

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| <i>General Editors' Preface</i> | 11 |
| <i>Acknowledgments</i> | 13 |
| <i>Abbreviations</i> | 15 |
| <i>Bibliography</i> | 17 |
| INTRODUCTION | 21 |
| A. The Title | 22 |
| B. The Historical Setting | 23 |
| C. Chronology of the Book of Judges | 25 |
| D. The Deuteronomic History | 26 |
| 1. Modern Theories | 27 |
| 2. Themes | 30 |
| 3. Supporting Themes That Flow Out of the Concept of Covenant | 32 |
| E. Writing and Compilation of the Book of Judges | 33 |
| F. Judges and the Inspiration of Scripture | 35 |
| G. Methodology | 36 |
| H. Theological Themes | 37 |
| 1. Human Freedom | 37 |
| 2. Sovereignty of God | 38 |
| 3. Call for Total Loyalty | 38 |
| COMMENTARY | 41 |
| I. Overview (1:1—3:6) | 41 |
| A. A Geography of Failure (1:1—2:5) | 43 |
| 1. Judah Goes Up (1:1-7) | 44 |
| 2. Taking Jerusalem and Hebron (1:8-10) | 46 |
| 3. Taking Debir (1:11-15) | 47 |
| 4. Judah's Successes and Inadequacies (1:16-21) | 48 |
| 5. Taking Bethel (1:22-26) | 49 |
| 6. Living Among the Canaanites (1:27-36) | 50 |
| 7. End of the Conquest (2:1-5) | 51 |
| B. Testing of Israel (2:6—3:6) | 54 |
| 1. Death of Joshua (2:6-10) | 55 |
| 2. The Next Generation (2:11-19) | 56 |
| 3. Yahweh's Decision (2:20-23) | 59 |
| 4. Reasons for the Nations to Remain (3:1-6) | 60 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| II. Military Triumph: Spiritual Degeneration (3:7—16:31) | 63 |
| A. Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar (3:7-31) | 64 |
| 1. Othniel (3:7-11) | 64 |
| 2. Ehud (3:12-30) | 67 |
| 3. Shamgar (3:31) | 70 |
| B. Deborah, Barak, and Jael (4:1—5:31) | 71 |
| 1. The Prose Story (4:1-24) | 72 |
| a. Sisera the Oppressor (4:1-3) | 74 |
| b. Deborah and Barak (4:4-10) | 75 |
| c. Heber the Kenite (4:11) | 76 |
| d. The Battle with Sisera (4:12-16) | 77 |
| e. Sisera and Jael (4:17-22) | 77 |
| f. Destruction of Jabin (4:23-24) | 79 |
| 2. The Poem (5:1-31) | 83 |
| a. Introduction (5:1-11) | 84 |
| b. The Mustering of the Tribes (5:12-18) | 85 |
| c. The Battle (5:19-22) | 86 |
| d. Jael's Victory (5:23-27) | 86 |
| e. Sisera's Mother (5:28-31) | 87 |
| C. Gideon, Abimelech, Tola, and Jair (6:1—10:18) | 89 |
| 1. Gideon, the Reluctant Judge (6:1—8:35) | 89 |
| a. Oppression of the Midianites (6:1-10) | 89 |
| b. The Call of Gideon (6:11-40) | 91 |
| c. God's Victory (7:1-23) | 96 |
| d. Gideon's Victory and Vengeance (7:24—8:21) | 100 |
| e. Gideon and Israel's Idolatry (8:22-35) | 103 |
| 2. Abimelech's Failed Monarchy (9:1-57) | 105 |
| a. Abimelech as King (9:1-6) | 106 |
| b. Jotham's Parable of the Trees (9:7-21) | 107 |
| c. Plots Against Abimelech (9:22-33) | 108 |
| d. Abimelech's Battles (9:34-57) | 109 |
| 3. Tola and Jair (10:1-5) | 112 |
| 4. God's Rejection of Israel's Cry (10:6-18) | 113 |
| D. Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon (11:1—12:15) | 116 |
| 1. Jephthah and the Ammonites (11:1-40) | 117 |
| 2. The War with Ephraim (12:1-7) | 122 |
| 3. Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon (12:8-15) | 124 |
| E. Samson (13:1—16:31) | 126 |
| 1. The Birth of Samson (13:1-25) | 128 |
| 2. Samson's Conflict with the Philistines (14:1—15:20) | 133 |
| 3. Samson's Final Exploits (16:1-31) | 140 |
| III. Failure Complete (17:1—21:25) | 149 |
| A. Relocation of Dan (17:1—18:31) | 151 |
| 1. Micah and the Levite (17:1-13) | 151 |
| 2. New Home for the Tribe of Dan (18:1-31) | 154 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| B. War Within Israel (19:1—21:25) | 161 |
| 1. The Levite and His Concubine (19:1-30) | 162 |
| 2. War Between the Tribes (20:1-48) | 171 |
| 3. Wives for the Men of Benjamin (21:1-25) | 182 |