

-Save This Page as a PDF-

The Cycle of Sin in Judges

When a generation tolerates sin, the next generation will celebrate it, and the next generation after them won't even know it's sin (J. C. Ryle 1816-1900).

The cycles of oppression and restoration under **the judges** cover the **Chapters 3:7 to 16:31**. This section is built around **a five-part cycle** as follows: **rebellion, retribution, repentance, restoration, and rest.**

Rebellion: With the rise of a new generation, there is apostasy and disobedience to **the Torah**, usually by means of idolatry.

Retribution: A divine judgment would come to **Isra'el** by means of slavery to **her** enemies.

Repentance: Retribution is followed by **Isra'el's** cry to **ADONAI** for help.

Restoration: **ADONAI** would raise up a **judge** to deliver **Isra'el** by means of a successful war. Restoration would begin a period of rest, and a new cycle would begin.

Rest: Consists of a period when **Isra'el** is obedient and enjoying **peace**, usually during the rule of **a judge**, beginning with the last years of **Joshua**.



The book describes a total of **seven cycles** (see **Genesis**, to see link click **Ae - The Number Seven**), each with five parts as seen above. **With a total of twelve judges, there were actually twelve cycles, but the author does not detail all twelve cycles, only seven. The first cycle** is the oppression by the Mesopotamians and the deliverance through **Othniel** (see **Ap - The First Cycle: Othniel**); **the second cycle** is the oppression by **Mo'ab**, and the deliverance by **Ehud** (see **Aq - The Second Cycle: Ehud**); **the third cycle** is the oppression by the Philistines and the deliverance by **Shamgar** in **3:31** (see **Ar - The Third Cycle: Shamgar**); **the fourth cycle** is the oppression by the Canaanites, and the deliverance through **Deborah** (see **As - The Fourth Cycle: Deborah and Barak**); **the fifth cycle** is the oppression of the Midianites and the deliverance through **Gideon** (see **Ay - The Fifth Cycle: Gideon**); **the sixth cycle** is the oppression of the Ammonites and the deliverance through **Jephthah** (see **Bn - The Sixth Cycle: Jephthah**); **the seventh cycle** is the oppression of the Philistines and the deliverance through **Samson** in **Chapters 13 to 16** (see **Bt - The Seventh Cycle: Samson**).³ There is a downward moral progression in each of **the judges** whose reign is detailed.