

Ir-ot-19  
The Delivering Judges  
(The Book of Judges)  
By Lenet Hadley Read

(Here is inspirational background showing how Israel would be delivered in the Last Days. In preparation look at a picture of the Sunstones on the Nauvoo Temple. Note the trumpets blowing above. Note the sun bursting forth over clouds of darkness].

- I. In spite of all the Lord had done to free Israel and bless them, as soon as Joshua and the elders who lived during his time were dead, the Israelites apostatized.
- A. "Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua... which had known all the works of the Lord" (Josh. 24:31; Judges 2:7).
  - B. Then a major change: "...and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel... And they forsook the Lord, and served [other gods] (Judges 2:10, 13)."
  - C. Due to their apostasies, Israel would often lose their role as God's favored people, and the Gentiles would then move into dominance.
  - D. Each time, the Lord raised up Judges to deliver them.
- II. These Judges, while true historical personages, also taught of Jesus Christ, the True Judge who has Delivered us, the Israel of the Latter-days.
- A. The combination of Deliverer and Judge is unique. But this combined role is marvelously fulfilled in the Savior.
  - B. When Christ first came, the leaders of Israel were then apostate and under the dominion of Rome. Jesus showed His role as Judge by such acts as cleansing the temple and cursing the fig tree.
  - C. The Jews expected their Messiah would deliver them from Rome. His true Deliverance was *from the far greater bondage of Satan, and from sin and death*.
  - D. Their disillusionment caused most of the Israelites to reject Him.
  - E. Thereafter Christ's Church was inherited mostly by *believing* Gentiles, while *unbelieving* Gentiles continued their dominion, their persecution, and final scattering of Israel. [Thus the "Time of the Gentiles" so often spoken of in scriptures is foreshadowed in the Book of Judges, when Israel would lose their inheritance and the Gentiles have dominion].
  - F. **Jesus Christ will be Israel's Final Judge and Ultimate Deliverer.** Note how Isaiah prophesied of this strange but true combination of His roles:

"...And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding... and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked" (Isaiah 11:1-4).

(We know this speaks of the Savior, for only He can perform the great destruction spoken of in the last two lines.)

#### IV. The Final Deliverance of Israel from Gentile dominance [i.e., the re-gathering of Israel], would occur in the latter-days.

- A. The Book of Judges and other scriptures verify that Israel would fall into apostasy after Christ, and that unbelieving Gentiles would be given dominion over them. Christ's church, which would become mostly Gentile, would also fall into apostasy, creating a time of total darkness. But the Lord would raise up a Deliverer in the Last Days who would bring the Israelites out from under Gentile dominion, restoring His Kingdom among them.
- B. Paul spoke of this phenomenon. He warned the Gentiles (who had inherited Christ's Church after its rejection by most Israelites) that if they were not faithful to their covenants, they would also be cut off. Then he prophesied that this would in fact occur, and Israel would eventually be restored. "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant ... that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the *Deliverer*, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (Romans 11:25-6. Here Joseph Smith is prophesied of as a "Deliverer," doing the same work as the delivering Judges, and details in their lives verify this truth).

#### V. The deliverance by each of the judges in the Book of Judges reveals different details about this latter-day deliverance from Gentile dominion.

##### A. Deborah

1. Deborah means a "honey bee" and her victory over the Gentiles occurred "when I arose a mother in Israel (Judges 5:7)." Today scattered Israel is returning to its inheritance due to the laborers in "Deseret," working together and diligent as a beehive. Very vital to this work is the powerful influence of "mothers in Israel," whose challenge is to raise generation after generation of righteous posterity. Remember that ancient Israel faltered because of an unbelieving new generation. "and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel... And they forsook the Lord, and served [other gods] (Judges 2:10-3)."

**The deliverance of Israel in these last days will succeed through the strength of the mothers in Israel!**

##### B. Gideon

1. Gideon's army was instructed to hold trumpets and lamps hidden in jars. At the moment of Deliverance, they **blew upon the trumpets**; they **issued a great shout**; they broke the jars, **letting light burst forth**. Due to the sudden bursting forth of that new light, they overcame the darkness and the power of the Gentiles.
2. Evidence indicates Joseph Smith and early Saints recognized these events prophesied of their works of Deliverance.
  - a. The Sunstones on the Nauvoo Temple portray the trumpets proclaiming the new truths of the Restoration and its bursting forth of light which overcomes past darkness. [For more of what the trumpets signify see my Old Testament lesson 16 and **how the Book of Mormon was received at the Feast of**

**Trumpets.** Or see Lenet Hadley Read, “The Golden Plates and the Feast of Trumpets” *Ensign*, January, 2000.)

b. The first hymns in our hymnal are based on these concepts. They were written by apostles and sung by our prophets who knew their meanings. Read from Hymn # 1, “The Morning Breaks, the Shadows Flee,” showing the belief the “time of the Gentiles has come in” (meaning it is over) and that the light of the Restored Gospel is now overcoming the powers of the darkness of apostasy. Other hymns such as Hymn # 2 and Hymn # 4 also contain such concepts.

### C. Samson

1. Many scholars through centuries have seen parallels between Samson and Christ, but due to negative aspects in Samson’s life there is reticence to make connections. But we should remember that David, who had his weaknesses, is accepted as having parallels with Christ in his role as King, etc. Here are *some* of the parallels with Samson. There are many more, but too many to cover here.

- a. Birth: Both his and Jesus’ births were announced by an angel prior to conception.
- b. His Nazarite vow consecrated Samson to the Lord: Jesus is the fulfillment of the concept of a Nazarite Vow. **He was truly consecrated to the Lord.**
- c. Samson used riddles. Jesus taught in parables which most could not understand.
- d. Because Samson’s Gentile bride returned to her heritage, Samson burned their grain fields, vineyards and olive groves. **This taught of Christ’s destruction of the wicked in the Last Days, who covenanted with Him but then apostatized.**

2. Like other judges, Samson teaches of our Latter-day Deliverance. In fact there are elements which **show the role of the *Book of Mormon* in that deliverance.**

- a. Samson conquered the Gentiles through “the jawbone [or mouth] of a [dead] ass.” Scholars [such as Irenaeus and Northrop Frye] see the ass -- a beast of burden-- as a symbol of Christ. *Irenaeus and John Foxe add that because it was dead, it signified conversion after Christ’s death*.
- b. **Samson used the jawbone to get drink for revival after a famishing thirst (Judges 15:18-20). These events occur at a place called Lehi, and the word Lehi means jawbone or cheek.** (Hugh Nibley, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*. p. 58-9. Other interpretations are “spring of the wild-ox jawbone” [see Nibley. The ox is symbol of Ephraim]. Also “God opened up the basin that was at Lehi” and “the spring of him who calls” (See footnotes for Judges 15:19). These all show connections to the Book of Mormon, for:
- c. Lehi was the name of the prophet from whom came the Book of Mormon.
- d. The Book of Mormon came through tribes of Manasseh and later Ephraim.
- e. And the **reality is, because of the Book of Mormon, the original Israel is now returning to their inheritance. For the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.**

Like other Biblical events there is a three part meaning to the stories of The Delivering Judges: The historical reality; the events pointing to Christ’s first ministry; and then to His finishing work in the last days of returning Israel to their place as His people.