



REVIEW ARTICLE

A STUDY OF ALLUSION OF MONARCHY IN THE PERIOD OF JUDGES

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ABSTRACT

After Joshua's death, the life of the Israelites in the land of Canaan falls into confusion and darkness caused by idolatry. From around 1200 BC, the era of judges ruling in the promised land begins. The Book of Judges recorded about 200 years of history from the time when the Israelites entered the promised land until the appearance of the kingdom in Israel. Since this time of Judgment was not yet a king in Israel, the twelve tribes of Israel were not united by any political power. However, there is an expression in the Judgment that informs the impression of the monarchy. One is the expression that "every man did what was right in his sight, because he had no king in Israel"(Jdgs 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25), the other is Abimelech's appearance. Was really there not a king in Israel at that time? This study attempts to analyze the allusion of the appearance of Israelite kingdom, which Deuteronomistic historians speak in the Old Testament, especially The Book of Judges.

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INTRODUCTION

In the days of Judges, the band that united the twelve tribes of Israel was only their common faith in one God. And the ark, a wooden box made of acacia wood, was the center of their faith. This ark is important because it is a symbol of God's presence with the Israelites. During this period, there were areas in Canaan where Israel had not yet conquered, and there was a threat of Philistines entering Canaan at about the same time. God used the Mesopotamian, Moab, Ammon, Amalek, Canaan, Midian, and Philistine peoples as tools to punish Israel for sinning. God used the stratum of the Gentiles to beat his people. Even the nations are under God's sovereignty. The universal God, not limited to Israel! God is not the God of Israel alone, but the master of the history of all other nations. In the Book of Judges, God does not act directly, but through historical and human means, he brings punishment and salvation (Nelson, 2015). God did not just punish Israel with these foreign nations and kings. The use of them was so that Israel would walk on the right path, and every time there was an invasion of foreign nations, he set up judges to save Israel. Such a record of Judges has narrative and instructional purposes (Kim, 2004). In this age when the king was not there, God has appointed them special powers to be leaders of Israel so that judges can act as leaders of Israel. These leaders are called charismatic leaders because they are established by the power God has given them. The character of these charismatic leaders is that the office could not be inherited.

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The son could not be a judge if his father was judge. The position was to end at his own time. However, there is a unique case where the story of a judge leads to the story of his son. That's the Gideon story.

Great Warrior and YHWH Shalom

Gideon is the fifth war hero in Judges. Dtr.H. first introduces Gideon as a somewhat frightened person with a shy personality. When he threshed the wheat, he tried not to be seen by the Midianites (Jdgs 6:11), and when he removed the Baal and Asherah's idols according to the word of God, he was frightened so torn them in the night not daytime (Jdgs 6:25-27). But the messenger of God says, "The great warrior, The LORD is with you"(Jdg 6:12). Gideon, referring to the "great warrior," is not the title he calls because he is now brave. It would be God's will to be with Gideon and make him a mighty warrior. The grateful Gideon calls for a sign to confirm that he was called at the meeting. He wants to get the mark through an offering to God. The messenger of God takes all of Gideon's demands by burning off the goats' meat and unleavened bread, offerings made by Gideon. Then Gideon knew that he was the messenger of YHWH who had spoken to him and talked with him, but he feared death rather than getting courage (Jdgs 6:22). In the Old Testament, those who meet God or the messenger of God are dead (Jdgs 13:22; Exodus 33:20). But God sent Shalom to Gideon, who was so afraid, and Gideon built an altar for YHWH and called the place YHWH Shalom (Jdgs 6: 22-24). This peaceful relationship with God inevitably leads to a fight with idols that God hates. On the night of the building of the altar of YHWH Shalom, Gideon destroyed the altar of Baal and Asherah, and built the altar with the woods

from the Asherah. On the night of the fire on the altar of YHWH Shalom, on the other side, the altar of Baal was destroyed and the Asherah's wood was burning (Jdgs 6:25-32).

