humanity to be the agent of His deliverance; but, that does not constitute a divine frailness nor does it make YHWH culpable for their sin in His redemptive action.

Having approached the theme of judgment through a hermeneutic of diachronic methodologies provides us with a substantial foundation for a historisophical understanding of YHWH's judgment of His people. Nonetheless, the historical literary and social scientific approaches to understanding the text are not adequate in and of themselves for exegesis. By necessity our examination must move forward to a synchronic interpretation of the text.

¹⁸³⁵ Wolf, 381.