

# Acts 13:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.

## Analysis

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**And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years**—Paul's sermon in Pisidian Antioch recounts Israel's history from Egyptian bondage through the period of the judges. The 450-year timeframe has prompted scholarly discussion: some manuscripts place this duration before the judges (covering Egyptian bondage, wilderness wandering, and Canaan's conquest), while others include the judges themselves. The Greek phrase *hōs etesin tetrakosiois kai pentēkonta* (ώς ἔτεσιν τετρακοσίοις καὶ πεντήκοντα) indicates an approximate period.

**Until Samuel the prophet** (ἕως Σαμουὴλ τοῦ προφήτου)—Samuel marks the crucial transition from the chaotic judge era to the monarchy. As both the last judge and first prophet of a new order, Samuel embodied God's faithful leadership before Israel's rebellious demand for a king. Paul's sermonic narrative builds toward Christ as God's ultimate appointed ruler, showing how even Israel's monarchy under David was preparatory.

## Historical Context

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Paul delivered this sermon around AD 47-48 during his first missionary journey. Speaking in a synagogue, he employed a historical survey familiar to Jewish audiences—a rhetorical pattern seen throughout Acts (7:2-53, 13:16-41). The judges period (c. 1375-1050 BC) represented Israel's theocratic government, where God raised up deliverers in cycles of apostasy and repentance. Samuel (c.

1100-1020 BC) anointed both Saul and David, bridging the era of judges to the Davidic monarchy from which Messiah would come.

## Related Passages

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

## Study Questions

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1. How does Paul's historical survey demonstrate God's patient faithfulness through Israel's repeated cycles of rebellion and deliverance?
2. Why is Samuel's role as the transition figure from judges to kings significant in understanding God's redemptive plan culminating in Christ the King?

## Interlinear Text

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καὶ	μετὰ	ταῦτα	ώς	ἔτεσιν	τετρακοσίοις	καὶ
And	after	that	about	years	the space of four hundred	And
G2532	G3326	G5023	G5613	G2094	G5071	G2532
πεντήκοντα	ἔδωκεν	κριτὰς	ἔως	Σαμουὴλ	τοῦ	
fifty	he gave	unto them judges	until	Samuel	G3588	
G4004	G1325	G2923	G2193	G4545		
προφήτου						
the prophet						
G4396						

## Additional Cross-References

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**Judges 2:16** (Judgment): Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them.

**1 Samuel 3:20** (Prophecy): And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the LORD.