YHWH Mashal

Gideon, with the force of thirty-two thousand (Jdgs 7:3), had to fight against the enemies Midian, Amalek, and the eastern peoples were about 140,000. The enemies were totally 135,000. It was a 4.2 to 1 force. Dtr.H likened them to the grasshoppers and the sand on the beach (Jdgs 7:12). God has reduced the number of the Gideon army, despite the absolute numerical decline. Gideon sent back those who were not prepared for war and those who were afraid. The remaining number of soldiers was only ten thousand. The power dropped to 13.5 to 1. God added a step here, and the last remaining Gideon's army was reduced to three hundred. Now the power is 450 to 1. Israel should not even think that by their own strength they could win this war. Moreover, the remaining three hundred soldiers were not merely those who had proved their military capabilities, but only those who licked water by grabbing at the water. The soldiers who remained until the end were those who passed the test of God, which they could not understand. It did not matter what they were. If God leads, no matter who he uses, the result will be the same. The Bible explains why God reduced the number of Israel's armies (Jdgs 7:2). If Israel won the war with a thirty two thousand military force, it would have been determined that they defeated over four times the enemy with men's strategy and courage. But if they win with three hundred men, the cause of the victory will never be found in the strategy or number of people, but will be turned to God's help. Indeed, they did not carry weapons on the battlefield. The trumpets and jars to wake up the sleeping enemy, and the torches to walk the night were all the weapons they had. The Midianites, who suddenly rose to the sound of a trumpet and a jar, should flee and fight against each other, captivated by the fear God has caused. The great victory of the day in the Old Testament was settled in the memory of the Israelites for a long time in the name of 'the day of Midian'(Isa 9:4).

Judges 8 begins with a conflict between the people of Ephraim and Gideon. They blamed Gideon for not calling them when the war against the Midianites began. In the Old Testament, Ephraim is used throughout the name of individual, tribe, and country. Early Ephraim, one of Joseph's two sons, came into the twelve tribes of Israel, and after Solomon's death, the kingdom was divided into two, and the name Ephraim was used to call the northern Israel. Joshua, the hero of the conquest of Canaan, was also from this Ephraimite tribe. They came to Gideon, saying, "Why have you treated us like this when you went to fight the Midianites?" But Gideon, already a hero of war, did not dismiss their claims. Gideon's words, which comfort them, are full of humility (Jdgs 8:2-3). He said "Aren't the gleanings of Ephraim's grapes better than the full grape harvest of Abiezer?"(Jdgs 8:2) 'The gleanings of Ephraim's grapes refer to the useless last grapes harvested from the mountains of Ephraim. They are inferior in quality. Abiezer is the home of Gideon. The full grape of Abiezer is Gideon himself. Obviously Gideon would have suppressed his feelings. Gideon did not fight the people of Ephraim because he was afraid of them. So why did he stay so low to persuade them? It is because they were not enemies. The Israelites asked Gideon, who took three hundred elite armies and defeated the Midianites and the Amalekites, to be their kings (Jdgs 8:22-

23). The people of Israel make a call to be king who can surely rule hereditary. Here the Hebrew word *mashal* is a word for the reign of the king. At that time, the eyes and attention of all Israel was concentrated in one person Gideon, and Gideon's popularity was at the height of popularity. He was definitely a superstar of the people. But Gideon's answer was firm: "I will not rule (*mashal*) over you, nor will my son rule(*mashal*) over you. The LORD will rule (*mashal*) over you." That was indeed an amazing answer. There are many people who want to be king at any time, and want to rule the people. He said that he would not be king, even though he received the trust and popularity of all the people. The voice of rejecting the monarchy is humble that God has given strength, wisdom and courage. He did not win by his own strength, but because God made him triumph, he should glorify God and deserve to be governed by God. Gideon 's heart, which rejects the people' s appeal to make himself king, once again embraces the modesty of not being self-confident. Although some scholars often claim that Gideon actually accepted the throne (Davies, 1963), there is no need to make such a conclusion in the light of Judges 9:1(Bright, 2007; Cf. McKenzie, 1966). But Gideon, a humble man, makes a crucial mistake. It is the work of asking the people who have come to ask of him to be king, the gold earrings that have been seized from the war, and the making of the ephod with it(Jdgs 8:24,27). The Israelites gladly gave Gideon gold jewelry, and the ephod become an idol. Perhaps Gideon would have made an ephod for use in a religious ceremony for God, but it was a violation of the Word of God forbidding the image (Exodus 20:4, second commandment) It became an idol to serve. We think once again that any plan of man cannot be above the Word of God.

