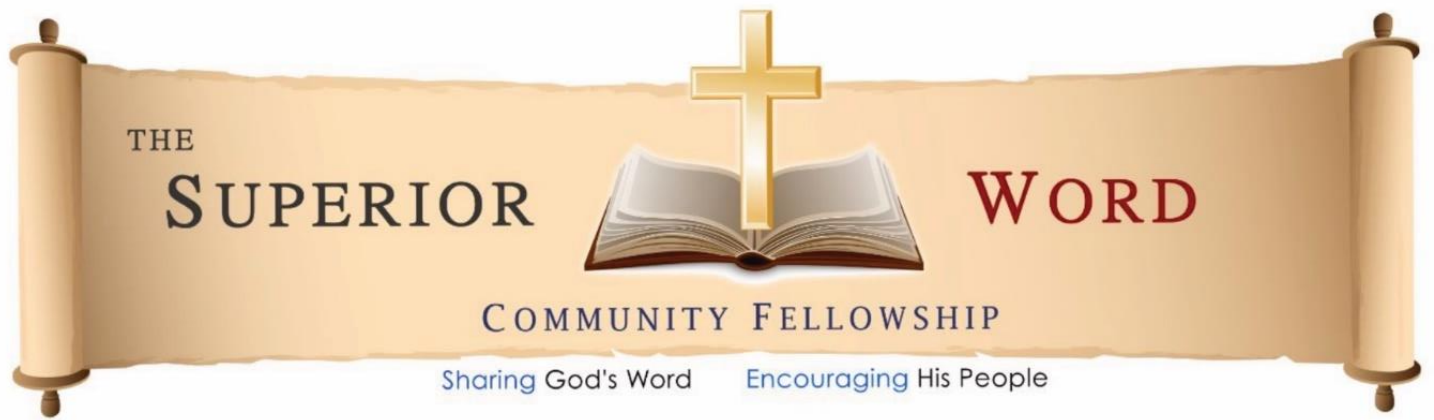




JUDGES

A Verse-By-Verse Study

By Pastor Charlie Garrett

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JUDGES 1:1-8 (JUDAH SHALL GO UP)

There are several mysteries concerning the book of Judges. In one way, it is one of the simplest books of all to read. It involves interesting stories and curious oddities that excite the mind.

RC Sproul once talked about being at a Jewish camp for children one year. He wanted to read the Bible to them, and since he knew he couldn't read from the New Testament, he chose the book of Judges.

For a young mind, it has all the excitement of a first-rate Hollywood movie. Sampson and Delilah. O my! Samson bringing down the walls of the temple of Dagon! Woooooow! Three hundred men defeating the vast army of the Midianites! Hooray!

The stories in Judges are filled with exciting details. But they also carefully reveal the underlying problem with man and the grace of God towards His people. Such great things are ahead of us as we enter into this new and exciting part of God's word.

Text Verse: *"And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah..." Hebrews 11:32*

All four of these men are characters in Judges. Three of them held the position of Judge, but all of them were involved in fighting the Lord's battles. However, there are difficulties that we will face in this book along with all the excitement. Adam Clarke notes –

"The chronology of the Book of Judges is extremely embarrassed and difficult; and there is no agreement among learned men concerning it. When the deliverances, and consequent periods of rest, so frequently mentioned in this book, took place, cannot be satisfactorily ascertained." Adam Clarke

Rather than the chronology being embarrassed, it is more embarrassing because of our limitations. It is not God's word which is convoluted, but our understanding of it. We are the ones who struggle to figure out what is going on, how it all fits together, and how this book ties in with the rest of the Bible.

It is embarrassing for us to evaluate it and later find out we were wrong on this point or that. But it is better to dive in and search it out than to shy away from it and not attempt to figure out what is going on.

The Lord willing, over the next 21 chapters of the book of Judges, I will do my utmost to not embarrass myself as I provide you with the details contained in them. While typing this sermon, I found out that I had an error in something I presented in the Joshua sermons. I will clarify it as we go.

