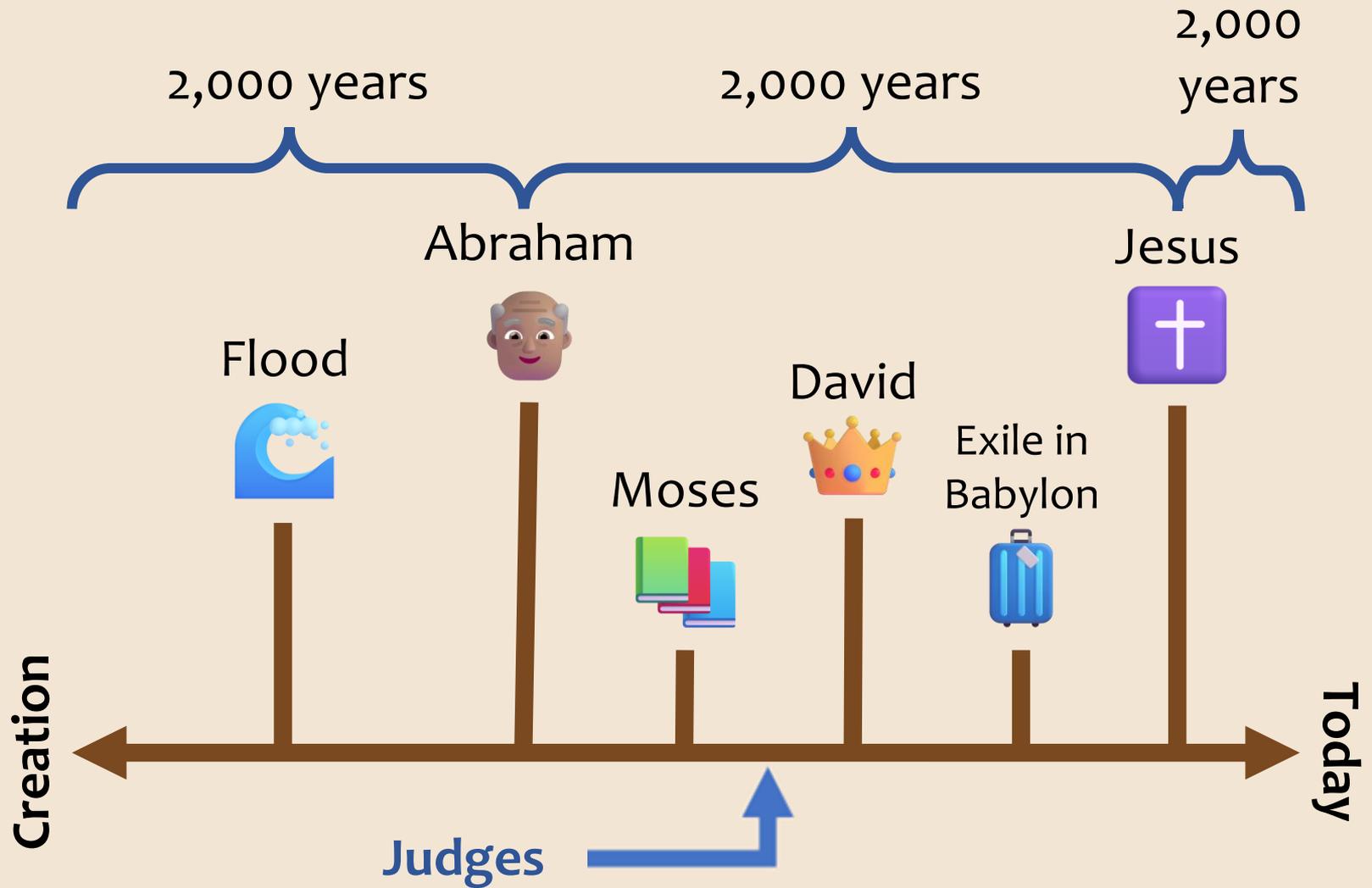


The Book of Judges



Bible timeline



Summary

Judges

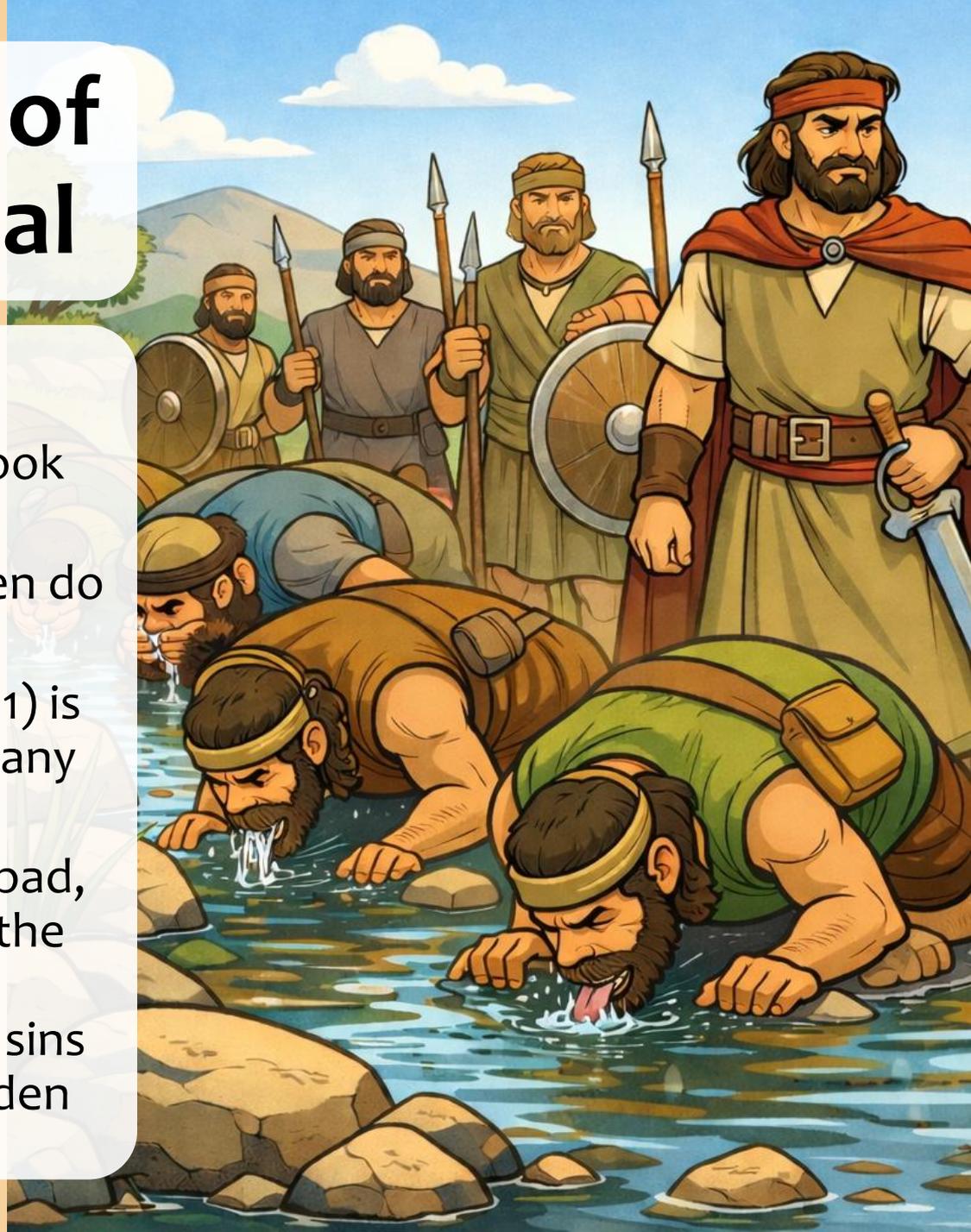
- The book provides its own summary in **Judges 2:11-19**:
- Israel spends generations repeating the same cycles of
 1. **Sin** (vs. 11-13, 17)
 2. **Foreign oppression** as punishment from God (vs. 14-15)
 3. **Deliverance** when God sent a “judge” (vs. 16, 18)
 4. And then **doing it all over again** once the judge died (v. 19)
- Keep in mind that there is no single leader of Israel at this time
 - Even the judges only led **regions**
 - Joshua died (2:8) and was not meant to have a national successor



Why the book of *Judges* is special

It is very messy

- Even the heroes in this book are deeply flawed
- They win battles, but often do terrible things
- The ending (chapters 17-21) is downright disturbing, by any standard
- Other books are not this bad, but it's not so much that the people become more righteous after this; their sins just seem to be more hidden



Main characters

-  **Deborah**
 - Female judge; reluctantly helps Barak fight
-  **Gideon**
 - Reluctant judge; wins with 300 men; hires a priest
-  **Samson**
 - STRONG man; *knows* a prostitute; violates many laws of Moses
-  **Jephthah**
 - Defeats enemies; rash vow leads to daughter's death

Outline of *Judges*

- **Introduction: chapters 1-2**
 - Israel did NOT finish conquering Canaan
 - Joshua died; “the LORD raised up judges” (2:16)
- **The judges: chapters 3-16**
 - People sin; enemies rush in; judges deliver; repeat
- **These scenes should disturb you: chapters 17-21**
 - Rape, human trafficking, genocide, and more
 - “In those days there was no king in Israel”
 - Repeated 4x in Judges (17:6, 18:1, 19:1, and 21:25 – which is the very end of the book)
 - First and last references say, “In those days *there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.*” (KJV)

