

IN THE TIME OF THE JUDGES

FROM THE CONQUEST (c. 1200 B.C.E.)
TO THE RISE OF THE MONARCHY (c. 1020 B.C.E.)
A COLLECTION OF TRIBAL NARRATIVES
ARE STRUNG TOGETHER AS IF THE “JUDGES,”
WHO LED INDIVIDUAL TRIBES IN BATTLE,
WERE SUCCESSIVE NATIONAL LEADERS.

Here are the MAJOR JUDGES and the ENEMIES they fought:

Ehud, a Benjamite	vs. Eglon King of Moab
Deborah, an Ephraimite & Barak	vs. Jael, a Kenite & Sisera of Canaan
Gideon (a.k.a. Jerubbaal) another Ephraimite	vs. Midianites
Abimelech, his son	vs. Brother Jotham & “Israel”
Jephthah, a Gileadite	vs. Ammonites
Samson, a Danite	vs. Delilah & the Philistines

What do these tribal leaders have in common?

According to the Editor (JE?) Who strung them together,
All of them DELIVERED “Israel” from enemies
into whose hand God had DELIVERED them.

NARRATIVE STRUCTURE IS PROVIDED BY A
CYCLICAL FRAMEWORK:

Then the Israelites **did what was evil** in the sight of the LORD and worshiped the Baals; and they abandoned the LORD, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; they **followed other gods**, from among the gods of the peoples who were all around them, and bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger. They abandoned the LORD, and worshiped Baal and the Astartes. **So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers** who plundered them, and he sold them into the power of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer withstand their enemies. . . .

Then **the LORD raised up judges, who delivered them** out of the power of those who plundered them. . . . [And] the LORD . . . delivered them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. . . . **[W]henver the judge died, they would relapse. . . . But when the Israelites cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up for them a deliverer.**

(2:11-14, 16, 18; 3:15)