It's a rather small error, but I apologized to the Lord many, many times as I typed. We should strive for perfection as we evaluate this gloriously marvelous word. This is because it is God's superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Book of Judges. An Introduction.

The book of Judges is the seventh book of the Holy Bible. Depending on how the Old Testament is divided, it is sometimes classified as 1) the second book of the section, sometimes called The Writings; 2) one of the Historical Books; or 3) a portion of the Former Prophets. Jesus uses this last division in Luke 24 –

“These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the Prophets* and *the Psalms* concerning Me.” ⁴⁵ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.” Luke 24:44, 45

Judges follows Joshua. Its Hebrew name is *Sefer Shoftim*, literally, “Book of Judges.” It is named based on the period of Israel's history that was ruled by judges rather than kings.

It is often claimed that this was a period of Israel living in a pure theocracy, but such a notion implies that the people are living for God and under His rule in an obedient and heartfelt manner. This is hardly the state of Israel at this time. Rather, a state of apostasy is noted at the turn of every page.

As far as dating when the book was written, there is dispute. However, the conservative and traditional dating is based upon internal clues found within the book. First, a repeated phrase concerning Israel having no king looks ahead to a time when Israel will

have a king. Saul was Israel's first king as recorded in 1 Samuel. Therefore, its writing would be at that point or after.

In Judges 1, it notes that Jebusites were living in Jerusalem. However, David conquered Jerusalem in 1004 B.C. Therefore, it would predate that timeframe. Likewise, a reference to Canaanites living in Gezer hints at a time before that city was given to Solomon as a gift in 1 Kings 9:6.

Also, there is a reference to "Bethlehem, Judah" in Judges 17 & 19 and also in Ruth 1 and 1 Samuel 17. As this occurs nowhere else in that manner, it seems to indicate that the phrase was limited to a specific period around the time of Samuel, the final judge of Israel.

One verse that tends towards a much later dating for the book is Judges 18:30 –

"Then the children of Dan set up for themselves the carved image; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land."

If this is referring to the exile of the inhabitants under Tiglath-Pileser III in 733-32 B.C., or their final deportation under Sargon in 722-21 B.C., then it means the book, or at least this note in the book, was written hundreds of years later.

However, this could be a prophetic announcement of a future captivity because of Israel's apostasy, or it could refer to some other event that occurred. What is most likely the case is revealed from an evaluation of the word translated as captivity, *galah*. It signifies to uncover or remove, but it is widely translated as reveal, appear, discover, disclose, make known, etc.

This word, *galah*, is used in 1 Samuel 4 at the time of the captivity of the ark –

"Then she named the child Ichabod, saying, 'The glory has departed [*galah*] from Israel!' because the ark of God had been captured and because of her father-in-law and her husband. ²² And she said, 'The glory has departed [*galah*] from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured.'" 1 Samuel 4:21, 22

Thus, this verse that seemingly points to a later date may be the author's reference to this event. If so, it would make Samuel a likely candidate for having authored Judges.

No author is named within the book, but Samuel the prophet is traditionally considered to be the inspired author. The Talmud ascribes authorship of both Judges and Samuel (which in Christian Bibles is divided into 1 & 2 Samuel) to the prophet Samuel.

As for the dating of the actual contents of the book, it falls between the events of the book of Joshua and the reign of Saul, Israel's first king. This is a period of about three hundred years. However, a seeming inconsistency is found in Paul's words of Acts 13 –

“Now for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness. ¹⁹ And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment. ²⁰ “After that He gave *them* judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. ²¹ And afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years.” Acts 13:18-21

The problem with this is that it says in 1 Kings 6:1 that it was four hundred and eighty years from the exodus until starting to build the temple in Jerusalem. This would make the Bible's chronology seemingly impossible to reconcile because of the kingships of Saul and David, along with the forty years in the wilderness and the events of Joshua.

However, the words of Paul are not speaking of a set chronology of one judge leading to the next. Rather, the rule of some judges overlapped the rule of another judge. Taking the time of each judge's rule as recorded in Judges and 1 Samuel, and then adding them together reveals what Paul was speaking of: 8 + 40 + 18 + 80 + 20 + 40 + 7 + 40 + 3 + 23 + 22 + 18 + 6 + 7 + 10 + 8 + 40 + 20 + 40. This totals 450 years.

