

**Period of the Judges**  
(Notes from Br. Morton Edgar)

| Period   | Scriptures  | Time (years)    |
|--|---|-----------------|
| Judgeship of Joshua & elders   | See note re: Jephthah below                               | 59 <sup>2</sup> |
| Servitude to Mesopotamia*  | Jdg 2:7-13; 3:7-8   | 8               |
| *Began after the death of Joshua and the elders that outlived him.   |   |                 |
| Judgeship of Othniel   | Jdg 3:9-11  | 40              |
| Servitude to Moab  | Jdg 3:14  | 18              |
| Judgeship of Ehud  | Jdg 3:30-31; 4:1-4, 5:31                                  | 20 <sup>1</sup> |
| Judgeship of Shamgar   | Jdg 3:31; 4:3   | 20 <sup>1</sup> |
| Judgeship of Deborah   | Jdg 5:31  | 40 <sup>1</sup> |
| <sup>1</sup> Jdg 3:30-31 – The land had rest a total of 80 years; would include judgeship of Ehud, Shamgar, and Deborah. Jdg 4:1-4 – Israel did evil when Ehud was dead and was oppressed by Jabin for 20 years. Since Shamgar was the immediate successor of Ehud, this oppression must have coincided with the judgeship of Shamgar. Deborah delivered Israel and judged for 40 years (80 – 20 – 40 = 20). |   |                 |
| Servitude to Midian  | Jdg 6:1   | 7               |
| Judgeship of Gideon  | Jdg 8:28  | 40              |
| Reign of Abimelech   | Jdg 9:22  | 3               |
| Judgeship of Tola  | Jdg 10:1,2  | 23              |
| Judgeship of Jair  | Jdg 10:3  | 22              |
| Judgeship of Jephthah  | Jdg 12:7  | 6 <sup>2</sup>  |
| <sup>2</sup> From death of Joshua and the elders to Jephthah = 241 years (8+40+18+20+20+40+7+40+3+23+22). Period from end of wilderness journey (entrance into Canaan) to Jephthah (Jdg 11: 13, 26) = 300 years.<br>∴ Judgeship of Joshua and the elders that outlived him = 300 – 241 = 59 years.   |   |                 |
| Judgeship of Ibzan   | Jdg 12:8-9  | 7               |
| Judgeship of Elon  | Jdg 12:11   | 10              |
| Judgeship of Abdon   | Jdg 12:13-14  | 8               |
| Servitude to Philistines   | Jdg 13:1  | 40              |
| Judgeship of Eli   | I Sam 4:15,18   | 40              |
| Judgeship of Samuel  | I Sam 4:17; 6:1-13, 14, 19; 7:1-2; 8:1-5; 9:27-10:1; 12:2 | 45 <sup>3</sup> |
| <sup>3</sup> According to Ferrer Fenton & Morton Edgar (Gleanings from Glasgow, page 179)  |   |                 |
| From entering the land   |   | 456             |
| Conquering the land  |   | -6              |
| TOTAL of Judges  |   | 450             |

In the list of 19 periods (see page 2), Samuel is entered as having judged Israel for 20 years, on the assumption that the 20 years spoken of in 1 Samuel 7:2 had reference to the duration of Samuel's judgeship. But 1 Samuel 7:2 does not state that Samuel judged Israel for 20 years. The Scriptures show that up to the time when Saul was anointed to be king of Israel, Samuel must have acted as judge much longer than 20 years.

Ferrar Fenton says 45 years, while other chronologers, reckon Samuel's judgeship to have been between 40 and 50 years. The Scriptures show that Samuel was a child at the time when Eli's eyes began to wax dim for age (1 Samuel 3:1-2). But Samuel is said to be old and gray headed when he anointed Saul as king (1 Samuel 12:1-2). This implies a considerable number of years between the death of Eli when Samuel replaced him as judge and his anointing of Saul (see also 1 Samuel 8:1-5; 12:2).

When we take the literal translation of the Hebrew of 1 Samuel 7:2, we read:

"And it came to pass from the time the ark remained in Kirjath-jearim, that the days were multiplied, and it was the 20th year and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD," or "assembled before the LORD."

In the Latin Vulgate [the] translation reads: "...it was now the 20th year."

Most translators and commentators consider that the Philistines, after the death of Eli, continued to have a certain power over Israel during 20 years. In the meantime, however, Samuel was judge in Israel.

But in the 20 years from the arrival of the ark in Kirjath-jearim, Israel had enough of the Philistines oppressive power and had turned to the Lord for help. We read that Samuel prayed to the Lord on behalf of the children of Israel in their distress, after admonishing them to

"...put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." (1 Samuel 7:3).

When the Philistines sought to do battle against the now repentant children of Israel, the Lord "...thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel... So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more unto the coast of Israel..." (1 Samuel 7:4-15).

After these 20 years, in the last of which the Philistines were finally subdued, Samuel judged Israel for 25 years until he anointed Saul to be king, making, therefore 45 years in all for the judgeship of Samuel. The number of years for Samuel as judge...is in agreement with the Scriptures.