Theology and doctrine

- A repeated phrase in Judges, in the last section is, “In those days *there was no king in Israel*”
 - Repeated 4x in Judges (17:6, 18:1, 19:1, and 21:25 – which is the very end of the book)
 - First and last references say, “In those days *there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.*” (KJV)
- So, did Israel *need* a king?
 - Well, they needed God as their king (**1 Samuel 8:7**)
 - And a fine second-best is one or many godly leaders
 - What they had, though, was none of that; they had *ungodly* leaders; the citizens were not helping; and there is no mention of priests, except darkly (chs. 17-18)

Recap of *Judges*

• Overview

- Generations of
Sin → *enemy invasion* →
deliverance → *sin again*

• Why it is special

- It is very messy

• Main characters

- Deborah
- Gideon
- Samson
- Jephthah

• Outline

- Chapters 1-2: Introduction
- Chapters 3-16: Judges
- Chapters 17-21: Disturbing

• Theology and doctrine

- “In those days there was no king in Israel”
(17:6, 18:1, 19:1, and 21:25)
- Did Israel need a king?

Deborah

Judges 4



Summary

Deborah
Judges 4

- A story in Judges about a battle victory
- If that sounds routine, the details make it extraordinary
 - The judge is a woman and she does what is right!
 - The battle is fought by a separate male commander, but he insists Deborah come with
 - A seemingly random civilian woman kills the enemy commander



Why this story is special

- Arguably the best leader in Judges is a woman
 - There are no other female judges that we know of
 - She tries to avoid the glory due to a man
 - She does not lead the *battle*
 - She “judges” (i.e. gives advice?) but is not a priest



Main characters

-  **Deborah**
 - Female judge; reluctantly helps Barak fight
-  **Barak**
 - Israelite commander
-  **Sisera**
 - Enemy commander
-  **Jael**
 - An innocent woman who kills Sisera

Outline of the story of Deborah

1. **Verses 1-3** Israel sins, is oppressed, and cry to God for help
2. **Verses 4-5** Deborah was a judge, but in a more normal sense
3. **Verses 6-7** On behalf of the LORD, Deborah asks Barak to lead Israel in battle
4. **Verses 8-10** Barak is scared unless Deborah goes with; she agrees
5. **Verse 11** Foreshadow of verse 17
6. **Verses 12-13** Sisera prepares
7. **Verses 14-16** Deborah inspires; Barak and army attack and win
8. **Verses 17-22** Sisera runs away and Jael kills him in his sleep
9. **Verses 23-24** Israel kills the enemy king also

In case you missed it

- Chapter 5 – *a poem* – seems to add several details to the story
 - How did the LORD “rout” or “throw into a panic” the enemy (4:15)?
 - 5:4-5 imply natural disaster; 5:20 says the stars fought
 - 5:21 says the river helped; perhaps a flash flood
 - Who was supposed to send troops?
 - 4:6 only mentions two tribes
 - 5:14-18 says additional tribes helped, while still others stood by and are shamed

Theology and doctrine

- Was it wrong for a woman to be a leader in Israel?
 - The text never says it is, and no one seems to notice
 - Deborah has a *reputation* – and a positive one
 - People come to her (4:5)
 - She is also a prophetess (4:4)
 - Barak's objection is NOT to Deborah leading
 - She fits the judge idea of Jethro (**Exodus 18:21-22**)
 - Bible books, especially Judges, do not always condemn bad actions
 - But considering that there is a *poem* about Deborah, she seems to be Biblically approved in her position and actions
- However, what we cannot conclude is that this paves the way for women leaders in the church
 - Scripture has plenty to say on that in the New Testament

Recap of the story of Deborah

• Overview

- A story of a judge that breaks the mold

• Why it is special

- Arguably the best leader in Judges is a woman

• Main characters

- Deborah
- Barak
- Sisera
- Jael

• In case you missed it

- Chapter 5 adds details about the LORD's intervention and the tribes that did and did not send troops

• Outline

1. **Vs. 1-3** - Sin, oppression, crying
2. **Vs. 4-5** - Deborah judged
3. **Vs. 6-7** - Deborah asks Barak to lead
4. **Vs. 8-10** - Barak is scared
5. **Verse 11** - Foreshadow of verse 17
6. **Vs. 12-13** - Sisera prepares
7. **Vs. 14-16** - Barak and army attack and win
8. **Vs. 17-22** - Sisera runs away and Jael kills him in his sleep
9. **Vs. 23-24** - Israel kills the enemy king

• Theology and doctrine

- Was it wrong for a woman to be a leader in Israel?

Poem: The song of Deborah and Barak

Judges 5

- A poetic retelling of Judges 4
 - Considered one of the oldest texts in the Bible
- Outline
 - Vs. 2-3 Good job, guys
 - Vs. 4-5 The LORD was there the entire time
 - Vs. 6-8 Israel was doomed
 - Vs. 9-12 We did it!
 - Vs. 13-18 Some tribes volunteered, and some did not
 - Vs. 19-23 The enemy came, and the LORD fought them with nature
 - Vs. 24-27 Let's not forget Jael!
 - Vs. 28-30 Sisera's mother was depressed
 - V. 31 Praise the LORD