Thus, Paul's reference is to the cumulative years of rule by the judges, even when they overlap, not a chronological dating.

As far as historical context, the book is given to reveal the time when Israel was ruled by judges rather than a king. The tribes were loosely held together but were tightly knit enough to unite when necessary to weed out evil among them. This is particularly seen towards the end of the book when the tribe of Benjamin commits a great offense in the land.

From a theological perspective, the events of the book reveal that though there are human judges within the land, the Lord (Yehovah) is the true and ultimate Judge over the events that occur. For example, during the time of Jephthah, conflict arose between Israel and the people of Ammon. In his words to them, he says –

“Therefore I have not sinned against you, but you wronged me by fighting against me. May the LORD, the Judge, render judgment this day between the children of Israel and the people of Ammon.” Judges 11:27

Other internal clues concerning the Lord’s rule are seen within the book as well. For example, Deborah is said to have judged while sitting under a palm tree, a symbol of uprightness and righteousness, in Judges 4. The passage will then refer to the righteous acts of the Lord (Judges 5:11) as the true Judge of Israel.

In Judges 6, the next major account in the book, it says –

“Now the Angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth tree which *was* in Ophrah, which *belonged* to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide *it* from the Midianites.” Judges 6:11

The Lord sat under an *elah*, or terebinth, tree (indicating strength). The passage then builds upon the idea of the might of the judge whom the Lord had appointed to deliver the people.

Paying attention to these types of internal clues will provide the reader with the means of understanding the theology that lies behind the narrative.

The people are prone to wander, and the judges are selected to return them to the Lord. The people are subdued by their enemies, and the judges are appointed to free them from their plight. The people are faithless to the covenant, and the Lord remains faithful to it, even when the judge himself is weak or otherwise ineffective.

An important note that must be included is that the book of Ruth is noted as occurring during the time of the judges (Ruth 1:1). As such, this timeframe is not only concerned with the preservation of Israel as a people, but – like all of their history – it is carefully watched over to lead to the Davidic rule of Israel and thus to the coming Messiah.

Even if veiled throughout all of what occurs, the anticipation is that of the coming of the true Judge in His incarnation.

And that leads to the redemptive context of the book. Judges, like Joshua, demonstrates the faithfulness of the Lord in keeping His promises to His people. They are settled in the land, they act contrary to the will of the Lord, and He takes action to instruct them

through correction. And yet, He remains faithful to the covenant promises He has agreed to. The key thought of Judges is the twice repeated statement –

“In those days *there was* no king in Israel; everyone did *what was* right in his own eyes.” Judges 21:25 (also Judges 17:6)

Even while Israel did not do what was right in the eyes of the Lord, the Lord always upheld His side of the covenant. This was to ensure that the people would continue until the coming of the Messiah, and thus to the redemption of the world from the power of sin. A key passage that encompasses this thought is found in these words –

“So the LORD said to the children of Israel, ‘*Did I not deliver you* from the Egyptians and from the Amorites and from the people of Ammon and from the Philistines?’ ¹² Also the Sidonians and Amalekites and Maonites oppressed you; and you cried out to Me, and I delivered you from their hand. ¹³ Yet you have forsaken Me and served other gods. Therefore I will deliver you no more. ¹⁴ Go and cry out to the gods which you have chosen; let them deliver you in your time of distress.’ ¹⁵ And the children of Israel said to the LORD, ‘We have sinned! Do to us whatever seems best to You; only deliver us this day, we pray.’ ¹⁶ So they put away the foreign gods from among them and served the LORD. And His soul could no longer endure the misery of Israel.” Judges 10:11-16

Being the seventh book of the Bible, it is of value to consider the number as it is revealed in Scripture. Seven is the number of spiritual perfection. Obvious pictures of Christ, the epitome of spiritual perfection, will be seen in Judges, and yet God will use imperfect people to accomplish this.

