

Sunday Night Message

October 21, 2018

Judges 11 - Jephthah

Series – *Judges*

Text – Judges 11

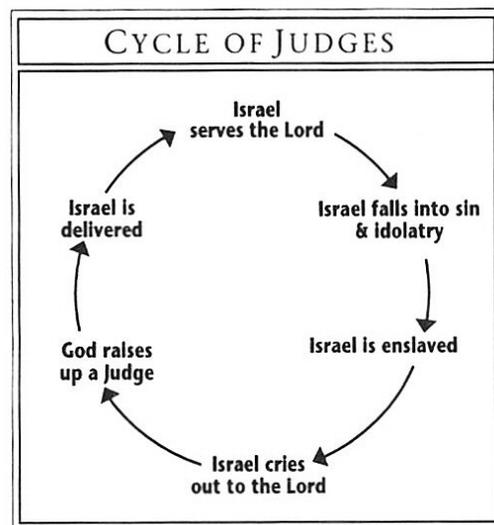
Introduction

Judges 11 is a very long chapter that deals with Jephthah, the 9th of 13 judges discussed in the Book of Judges. Note – there are 15 judges in all, but Eli and Samuel are not discussed until we get to 1 Samuel.

Review the cycle of Judges:

Throughout the Book of Judges we see a repeated cycle:

1. Israel in a right relationship with God receiving God's blessing of provision and protection.
2. Israel moves away from God and begins to worship idols and fall into sin.
3. God drops the hedge of protection that was placed around them, and Israel's enemies begin to conquer them.
4. Israel cries out to the Lord.
5. The Lord raises up a judge.
6. Israel is delivered.



Here in chapter eleven, the oppressing enemy is Ammon, a nation to the west of Israel.

I The Rejection of Jephthah's Maternal Pedigree (vs. 1 – 3)

Jephthah's paternal family rejected him because he was not born to Gilead's wife, but rather to a prostitute – a "strange woman."

Gilead was certainly wrong to have sex with a prostitute, or anybody else for that matter who is not your spouse:

"Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well. Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets. Let them be only thine own, and not strangers' with thee. Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love. And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?" (Proverbs 5:15-20)

"My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways. For a whore is a deep ditch; and a strange woman is a narrow pit. She also lieth in wait as for a prey, and increaseth the transgressors among men."
(Proverbs 23:26-28)

However, as wrong as it was for Gilead to sleep with a strange woman, it was right for him to care for the child that came out of that sinful union. The child should not be held accountable for the sins of the parents.

Practical Application – People may reject you, but God has a special plan for your life. God has used a lot of great people who have been descendants of harlots. David and Jesus come to mind – they both are descendants of Rahab. Jack Hyles father was a drunkard, but God used him to build one of the greatest churches in history. Don't where or who you come from define you. Don't let other people define you either.

II The Reversal of Jephthah's Military Popularity (vs. 4 – 11)

It is amazing how people's opinion of another will change when they are put into a position where they actually need that person. I have seen wars break out between people, even here in the church, but when the situation changes such that they need something from each other, people become miraculously forgiving. It is a shame that God's people, especially, cannot treat each other with compassion and kindness, just because of their love for Christ.

Jesus said:

"But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you." (Luke 6:27-28)

If we are commanded to love our enemies, how much more should we love our brothers and sisters in Christ:

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John 13:35)

Paul said:

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;" (Romans 12:10)

Peter said:

"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:" (1 Peter 3:8)

The sad truth is that these Gileadites only wanted Jephthah for what they could get from him. They used him.

III The Rehearsal of Israel's Missionary Past (vs. 12 – 28)

Jephthah sends communications to Ammon, attempting to avert a war. They accuse Israel of stealing their land. However, the fact is clear that God gave them the land that Israel occupied. Jephthah reminds them that the lands of Moab, Edom, and Ammon were originally not part of God's plan. Israel only intended to pass through these countries on their way to Canaan. However, because these nations resisted Israel and refused to give them safe passage, Israel was forced to fight them. As a result, Israel ended up with their land.

