

Summer Sermon Series

Summer 2019

**PARTNERSHIP FOR
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Diocese of Ely



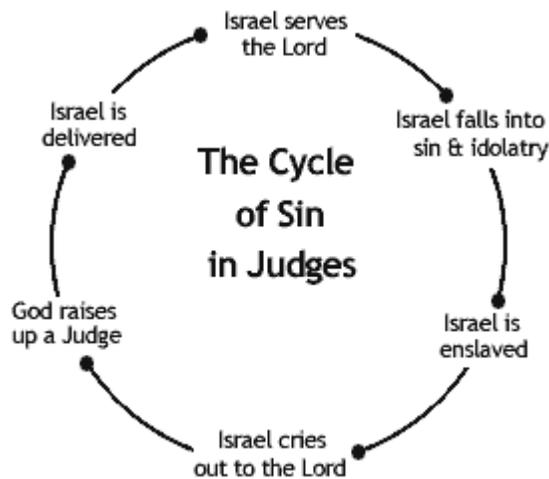
A state that has lost its way
studies in the book of Judges

A state that has lost its way: *Studies in the Book of Judges.*

The book of Judges is pivotal in the Old Testament and, at its close, shows us a terrifying picture of a deeply divided nation descending into chaos. The stories of the increasingly broken 'heroes' as recounted by the historians of Israel and by the final editors of their work, hold up to us a distant mirror of what happens to a people who lose their way.

As the book opens, we find that Israel is rapidly forgetting all that God had done for them in the Exodus: their escape from slavery in Egypt, and the covenant agreement made through Moses with God at Mount Sinai. This covenant was one of rewards and punishments. Put briefly, 'good behaviour', that is behaviour that honoured God, His creation and all his people, would bring peace and security, but 'bad behaviour' that was focused more and more on self would have dire consequences.

In Judges, we will come to see a cyclical pattern of behaviour.



Each cycle begins with a period of peace, during which time basic truths are forgotten, behaviour becomes more and more wayward, and violence and disorder grow. Oppressed and in despair, the people cry out for help and God responds.

The judges are basically military rulers who step in to restore order and peace, but the hard-learned lesson is soon forgotten, and the sequence begins again. Sadly, the judges themselves mirror the state of the nation and became more and more wayward. A sinful nation cannot in the end find a way out of the mess, each deliverance is less decisive, and attitudes and actions become more violent and wild.

At the end of the book, the need for a King who will restore order is unspoken but urgent. 1 Samuel will take the story onwards, to the institution of kingship for Israel. Sadly, the flaws the book of Judges identifies so powerfully are not altogether eliminated by this, and thus humanity's need for another 'rescuer' becomes clearer.

23 rd June Trinity 1	Judges 2:6-23 Setting the scene Luke 8:26-39
30 th June Trinity 2	Judges 4:1-16 Deborah Luke 9:51 to end
7 th July Trinity 3	Judges 6:1-27 Gideon Luke 10:1-11, 16-20
14 th July Trinity 4	Judges 11:29-35 Jephthah Luke 10:25-37
21 st July Trinity 5	Luke 10:38 -end Guest Speaker Mission to Seafarers
28 th July Trinity 6	Luke 11:1-13 Lectionary AP away
4 th August Trinity 7	Judges 14:1-14 Samson 1 Luke 12:13-21
11 th August Trinity 8	Judges 16:1-17 Samson 2 Luke 12:32-40
18 th August Trinity 9	Luke 12:49-56 Lectionary AP away
25 th August Trinity 10	Luke 13:10-17 Lectionary AP away
1 st Sept Trinity 11	Judges 20:1-7,24-28 (17-21 pre or post reading) as bad as it gets? Luke 14:1, 7-14
8 th Sept Patronal festival	