

# The Early Prophets - One Book, One Theme - class # 5

## Sefer Shoftim- A book about Judges or Kings

Source sheet for TIM shiur by Menachem Leibtag/

### Introduction

SEFER SHOFTIM – *Chronicle or Composition?*

*What to consider –*

*Who is the author?*

*What was the prophetic purpose of its composition?*

*When was it written [ during or after that time period]?*

*The 'purpose of Prophecy' – to predict or shape history-*

*Must consider Prophetic purpose of the composition.*

### Chapter

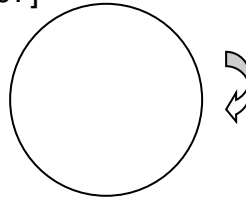
### Topic

1

**Background** - *Who conquered, and who didn't*  
[A segue from Sefer Yehoshua to Shoftim]

2

**Stating the thesis** - *the 'cycle' - intro to the first theme:*  
→ *The danger of appointing a King*  
[leaving God -> trouble -> 'crying out' -> salvation -> quiet...]  
[compare this cycle with Tehillim 107]



3 - 8

**Proving the thesis** - *the 'good' "shoftim" [judges]*

*The stories of*

*Otniel (40 years)*

*Ehud (80 years / includes Shamgar?),*

*Devorah (40 years)*

*Gideon (40 years, note request re: King at end of story!)*

9 -10

**The story re: Avimelech** - *an 'anomaly'*

*Intro to the second theme: The danger of not appointing a King*

[ note how Avimelech **does not** fit the above cycle - note his character]

10 -16

**The stories re: Yiftach & Shimshon** -

*Proof from the 'not so good' "shoftim" - note years are not '40'*

*Note as well the numerous 'one-liner' shoftim*

17 -21

**Three additional 'stories'** - *' not involving "shoftim"*

*Third & final theme: the need for educational leadership of shevet Levi*

*Note the phrase "ba'yamim ha'heyim, ein melech b'Yisrael..."*

*In each story - note as well how they relate to 'anarchy'*

*Pay attention to the character of the "ish Levi" involved in each story!*

1. "pesel Micha" - *Idol made by Micha & shevet Dan,*

2. "pilegish b'Givah" - *(how & why he cut up her body)*

3. "milchemet Binyamin" - *the civil war against Binyamin*

*& the attempt to find wives for the 600 male survivors.*

## II. What were the key prophetic issues during the time of Shmuel?

Fundamental question: Should Israel establish a Monarchy?

Devarim chapter 17:

- יד** כִּי-תָבֵא אֶל-הָאָרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ, וַיִּרְשָׁתָהּ, וַיֵּשְׁבֶתָהּ בָּהּ; וְאָמַרְתָּ, אֲשִׁימָה עָלַי מֶלֶךְ, כְּכָל-הַגּוֹיִם, אֲשֶׁר סְבִיבְתַי.
- טו** שׁוּם תָּשִׂים עָלֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ, אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בּוֹ: מִקְרֵב אַחִיךָ, תָּשִׂים עָלֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ--לֹא תוּכַל לָתֵת עָלֶיךָ אִישׁ נָכְרִי, אֲשֶׁר לֹא-אַחִיךָ הוּא.
- טז** רַק, לֹא-יִרְבֶּה-לוֹ סוּסִים, וְלֹא-יָשִׁיב אֶת-הָעַם מִצְרַיִמָּה, לְמַעַן הִרְבּוֹת סוּסִים; וַיְהוּהוּ, אָמַר לָכֶם, לֹא תִסְפּוּן לָשׁוּב בְּדַרְדָּר הַזֶּה, עוֹד.
- יז** וְלֹא יִרְבֶּה-לוֹ נָשִׁים, וְלֹא יִסוּר לְבָבוֹ; וְכֶסֶף וְזָהָב, לֹא יִרְבֶּה-לוֹ מְאֹד.
- יח** וְהָיָה כְּשִׁבְתּוֹ, עַל כִּסֵּא מַמְלַכְתּוֹ--וְכָתַב לוֹ אֶת-מִשְׁנֵה הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת, עַל-סֵפֶר, מִלְּפָנָי, הַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּים.
- יט** וְהָיְתָה עִמּוֹ, וְקָרָא בּוֹ כָּל-יְמֵי חַיָּיו--לְמַעַן יִלְמַד, לִירְאָה אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו, לְשָׁמֹר אֶת-כָּל-דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת וְאֶת-הַחֻקִּים הָאֵלֶּה, לַעֲשׂוֹתָם.
- כ** לְבַלְתִּי רוּם-לְבָבוֹ מֵאַחֵיו, וּלְבַלְתִּי סוּר מִן-הַמִּצְוָה זְמַן וּשְׂמֵאוֹל--לְמַעַן יִאָּרֶיךָ יָמִים עַל-מַמְלַכְתּוֹ הוּא וּבָנָיו, בְּקִרְבֵּי יִשְׂרָאֵל. {ס}
- 14** When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein; and shalt say: 'I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are round about me';
- 15** thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose; one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee; thou mayest not put a foreigner over thee, who is not thy brother.
- 16** Only he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses; forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you: 'Ye shall henceforth return no more that way.'
- 17** Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away; neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.
- 18** And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the priests the Levites.
- 19** And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them;
- 20** that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left; to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children, in the midst of Israel. {S}

