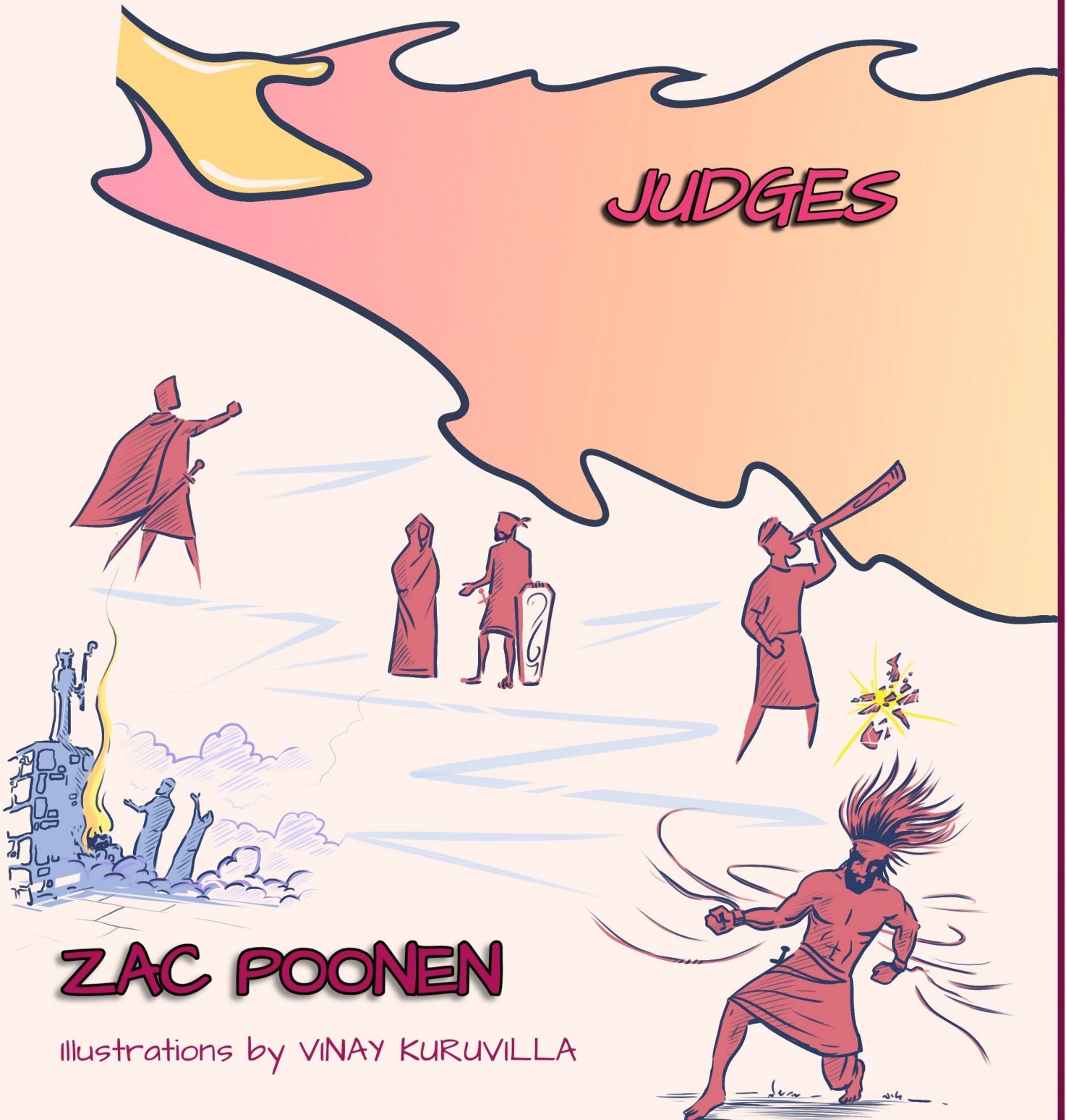


THROUGH THE BIBLE

JUDGES



ZAC POONEN

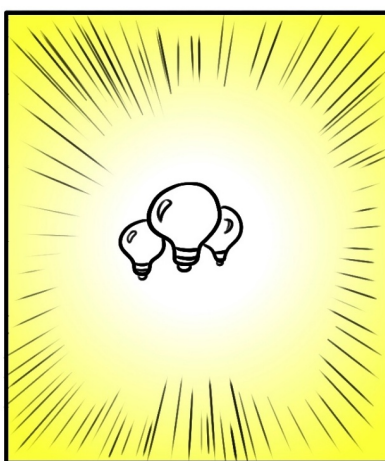
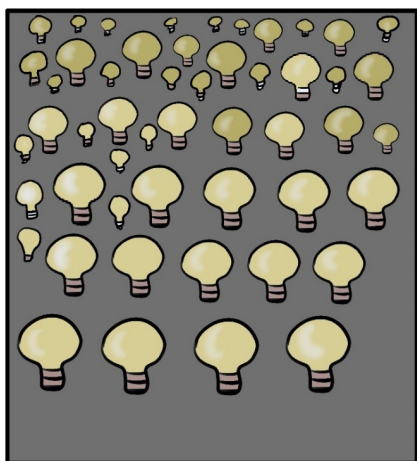
Illustrations by VINAY KURUVILLA

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JUDGES

The book of Judges describes the **backslidden** state of Israel, immediately after the powerful **triumph** they experienced under the **leadership** of Joshua. The state of God's people depends on the **quality** of its **leaders**. Most leaders in Christendom today are not **strong** enough to keep God's people on the **straight** and **narrow** path because the leaders **themselves** don't know God and are **compromisers** who seek to **please men**. They may have **zeal** and even **sacrifice** but they don't **know God**. The statistics of their work maybe **impressive** but the quality of their carnal - minded converts will be **poor**



These Israelites did not **know** God and therefore " they did evil in the sight of God and served the Baals " (2: 11)



It is better to have a **small** church of spiritual believers, than a **large** church of carnal ones. Having a **few** 1000 watt bulbs are **better** than having a hundred **zero** watt bulbs. We are to be the **light** of the world. The **intensity** of the light depends on how much we know God through **humbling** ourselves in trials



God raised up men who brought **revival** in their time. But after they **die**, **decline** sets in. The founder knew God. The members **know the founder**, but don't know God like he did