IV The Routing of Israel's Mighty Persecutors (vs. 29; 32 – 33)

The victory that God wrought through Jephthah came about as a result of the Spirit of the Lord, not because of his stupid vow. Notice, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him before he made the vow.

V The Results of Jephthah's Misguided Pledge (vs. 30 – 31; 34 – 40)

Some expositors believe that Jephthah did not actually kill his daughter as a sacrifice, but she was dedicated to the Lord, and lived the rest of her life without husband or children. (Similar to Samson) The fact that the text states twice that she "bewailed her virginity," meaning that she mourned the fact that she would remain celibate. The text also states that she "knew no man."

It is not wise to make pledges or oaths that you will be unable to keep later, but once you make an oath, God expects you to keep it. (See [Numbers 30](#))

"Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself (meaning to swear falsely by not doing what you say you will do), but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." (Matthew 5:33-37)

Be very careful about promising to do something, and then not doing it. Ananias and Sapphira promised to give all of the proceeds from the sale of their land, but then later, changed their minds. (See [Acts 5:1 – 11](#))

Herod made a stupid oath, that he regrettably had to keep.

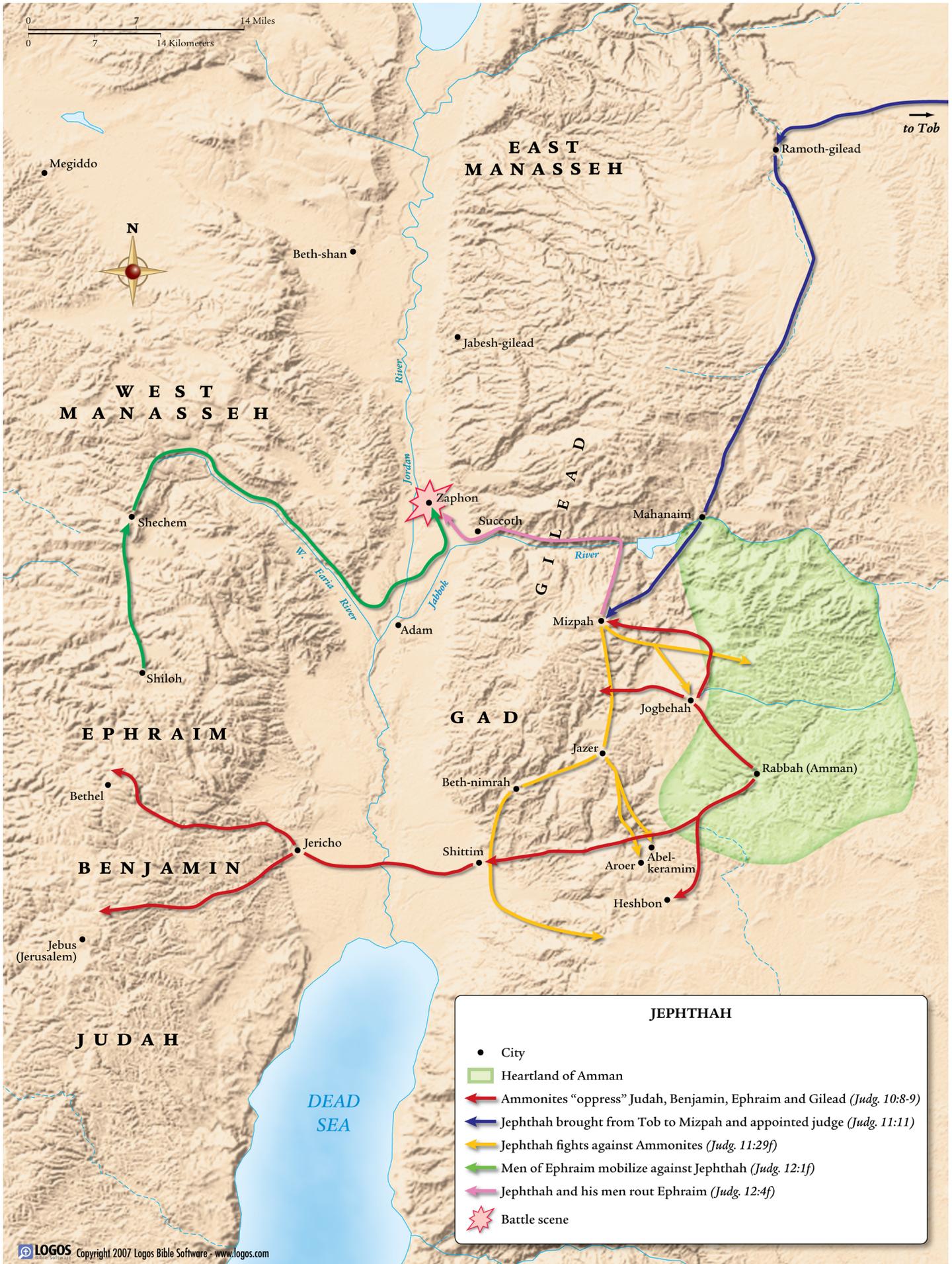
"But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask. And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger. And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her. And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison." (Matthew 14:6-10)