### Pro's & Con's of a Kingdom

### III. Devarim chapter 4 – Intro to main speech / purpose of nationhood

- ה** רְאֵה לְמַדְתֵּי אֲתָתְךָ, חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים, כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוִּנִי, ה' אֱלֹהֵי: לַעֲשׂוֹת כֹּן--בְּקִרְבֵּי הָאָרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם בָּאִים שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ.
- ו** וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם, וַעֲשִׂיתֶם--כִּי הוּא חֻכְמַתְכֶם וּבִינַתְכֶם, לְעֵינֵי הָעַמִּים: אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁמְעוּן, אֵת כָּל-הַחֻקִּים הָאֵלֶּה, וְאָמְרוּ רַק עִם-חֻכְם וּנְבוֹן, הַגּוֹי הַגָּדוֹל הַזֶּה.
- ז** כִּי מִי-גּוֹי גָּדוֹל, אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ אֱלֹהִים קְרֹבִים אֵלָיו, כִּי הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ, בְּכָל-קְרָאֵנוּ אֵלָיו.
- ח** וּמִי גּוֹי גָּדוֹל, אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים צְדִיקִים, כָּל הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת, אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי נָתַן לְפָנֶיכֶם הַיּוֹם.
- 5** Behold, I have taught you statutes and ordinances, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the midst of the land whither ye go in to possess it.
- 6** Observe therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, that, when they hear all these statutes, shall say: 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.'
- 7** For what great nation is there, that hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is whensoever we call upon Him?
- 8** And what great nation is there, that hath statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?

### Compare with why Avraham was chosen -Breishit 12:1-3

**ב** וְאֶעֱשֶׂךָ, לְגוֹי גָדוֹל, וְאֶבְרַכְךָ, **2** And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing.

### and Yosef in the eyes of Egypt (Breishit 41:39)

**ל**ט וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶל-יוֹסֵף, אַחֲרֵי הוֹדִיעַ אֱלֹהִים אוֹתְךָ אֶת-כָּל-זֹאת, אִין-נָבוֹן וְחָכָם, כָּמוֹךָ. **39** And Pharaoh said unto Joseph: 'Forasmuch as God hath shown thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou.'

### III. Shmuel Alpeh chapter 12 – Shmuel's speech at Coronation of Shaul

**ו** וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל, אֶל-הָעָם: ה', אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֶת-מֹשֶׁה וְאֶת-אַהֲרֹן, וְאֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָה אֶת-אַבְתֵּיכֶם, מִמִּצְרָיִם. **6** And Samuel said unto the people: 'It is the LORD that made Moses and Aaron, and that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt.'

**ז** וְעַתָּה, הִתְיַצְּבוּ וְאִשְׁפָּטָה אֶתְכֶם--לִפְנֵי ה': אֶת כָּל-צְדָקוֹת ה', אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה אֶתְכֶם וְאֶת-אַבוֹתֵיכֶם. **7** Now therefore stand still, that I may plead with you before the LORD concerning all the righteous acts of the LORD, which He did to you and to your fathers.'

