

IS JUDGES HISTORICAL? JUDGES 1:1

What happened? Is this real history?

*Wilmer McLean

A normal man in abnormal times. He was primarily a wholesale trader. Sugar was one of his biggest products.

July 21, 1861 Manassas Junction / Bull Run

He then moved 120 miles farther west to escape the conflict

April 8, 1865 Appomattox Courthouse

He stated: "The war began in my front yard and ended in my front parlor!"

| Fiction | Historical fiction | Essentially history | History+ | History – as in a chronicle |
|---------|--------------------|---------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| | | | Story / Narrative History His story Not all that happened Not even all the important history All from Israel's perspective All for God's purposes | |

What do we find?

1. History with bookends!

Joshua 1:1 NOW after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying,

Judges 1:1 NOW after the death of Joshua it came to pass, that the children of Israel asked the LORD, saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them?

Judges 2:8 And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old.

1 Samuel 13:1 Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, **1 Samuel 13:2** Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel; whereof two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in mount Beth-el, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin: and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent. **1 Samuel 13:3** And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear.

What do we find?

- History
- Connected history
- Connected, narrative history
- History about Israel and other peoples as they interact & impinge upon Israel.

2. History with dates!

Judges 11:26 While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her towns, and in Aroer and her towns, and in all the cities that be along by the coasts of Arnon, **three hundred years?** why therefore did ye not recover them within that time?

1 Kings 6:1 And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD.

1446 ← ----- 966 BC

1400 ← ----- 1100s

This is fairly common throughout the Bible. Usually this is done **without any apologetic value:**

Haggai 1:1 IN the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying, **Haggai 1:2** Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built.

Haggai 2:1 In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month, came the word of the LORD by the prophet Haggai, saying,

Haggai 2:10 In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying,

Haggai 2:20 And again the word of the LORD came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth day of the month, saying, **Haggai 2:21** Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth;

Luke 2:1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from **Caesar Augustus**, that all the world should be taxed. **Luke 2:2** (And this taxing was first made when **Cyrenius was governor of Syria.**)

Luke 3:1 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, **Luke 3:2** Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

Acts 11:27 And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. **Acts 11:28** And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: **which came to pass in the days of **Claudius Caesar.****

Acts 18:1 After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; **Acts 18:2** And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that **Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:**) and came unto them.

5. History confirmed by **other history!**

Merneptah Stele – created / carved in 1208 BC

From Pharaoh Merneptah 1213-1203 BC

Discovered by Flinders Petrie 1896 at Thebes.

This was a victory Stele of Merneptah → or a brag sheet written / carved in stone! (This is my opinion of it!)

28 lines total. Most deal with his victory over the Libyans

3 lines deal with a campaign in Canaan:

The princes are prostrate, saying, "Peace!"
Not one is raising his head among the Nine Bows.
Now that Tehenu (Libya) has come to ruin,
Hatti is pacified;
The Canaan has been plundered into every sort of woe:
[Ashkelon](#) has been overcome;
[Gezer](#) has been captured;
[Yano'am](#) is made non-existent.
Israel is laid waste and his seed is not;
Hurru is become a widow because of Egypt.

How does this help us?

- **This gives a solid, external date**
- **Israel, large enough and unified enough, to be recognized**
- **Named Israel by their enemies**
- **Egypt destroyed their seed (= the grain for planting and eating)**
- **This fits well into the invasion of the Sea Peoples**

- **This gives us the technically advanced Philistines as primary enemies during the later Judges (Samson & Samuel) and during the first Kings (Saul & David)**