

**THE NEW CENTURY
BIBLE
JUDGES AND RUTH**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649383887

The New Century Bible Judges and Ruth by G. W. Thatcher

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

G. W. THATCHER

**THE NEW CENTURY
BIBLE
JUDGES AND RUTH**

THE NEW CENTURY BIBLE
JUDGES AND RUTH

*The REVISED VERSION is printed by permission of the
Universities of Oxford and Cambridge*

PREFATORY NOTE

THE object of this commentary is not to evolve historical or religious teaching from the books treated. That should be the final object of every thoughtful reader. The special work of the editor is to show what material is available for such a purpose, how it arose and how it has fared in the course of its transmission. For those who would study these things more in detail, this little book may serve as an introduction to the fuller works cited under *Literature*.

THE BOOK OF JUDGES

INTRODUCTION

THE BOOK OF JUDGES

INTRODUCTION

THE PLACE OF THE BOOK IN THE CANON.

THE Hebrew Bible, of which our O. T. is a translation, is known among Jews as 'The Law, the Prophets, and the Writings.' The three titles correspond with three divisions of the O. T. writings, and indicate three stages in the formation of the Canon. 'The Law,' comprising Genesis to Deuteronomy, formed the first Hebrew Bible, and was received as such about the end of the fifth century B.C. To this was added, not later than 200 B.C., the collection called 'the Prophets,' composed of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings in the first half, and Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor Prophets in the second part. The third Canon, called 'the Writings,' was practically closed at the time of Christ, though the fitness of some books to be in it was matter of dispute until near the end of the first century A.D. In it were contained the Psalms (the Jewish hymn-book), the two Wisdom books, Proverbs, and Job, a collection of five small works (Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther) recited in the synagogues on certain special days, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles, the great Church History of the Jews. The first half of the second Canon thus contained the history of the Hebrews from the death of Moses to the Exile, and the Book of Judges was put into this Canon to fill up the gap from the death of Joshua to the birth of Samuel. Was the book written for this purpose and at this time, or was it already in existence? Like the other historical books of the O. T. it is anonymous. Little or no regard

was paid to authorship in those days. Nor is the date of its composition given in the work itself. It is only by a careful examination of the contents, structure, language, and modes of expression that we can hope to gain some idea of the origin and history of the book which was thus received into the Canon.

CONTENTS.

The Book of Judges in its present form claims to present the history of Israel from the time when the tribes went up from the Jordan valley to take possession of the districts which had fallen to their lot to conquer, up to the days of Samuel, in whose time the monarchy came into existence. The Israelites are represented as a nation existing alternately in a state of anarchy and idolatry, and under the rule of distinguished 'judges' or heroes, of whom thirteen are mentioned.

In chapters i. 1-ii. 5 is a Preface containing a valuable but fragmentary and incomplete account of the first attempts of the Hebrew tribes to conquer Palestine, and the result of these attempts, chiefly in the way of failure. Chapters ii. 6-xvi contain the stories of the Judges, and include a scheme of chronology evidently intended to fill up the period from Joshua to Samuel. The deeds whereby the heroes won their position as judges of Israel are recorded as to Othniel in iii. 7-11, Ehud in iii. 12-30, Barak (with Deborah) in iv. 1-v. 31, Gideon in vi. 1-viii. 32, Abimelech in viii. 33-ix. 57, Jephthah in x. 6-xii. 7, Samson in xiii. 1-xvi. 31. Beside these men are mentioned Shamgar, who slew six hundred Philistines (iii. 31), and five others—Tola (x. 1, 2), Jair (x. 3-5), Ibzan (xii. 8-10), Elon (xii. 11, 12), and Abdon (xii. 13-15)—of whom we are told only their places of burial and their social distinction. The stories of the Judges come to an end with chapter xvi. In the remaining part of the book we have two stories of events which are said to have happened in the times of the Judges. In chapters xvii, xviii is con-