

Is there any scriptural way of telling whether or not the judges of Israel had saving faith?

God raised up judges through whom the nation Israel was delivered.¹ Regarding the judges themselves J. Vernon McGee wrote:

All the judges were themselves limited in their capabilities. In fact, each one seemed to have some defect and handicap which was not a hindrance but became a positive asset under the sovereign direction of God. None of them were national leaders who appealed to the total nation as Moses and Joshua had done. The record is not continuous but rather a spotty account of a local judge in a limited section of the nation.

Backsliding and the amazing grace of God in recovering and restoring is the theme of Judges. The New Scofield Reference Bible gives the theme of the Book of Judges as “Defeat and Deliverance.” This is unusually appropriate. There is, however, another aspect which this book emphasizes: disappointment.²

A judge in Israel would have had to come to God in the same way as any other person—by grace through faith (Eph 2:8-9). Individuals and nations must turn *from* sin and *toward* the living Lord.

An individual may believe in God—even the demons believe and tremble (Jas 2:19); however, one must place his trust in Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior to be saved (Ac 5:14; 1 Ti 4:12). He proves his conversion by right judgement (Pr 31:9, 1 Co 6:3) and good works (Mt 7:20, Jas 2:17, 20).

Individuals and nations are responsible before God (2 Chr. 21:1–17).

The apostle Paul made it clear that the mark of a true Jew is one whose heart is right with God (Ro 2:25–29).³

It is needful for judges to be wise (1 Ki 3:9); but, scripture reveals that they can be easily corrupted (Mic 7:3).

¹ List of judges: Othniel (Judg. 3:9–11), Ehud (Judg. 3:15–30), Shamgar (Judg. 3:31), Deborah and Barak (Judg. 4:4–9), Gideon (Judg. 6:11–40), Abimelech (Judg. 9:1–54), Tola (Judg. 10:1, 2), Jair (Judg. 10:3–5), Jephthah (Judg. 12:1–7), Ibzan (Judg. 12:8–10), Elon (Judg. 12:11, 12), Abdon (Judg. 12:13–15), Samson (Judg. 15:20), Eli (1 Sam. 4:15, 18), Samuel (1 Sam. 7:15), Samuel’s sons (1 Sam. 8:1–3). Thomas Nelson Publishers. (1996). Nelson’s quick reference topical Bible index (p. 357). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

² McGee, J. V. (1991). *Thru the Bible commentary: History of Israel (Joshua/Judges)* (electronic ed., Vol. 10, p. 117). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³ For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God (Ro 2:28–29, NKJV).