

Joshua and Judges The Historical Idea and Setting of the Judges Cycle

Interpreting the Text:

1. What questions came up for you while reading this text?
2. Did anything surprise you about this text?
3. Did you notice any differences between the story of Israel's origins described in this text compared to other books of the Bible (Joshua, Genesis, etc.)? What details are unique to Judges?
4. The book of Judges appears to differ pretty significantly from Joshua in recounting the history of the Israelites, suggesting that they predate our Deuteronomistic storyteller. What details or themes stand out to support this theory?
5. Do you think the Deuteronomistic Historian's theological point of view comes through as strongly in the book of Judges as it did in the book of Joshua? If yes, provide examples.

Applying the Text:

1. If Israel's historic origins were actually less unified than the Bible suggests, what do you think the storyteller's motivation to reimagine a shared narrative and identity for these disparate tribes might have been? How do we as readers hold both of these accounts together to reflect on the history of the Israelites?
2. Women are featured prominently, and powerfully, in Judges, something unique in the Hebrew Bible. How can Judges be used today to challenge exclusively patriarchal narratives in our own communities today?