Be slow to promise to do something.

"Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few. ... When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay." (Ecclesiastes 5:2, 4-5)

But when you do promise to do something, keep your word.

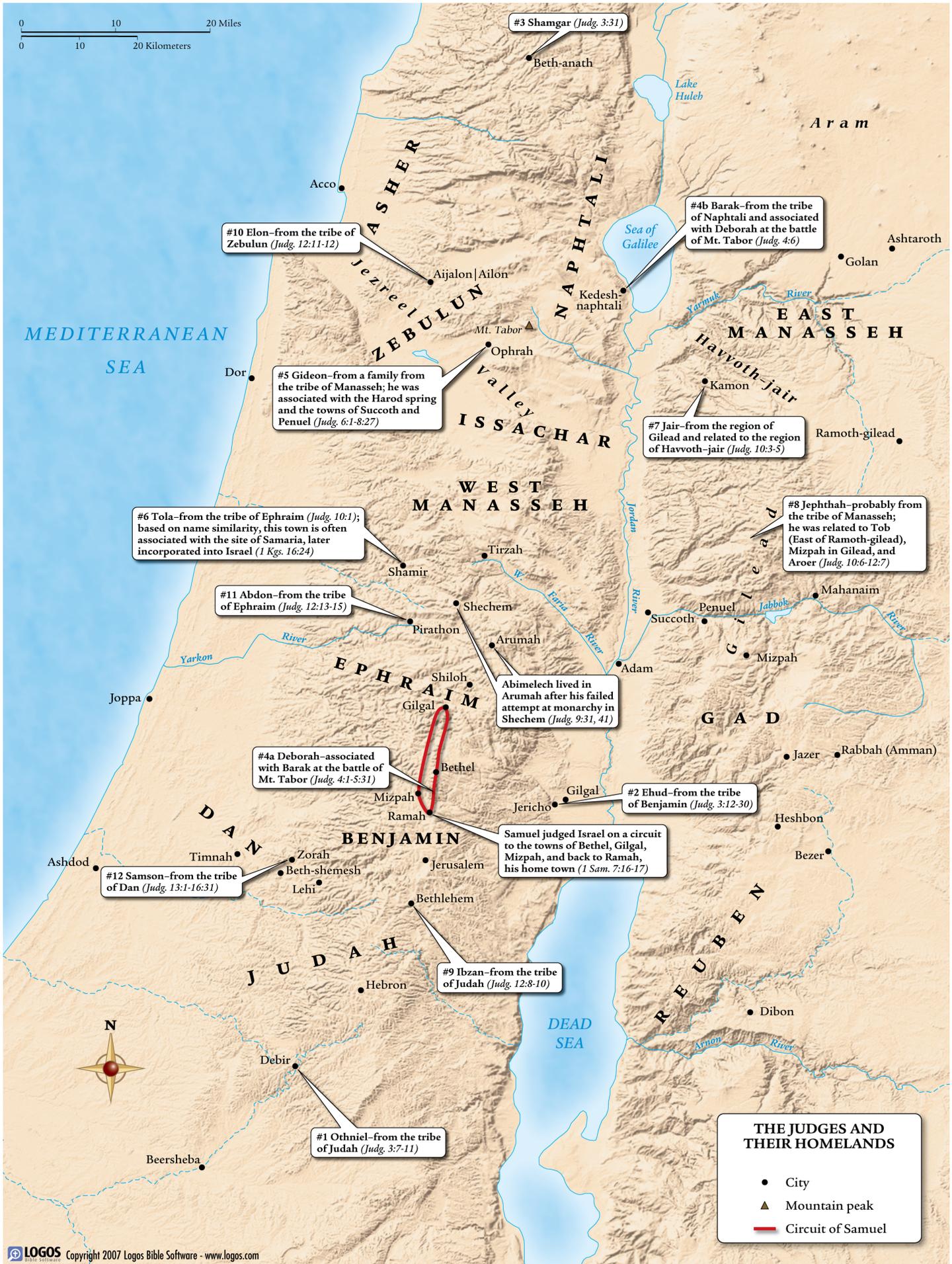
The rule of higher authority applies. If you promise something and it ends up being wrong in the sight of God, you cannot keep that promise, but God will still fault you for making a stupid promise in the first place.