My Father is King?

After Gideon died, there is one who appears as king. It is Abimelech (Jdgs 9:6)! He was the son of Gideon(=Jerubbaal). Gideon returned to his hometown and lived a normal life, and he gave birth to seventy sons and died (Jdg 8:31). The story of the monarchy of Israel begins to sprout from Abimelech, one of his many sons. Gideon had many wives, and a son named Abimelech was born from a Canaanite woman from Shechem. The name Abimelech means 'my father is king (*Melek*)'. Perhaps this name appears to have been made in the sense that God is the father of all Israel. Abimelech had the ambition to become king, ignoring the great lessons of Gideon. He would have been upset because his father rejected the throne. I would have thought that I had kicked the pumpkin that rolled into the vine. He was helped by telling the people of Shechem that he was their relative. And he did the terrible thing of bringing together seventy siblings on a rock and slaughtering them. Abimelech, who wanted to be king, saw his brethren against the competition. In the siege, Jotham, the only surviving of the Gideon sons, made a fable. The allegory shows how dangerous the kingdom of Abimelech is as a king (Jdgs 9: 8-15,18). A fire from a thorn tree will burn a cedar of Lebanon (Jdgs 9:15). The concern was that Abimelech would have a fire from the people of Shechem and the people of Milo who set him up as a king (Jdgs 9:20). Actually Abimelech burned a thousand men and women in the tower of Shechem by fire (Jdg 9:49). He did not mind slaughtering the people in order to maintain his regime, and after pursuing the fleeing people, he came to the place called Thebez, and tried to set fire under the tower. But the reign of Abimelech, who had slain his brothers and his people,

who wanted to be king himself, had to end in a short time. A woman who was on the tower threw a millstone overhead on Abimelech's head, and it broke the skull (Jdgs 9:50-54). In the end, Abimelech governed for three years and was killed in vain. The memory of Abimelech, the tree of thorns, which was to build his kingdom over the shedding of blood of brothers and nations, was remembered as a pain until the time of David (2Sam. 11:21-22).

Conclusion

The characteristic of the Judges' day is that God did not allow kings in Israel (Jdgs 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). The king in Hebrew is *Melek*. There are two men named *Melech* in the period of Judges. One is Abimelech as mentioned above, and the other is the husband of Naomi, Elimelech (=my God is king), who appears in Ruth. It is no coincidence that such names appear in the age of Judges. Now it is suggesting that the time of Judges will be over and that the period of kingdom will come to Israel. But there is one thing to think about. Was there really no king in Israel in the age of Judges? The God of Israel has long been a king of Israel. God has already ruled Israel from his early time (Nu 23:21; 1Sam 12:12). In Israel during that period, there was just no earthly king visible. The invisible God was a heavenly king, unlike any other kings in the world (Lee, 2010).

The God has always been King of Israel, and he is still king in our lives. Previously, we did not recognize God as a king so did what was right in our own eyes, but now we could give up our own opinion in acknowledging God's kingliness. One step further, acknowledging God as king and master is that not only our 'life' but also 'death' should be left to his providence and sovereignty. David said that "Our lives are seventy years, and if we are strong, we are eighty (Psalm 90:10) and "Teach us to number our days and earn the heart of wisdom" (Psalm 90:12). Our lives remain valuable when we acknowledge God's master hood in front of the enormous barriers of life. In the Old Testament, Israel had to live more loyally than any other people because God was their king.

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