

Overview:

- Repeating downward cycle (Judges 2-16)
- Result - Civil War (Judges 19-20)
- Objective – Understand techniques of narrative and how they carry the inspired message.
- Through narrative, God communicates **culturally** and **symbolically**.

1. Judges 2 – 16 – Downward cycles

- The biblical author uses a Narrative literary device of repetition to convey the message of what the writing is about



2. Final Cycle – Samson (שׁוֹמֵר) and Delilah (דִּלְיָה)

Samson	From Hebrew word for the Sun (<i>ShMSb</i>)	Light
Delilah	Sounds (spelled) like the Hebrew word for Night (<i>Lilab</i>)	Darkness

3. Judges 17 – 21 - Result of downward cycles^{1 2}

Chapter	Meaning
Judges 17-18	- deterioration of the religious cult in Israel
Judges 19	- inversion of the social order (Sodom and Gomorrah - Gen. 19)
Judges 20	- Civil War against the tribe of Benjamin
Judges 21	- concern for the survival of Benjamin (see Gen. 19:30-38. Concern for survival of Lot and offspring that results in the birth of two nations – Moab and Ammon)

4. Enemy moves from outside to inside:

- Judges 1-16 – the enemy is **outside** of Israel and serves as a uniting force
 - Judges 1:1 “Who of us is to go up first to fight against the **Canaanites?**”
- Judges 20 – the enemy is **inside** – the tribe of Benjamin.
 - Judges 20:18 “Who of us is to go up first to fight against the **Benjamites?**”

¹ Anne Katrine de Hemmer Gudme. “Sex, Violence and State Formation in Judges 19-21” in *The Bible and Hellenism* (Copenhagen International Seminar) Taylor and Francis (2014).

² Keefe, Alice A. 1993. “Rapes of Women/Wars of Men.” *Semeia* 61: 79–97.

5. Cultural Symbolism – Judges 19 – 21

- The symbolism of rape/sexual violence as the disintegration of social order is found in both the bible and in cultures surrounding Israel.³
 - See Genesis 19 – Sodom and Gomorrah.
- Sexual violence – as the disintegration of social order (state or family) – leads to war.
 - See Genesis 34 – rape of Dinah leads to violence against the Canaanites at Schechem.
 - See 2 Samuel 13 – rape of Tamar leads to the murder of Ammon and the fracture of David's family.

6. Judges 19 – a disturbing story.⁴

- Reflects Genesis 18 & 19 (Sodom and Gomorrah)
 - A display of incredible hospitality contrasted with a display of inhospitable acts that lead to destruction (Gen. 19 – Sodom and Gomorrah and Jg. 20 – the tribe of Benjamin).
- On an **ancient symbolic level**, the dismemberment of the concubine represents societal disintegration (society is being torn apart).

7. Dismemberment and the Collapse of Society in Egypt –

- Egyptian Osirian Khoiak Festival (Sept. – Oct.) – reenacting the myth of Osiris, which dramatically explains the collapse and restoration of Egypt.
 - Osiris – Benevolent King that represents the good and ordered society.
 - Seth – the jealous brother of Osiris, who wants to be king - represents the inherent evil side of society and the chaos that results when evil takes over.
- Seth murders his brother Osiris, **dismembers the body**, and disperses it to each of the **forty-two provinces** of Egypt.
 - The dismembered body of Osiris serves as a substitute for the social body of Egypt.
 - Each year at the Khoiak Festival, the people would celebrate the gathering of the body of Osiris, which eventually led to the birth of Horus and the return of order and peace to Egypt.
- The dismemberment is **not** what is outraging the Israelites - Judges 19:29-30. The outrage is the lack of hospitality – the inversion of societal norms – demonstrated by the Benjaminites (Jg. 20:4-5)
- The dismemberment is a sign/symbol to the Israelites of something greater.

³ Keefe, Alice A. 1993. "Rapes of Women/Wars of Men." *Semeia* 61: 79–97.

⁴ There are numerous scholarly articles about the similarities of Judges 20-21 and the story by the Roman historian Livy we call The Rape of the Sabine Women. The similarities include a war followed by concern that there will not be enough wives (Jg. 21:7) and the men kidnapping women during a religious festival (Jg. 21:19-21).