JEPHTHAH

- City
- Heartland of Amman
- ← Ammonites "oppress" Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim and Gilead (*Judg. 10:8-9*)
- ← Jephthah brought from Tob to Mizpah and appointed judge (*Judg. 11:11*)
- ← Jephthah fights against Ammonites (*Judg. 11:29f*)
- ← Men of Ephraim mobilize against Jephthah (*Judg. 12:1f*)
- ← Jephthah and his men rout Ephraim (*Judg. 12:4f*)
- ★ Battle scene

0 10 20 Miles
0 10 20 Kilometers



#3 Shamgar (Judg. 3:31)
Beth-anath

#10 Elon—from the tribe of Zebulun (Judg. 12:11-12)
Aijalon|Ailon

#4b Barak—from the tribe of Naphtali and associated with Deborah at the battle of Mt. Tabor (Judg. 4:6)
Kedesh-naphtali

#5 Gideon—from a family from the tribe of Manasseh; he was associated with the Harod spring and the towns of Succoth and Penuel (Judg. 6:1-8:27)
Ophrah

#7 Jair—from the region of Gilead and related to the region of Havvoth-jair (Judg. 10:3-5)
Kamon

#6 Tola—from the tribe of Ephraim (Judg. 10:1); based on name similarity, this town is often associated with the site of Samaria, later incorporated into Israel (1 Kgs. 16:24)
Shamir

#8 Jephthah—probably from the tribe of Manasseh; he was related to Tob (East of Ramoth-gilead), Mizpah in Gilead, and Aroer (Judg. 10:6-12:7)
Mahanaim

#11 Abdon—from the tribe of Ephraim (Judg. 12:13-15)
Pirathon

Abimelech lived in Arumah after his failed attempt at monarchy in Shechem (Judg. 9:31, 41)
Arumah

#4a Deborah—associated with Barak at the battle of Mt. Tabor (Judg. 4:1-5:31)
Bethel

#2 Ehud—from the tribe of Benjamin (Judg. 3:12-30)
Jericho

Samuel judged Israel on a circuit to the towns of Bethel, Gilgal, Mizpah, and back to Ramah, his home town (1 Sam. 7:16-17)
Bethel, Gilgal, Mizpah, Ramah

#12 Samson—from the tribe of Dan (Judg. 13:1-16:31)
Timnah

#9 Ibzan—from the tribe of Judah (Judg. 12:8-10)
Bethlehem

#1 Othniel—from the tribe of Judah (Judg. 3:7-11)
Debir

THE JUDGES AND THEIR HOMELANDS

- City
- ▲ Mountain peak
- Circuit of Samuel