**ח** כַּאֲשֶׁר-בָּא יַעֲקֹב, מִמִּצְרָיִם--וַיִּזְעַקוּ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם, אֶל-ה', וַיִּשְׁלַח ה' אֶת-מֹשֶׁה וְאֶת-אַהֲרֹן וַיּוֹצִיאוּ אֶת-אַבְתֵּיכֶם מִמִּצְרָיִם, וַיֵּשְׁבוּ בְּמִקּוֹם הַזֶּה. **8** When Jacob was come into Egypt, then your fathers cried unto the LORD, and the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, who brought forth your fathers out of Egypt, and they were made to dwell in this place.'

**ט** וַיִּשְׁכְּחוּ, אֶת-ה' אֱלֹהֵיהֶם; וַיִּמְכְּרוּ אֶתְכֶם בְּיַד סִיסֵרָא שַׂר-צָבָא חֲצוֹר וּבְיַד פְּלִשְׁתִּים, וּבְיַד מֶלֶךְ מוֹאָב, וַיִּלָּחֲמוּ, בָּם. **9** But they forgot the LORD their God, and He gave them over into the hand of Sisera, captain of the host of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought against them.'

**י** וַיִּזְעַקוּ אֶל-ה', וַיֹּאמֶר (וַיֹּאמְרוּ) חָטָאנוּ, כִּי עֲזַבְנוּ אֶת-ה', וְנַעֲבַד אֶת-הַבְּעָלִים וְאֶת-הָעִשְׂתֵּרוֹת; וְעַתָּה, הֲצִילֵנוּ מִיַּד אִיְבֵינוּ--וְנַעֲבֹדְךָ. **10** And they cried unto the LORD, and said: We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD, and have served the Baalim and the Ashtaroth; but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve Thee.'

**יא** וַיִּשְׁלַח ה' אֶת-יִרְבֵּעֵל וְאֶת-בְּדַן, וְאֶת-יִפְתָּח וְאֶת-שְׁמוּאֵל; וַיַּצֵּל אֶתְכֶם מִיַּד אִיְבֵיכֶם, מִסָּבִיב, וַתֵּשְׁבוּ, בְּטָח. **11** And the LORD sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and ye dwelt in safety.'

**יב** וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָל-הָעָם אֶל-שְׁמוּאֵל, הֲתִפְּלֵל בְּעַד-עֲבֹדֶיךָ אֶל-ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ--וְאֶל-נָמוֹת: כִּי-יִסְפְּנוּ עַל-כָּל-חַטֹּאתֵינוּ רָעָה, לְשָׂאֵל לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ. **19** And all the people said unto Samuel: 'Pray for thy servants unto the LORD thy God, that we die not; for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king.'

**יג** וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל אֶל-הָעָם, אֵל-תִּירְאוּ--אֲתֶם עָשִׂיתֶם, אֶת כָּל-הָרָעָה הַזֹּאת; אֲךָ, אֵל-תִּסּוּרוּ מֵאַחֲרַי ה', וְעַבַדְתֶּם אֶת-ה', בְּכָל-לִבְבְּכֶם. **20** And Samuel said unto the people: 'Fear not; ye have indeed done all this evil; yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart;'

**יד** וְלֹא, תִסּוּרוּ: כִּי אַחֲרַי הִתְהוּ, אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יוֹעִילוּ וְלֹא יִצְלוּ--כִּי-תִהְיוּ הַמָּה. **21** and turn ye not aside; for then should ye go after vain things which cannot profit nor deliver, for they are vain.'

**טו** כִּי לֹא-יִטֹּשׁ ה', אֶת-עַמּוֹ--בְּעֵבוֹר, שְׁמוֹ הַגָּדוֹל: כִּי הוֹאִיל ה', לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶתְכֶם לֹו לְעַם. **22** For the LORD will not forsake His people for His great name's sake; because it hath pleased the LORD to make you a people unto Himself.'

### Discussion:

### *Tribalism vs Monarchy*