

IS JUDGES HISTORICAL? JUDGES 1:1

What do we find?

1. History with **bookends!**

2. History with **dates!**

3. History **within** history!

1 Samuel 13:1-3

1 Samuel 13:19 Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears: 1 Samuel 13:20 But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock. 1 Samuel 13:21 Yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to sharpen the goads. 1 Samuel 13:22 So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found.

Deuteronomy 7:1 When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, **the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou;** Deuteronomy 7:2 And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: Deuteronomy 7:3 Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. Deuteronomy 7:4 For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. Deuteronomy 7:5 But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire.

The Era of the Judges ends with the rise of the Kings and Jewish kingdom.

How does this small~ group of Israelites suddenly emerge on the world's stage and then reasonably quickly rise to become a "superpower" and just as quickly decline into a bit player / 2 bit players?

What we know:

➤ **Israel emerges among several Superpowers:**

Egypt:

Hittite Empire: to the far north primarily in modern-day Turkey

Mitanni Empire (The Hurrians) in Syria and Iraq

Assyrian Empire:

Mycenaean Greeks:

Minoan Cretes:

➤ **Israel emerges during the late bronze age → 1550-1200BC**

In fact, Israel was still using bronze weapons while the Philistines were using iron weapons.

This means that iron weapons emerged more slowly in the margins.

➤ **Israel emerges from the collapse of the (late) bronze age**

It only takes a minute to recognize that many superpowers fall on very hard times exactly when Israel begins to emerge as a nation.

A. Elimination of some empires

Hittites: 1178 BC gone from history.... Hittite dynasties / enclaves survived after this in Syria, Lebanon, and the Levant.

Mitanni / Hurrian: 1150 BC

Mycenaean Greece: 1050 BC

Minoan Cretes: 1100BC

B. (Near) Destruction of others:

Egyptian Empire: decline....although always present but never the superpower again

Assyrian Empire: collapse: 1200-936 BC

C. **Intrusion of one empire: The Philistines!**

The Sea Peoples caused massive destruction throughout the Mediterranean, Egypt, Asia Minor, Syria, Lebanon, and...!

At least some of the Sea Peoples migrate into the Philistine Pentapolis

Philistines:

➤ **Already present in Abraham's day**

7x in Genesis	2x in Exodus
0x in Leviticus – Deuteronomy	2x in Joshua

➤ **Not known as enemies then**

➤ **No warnings in Exodus – Deuteronomy about Philistines as potential enemies → because they weren't enemies**

➤ **Intrusion into Palestine**

➤ **“Probably” connected to the Sea Peoples**

➤ **“Probably” from Crete, Greek Isles, Southern Europe, Rome...**

(DNA links with as far west as Spain)

➤ **Certainly early Israel's biggest threat from Samson to Saul!**

7 x in Genesis	2x in Exodus	0 x in Leviticus
0 x in Numbers	0x in Deuteronomy	2 x Joshua
31 x in Judges	100+ x in I Samuel	24 x in II Samuel
3x in I Kings	3 x in II Kings	

➤ **Certainly more advanced technologically than Israel from Samson to Saul**

Bronze age → Iron age!

4. **History with footnotes!**

Judges 1:21 And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem **unto this day**.

Judges 1:26 And the man went into the land of the Hittites, and built a city, and called the name thereof Luz: which is the name thereof **unto this day**.

Judges 6:24 Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovah-shalom: **unto this day** it is yet in Ophrah of the Abi-ezrites.

Judges 10:4 And he had thirty sons that rode on thirty ass colts, and they had thirty cities, which are called Havoth-jair **unto this day**, which are in the land of Gilead.

Judges 15:19 But God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived: wherefore he called the name thereof En-hakkore, which is in Lehi **unto this day**.

Judges 18:12 And they went up, and pitched in Kirjath-jearim, in Judah: wherefore they called that place Mahaneh-dan **unto this day**: behold, it is behind Kirjath-jearim.

Judges 19:30 And it was so, that all that saw it said, There was no such deed done nor seen from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt **unto this day**: consider of it, take advice, and speak your minds.

Judges 1:11 And from thence he went against the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir **before** was Kirjath-sepher:

Judges 1:23 And the house of Joseph sent to descry Beth-el. (**Now the name of the city before was Luz.**)

Judges 19:10 But the man would not tarry that night, but he rose up and departed, and came over against **Jebus, which is Jerusalem**; and there were with him two asses saddled, his concubine also was with him.

Judges 20:27 And the children of Israel inquired of the LORD, (for the ark of the covenant of God was there **in those days**, **Judges 20:28** And Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it **in those days**,) saying, Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease? And the LORD said, Go up; for to morrow I will deliver them into thine hand.

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