The Spirit of the Lord came upon the 13 judges so that they could **serve**. Even Jesus who was born of the Spirit and lived a perfect life for 30 years, had to be anointed by the Holy Spirit before He went out to **serve**

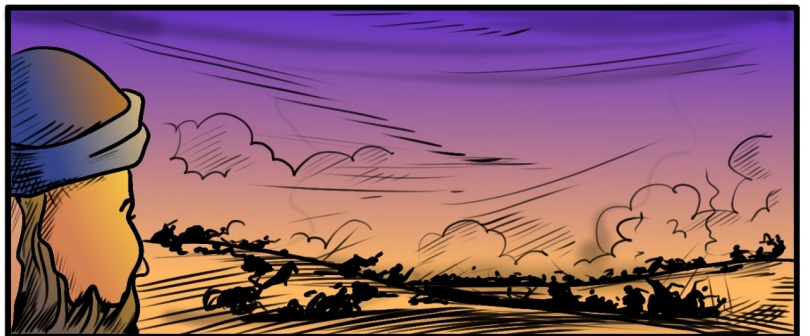


We see 7 cycles of **backsliding** repenting being **delivered** and backsliding again .. It is **not** God's will that we live this way. Today we all can receive the **Spirit** and have His fire burning in our hearts **all** the time. After Othniel died, the Israelites served **Moab** for 18 years then **Ehud** was raised to deliver them when the Israelites **cried out**



Then they did evil **again** and were ruled by the **Canaanites**, whom they were supposed to **exterminate**. God's **first** choice is a **man** to lead for 2 reasons. Eve was created as a **helper** to Adam and she was **deceived** first and **sinned**.

But God did **not** find a man to lead so He raised up **Deborah**. God has used women **mightily** as **missionaries** and as **writers** to save souls and build the body of Christ. When God **cannot** find a man, He uses a **woman** - in **any** ministry. The **promise** of the **new covenant** age is " I will pour out my Spirit on your sons and **daughters** and they will **prophesy**." Acts 2: 17, 18. **Philip** had 4 unmarried **daughters** - all of whom took advantage of that **promise** of God and **prophesied** (Acts 21: 9) Deborah realized her **limitation** and needed a man, **Barak** to lead Israel into battle. Yet, the **bravest** man in Israel said to Deborah " **if** you come with me, I will go " .



