***AUTHOR & DATE:*** Various men apparently authored this book. The story was probably continually added onto the book as events happened-Deborah's song and the parable of Jotham for example. It was probably Samuel, the last of the Judges (Acts 13:20; 1 Samuel 7:16)*,* who at least compiled the information, no doubt adding sections where necessary. The ***Talmud*** says, "Samuel wrote the book which bears his name **and the Book of Judges..." *(Baba Bathra 14b)****.* Some feel that Isaiah later put the finishing touches on the book (Proverbs 25:1)*.* Regardless, the bulk of book was undoubtedly completed **before** David's conquest of Jerusalem around 1005 BC (1:21 cp. 2 Samuel 5:7)*,* but **after** the establishment of the kingdom evidenced by the statement ***"in those days there was no king" (17:6)****.* Samuel must have completed his work **during Saul's reign** which took place around 1048-1008 *BC.* Samuel died around 1009 *BC,* only a year or so before David was crowned King over Judah, which occurred about 1008 *BC.* This places the writing somewhere around 1020-1010 *BC.* The **time period** of the Judges begins with Joshua's death **(l:l**) at age 110 around **1377 *BC,* 25** years after the entrance into the Promised Land. The last recorded event is probably Jair's death around 1056 *BC (10:3-5),* which occurred within the decade, but before Saul's coronation as King of Israel. Therefore, the book covers a **total period of around** 322 years

***PURPOSES, THEME & KEYS:***Judges was compiled ***(1)******to continue the history of Israel, the***chosen nation, from the death of Joshua to the time of Samuel; and ***(2) to provide a terrible demonstration of the moral depravity*** *of* ***man*** by showing what happens when ***"everyone did as he saw fit" (17:6; 21:25)****.*

***Theme: a brief history*** *of* ***Israel during the period of the judges-men*** whom God raised up not merely for judicial matters, but to be leaders and delivers of Israel before that nation had a king; at various times during this period Israel was given over into the hands of their enemies because of their sinfulness; but then God would raise up a deliverer and they would enjoy a period of peace, after which they would corrupt themselves again *(2:14-19).*

***Key Verses: 2:14-19; Key Words:*** *evil-14* times (most of these ***did evil); judge*** *(plus* ***judged, judgment)-22*** times.

***SUMMARY:***Samuel was the first of the prophets *(Acts 3:24; Hebrews 11:32; 1 Samuel 3:20; 9:9)* and Judges is assigned to the *Former Prophets* division in the *Old Testament.* The book shows that Israel's national existence depended upon her obedience. In a monotonous cycle: Israel rebelled; God allowed them to be conquered by an enemy king; they were vassals to a foreign nation for a period of years; Israel cried to God; and God raised up a judge to deliver them. The cycle may be described as **sin, servitude, supplication** and **salvation.** Notice that God always gave more years of peace than years of captivity-often at a five-to-one ratio. The major spiritual principle to be learned is the principle of restoration upon **repentance and change.** God would not accept His called out physical people in a sinful and rebellious condition, and He certainly will hold to the same conditions for his spiritual people, ***"For God does not show favoritism" (Romans 2:11)****.* Judges also shows the necessity of right leadership. Each time God delivered Israel, He called a specific individual to lead them into battle, and to be judge over them when they were freed. And when that leader died, the nation returned to its apostasy.

De 18:15 The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;

16 According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not.

17 And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken.

18 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

1Samuel 3:20 And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the LORD.

Ps 99:6 ¶ Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the LORD, and he answered them.

Jer 15:1 ¶ Then said the LORD unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth.

Ac 3:20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

23 And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

25 Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

Ac 7:37 This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.

Ac 13:20 And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.

Heb 11:32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: