

## Judges Discussion Qs

1. What is the function of the judges? Do they have tasks beyond that of judging the surrounding nations in protection of the people of Israel?

A. The judging by executing judgment on the surrounding nations is apparently primary (2.16; 3.9-11; 3.15, 20, 30). However, it is clear that judgment between Israelites analogous to our notion of a judge in a court of law was also part of their duties (cf. Deborah sitting in judgment disputes among the people of Israel, 4.4-5; the request that Gideon rule, 8.22).

2. How does God's sovereign mercy come to expression in the book of Judges?

A. Overviewing the Judges era, the author tells us that Israel fails the test, "not knowing the Lord" and "doing evil in the eyes of the Lord" (2:10-11). God then judged the nation. They would groan in oppression and call out to the Lord. Then the Lord had compassion and raised up judges to save them by judging the nations afflicting them.

What emerges here? *God is accomplishing his purpose in history through Israel, demanding obedience, judging disobedience. Thus, though the disobedience is recurrent, even spiraling in a downward direction over the 300 years, God is accomplishing his will, demanding and eliciting obedience selectively, in stages, over time.*

God is continuing to fulfill his purpose expressed to us as a promise from the very beginning. He is keeping his promise in spite of our disobedience; even disobedience is taken up in his purpose and is countered by his judgment and compassion. Our fallenness is acutely shown in Israel's disobedience generation after generation. But God does not leave Israel to her own devices to go her own way in final disobedience. He continues to intervene in her downwardness and saves.

Salvation is truly shown to be "of the Lord." He is to be praised. This comes out in Deborah's song, Judges 5.