After they won, they said "curse **Meroz** because they **did nothing** " While the other tribes went to battle they did not. This was a **sin of omission** where we do nothing when we should **have done** something. If we don't go out to **spiritual battle**, to fight for the Lord, we are **sinning**. It is a sin to **sit back and do nothing** when others are fighting



They had peace for 40 years. Then they again sinned and they were enslaved by the Midianites. Then God raised up Gideon to be the deliverer. Gideon blew his trumpet and went to battle



32,000 men came to fight alongside Gideon. But the Lord said the people were too many (7: 2) God didn't want all of them because they were *not whole hearted*. So Gideon told those who were afraid to go home. If we're afraid of the devil or that we will be called " Beelzebub, heretic or false prophet " then let us go home. 10,000 were still left and they were tested by the way they drank water. Some forgot all about the enemy and *buried* their heads in the water to drink. Many, like this, forget about the Lord and His battles and *bury their heads in covetous pursuit of wealth*. But 300 gathered *just enough* water with their hands to quench their thirst. These typify believers who use money and material things but are *not taken up with it*.



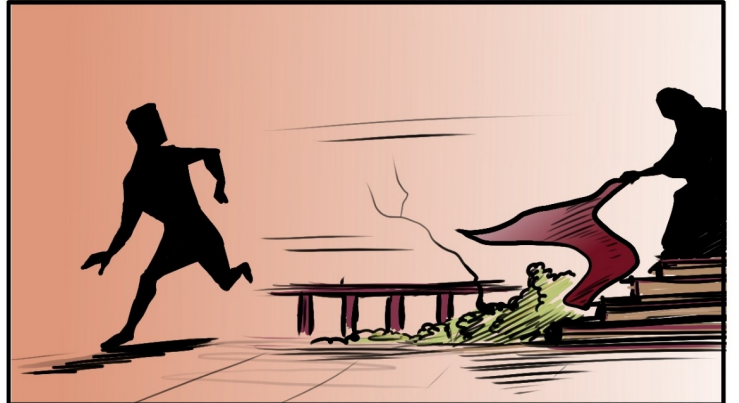
They broke the pitcher and the light inside showed and then they blew their trumpets. This is how our life and ministry should be. "We have this treasure of the glory of God within our earthen vessel" (2 Corinthians 4: 6,7) But the light can be seen only if we are broken through various trials, " then we proclaim His Word



When Gideon went down to the enemy camp, he heard that all were scared of him. Today, if we go into the Devil's camp and listen, we will hear they are scared of Jesus and those who follow Him. That should encourage true disciples to go to battle against Satan. Let us call the Devil's bluff when he tries to frighten us.



But even Gideon did not **endure** in faithfulness to the Lord. This is the **sad** story of many who **started** well. While he **seemed** spiritual when he said " Neither I or my sons will rule " , in the **next** verse he asked all of them for a **earring** Gideon became a **multimillionaire** in a single day - just like many **preachers** who become millionaires by collecting **tithes** and **offerings** from their flock and taking it all **home**. Gideon used some of the gold to make an **ephod** that became an idol that Israel **worshipped**. *The lesson here is we cannot serve God and money*



The 13th judge was **Samson**, who **backslid** early in life because he could not **control** his **lust** for **pretty women** , whether **jew** or **gentile**. He forgot his calling and pursued his **lust**. This is in **contrast** to **Joseph** who remains an **outstanding** example for young men. Joseph lived **before** the law was given but **stood** for **God**



Samson's is a story of **two lions** - one on the **outside**, which he could tear to pieces - and one on the **inside**. The internal lion of sexual lust was **far** stronger

If we keep **rejecting** God's **gentle** warnings to our conscience, we can **destroy** ourselves even if we **think** God is **using** us. Finally, **Delilah** cut his hair and his ministry was **over**. *What a tragedy!* A man who was a **mighty** deliverer, enslaved to his **own** lust. Paul says " I **make** my body do what it **should** do, not what it **wants** to do " lest he be **disqualified** after **preaching** to others. (1 Corinthians 9: 27)





So we read how Samson lost his power amid how his eyes were blinded. When preachers go after women, they *also* lose their *spiritual* vision. Samson became a slave but towards the end, he acknowledged his sin, repented and finally destroyed many philistines. The Bible *exhorts* us to *flee* from immorality. That is the *only* way to overcome it - don't go anywhere *near* such temptation! Samson lived under the old covenant. So no one can make Samson's example an excuse for falling into immorality today. Today, Jesus is our example and the Holy Spirit is our indwelling Helper. We have *no excuse* for living in sin



In 17: 7-13, we see the first case of a *paid professional preacher* in the Bible, who was *willing* to go wherever he got the *best* salary and *benefits*. A businessman came along and offered him a good salary, a new set of clothes each year and free housing.



The businessman thought that God would *bless* him. The Levite signed the contract *immediately*. How very like what we see happening *today*! The reason for this *pathetic* state of affairs is given in 21: 25 - "In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was *right* in his *own* eyes." Jesus must be our King or else we can end up like this