As such, those highlighted in Judges are only typical of Christ, and the book is merely a typological representation of the greater Judge, Jesus Christ.

There is much more that could be said about the book, and commentaries abound for you to consider. As for us, it is time to enter into this treasure of God’s word and begin seeking out its secrets. May the Lord bless our time in the book of Judges.

*The enemies are out there, but they are defeated
The victory is assured as we head out
Through the power of the cross, they are unseated
And so to the Lord we give a victory shout*

*Every tribe and tongue and nation
Is included in the deal
Human hearts filled with elation
Because of the precious Seal*

*How grateful we are for what You have done
Thank You, O God for our Lord Jesus
We have restoration through the giving of Your Son
Such marvelous things You have done for us*

II. Thumbs and Big Toes (verses 1-8)

¹Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass

The book actually begins as several of the books of the Old Testament begin, with a conjunction connected to a verb: *vayhi akhare moth Yehoshua* – “And it was, after death Joshua.”

Beginning with the word “and,” it signifies that what is presented is merely a continuation of the same story we have been reading. God is revealing to us wonders, unfolding them in a logical sequence which – at times – may or may not be chronological, but they fit in a fashion as orderly as if they were chronological.

In this case, it is a chronological event, following directly after the recorded death and burial of Joshua as Joshua ended. This same “and” begins the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Joshua, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Esther, Ezekiel, and Jonah.

Beginning this way is intended to show us the continuation of a thought process that began earlier. The note of the deaths of Joshua and Eleazar were recorded at the end of Joshua –

“Now it came to pass after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, *being* one hundred and ten years old. ³⁰ And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Serah, which *is* in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash. ³¹ Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the LORD which He had done for Israel. ³² The bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel had brought up out of Egypt, they buried at

Shechem, in the plot of ground which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred pieces of silver, and which had become an inheritance of the children of Joseph. ³³ And Eleazar the son of Aaron died. They buried him in a hill *belonging to* Phinehas his son, which was given to him in the mountains of Ephraim.” Joshua 24:29-33

It is with this context that the words, “And it was,” find their meaning. It is at this point in the history of the redemptive narrative...

¹ (con’t) **that the children of Israel asked the LORD,**

vayishalu bene Yisrael b’Yehovah – “and asked sons Israel in Yehovah.” The first thing to notice is the repetition of “and” here –

“And it was, after death Joshua.”

“and asked sons Israel in Yehovah.”

John Lange takes this as cause and consequence. Hence, he sees it as being “right after the death of Joshua, they asked.” As for the term “in Yehovah,” it is an unusual phrase, and it is debated what the meaning of asking “in Yehovah” is. Some think it means via the high priest who consulted the Urim and Thummim. That seems likely. In Numbers 27, it said –

“And the LORD said to Moses: ‘Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom *is* the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; ¹⁹ set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and inaugurate him in their sight. ²⁰ And you shall give *some* of your authority to him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. ²¹ He shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire before the LORD for him by the judgment of the Urim. At his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, he and all the children of Israel with him—all the congregation.’” Numbers 27:18-21

The words “by the judgment of the Urim” are *b’mishpat ha’urim* – “in judgment the Urim.” Hence, to inquire in Yehovah would be “in the judgment of the Urim” because it is the Lord who responds according to the Urim, the Lights. The sons of Israel were...

¹ (con’t) **saying, “Who shall be first to go up for us against the Canaanites to fight against them?”**

The reference to the enemy is singular: *l'mor mi yaaleh lanu el ha'k'naani bat'khilah l'hilakhem bo* – “to say, who shall ascend to us unto the Canaanite in the beginning to fight in him?” The word *lakham* signifies to fight, war, eat, devour, etc. It comes from a root signifying to feed on. Thus, one gets the imagery of the savageness of war.

The timing of these words is debated. The verse started with the thought of this being after the death of Joshua. However, most scholars are adamant that the contents of Judges 1 through Judges 2:8 are referring to events that have already occurred. For example, Joshua 2:6 specifically mentions Joshua dismissing the people, which is in accord with Joshua 24:28.

Likewise, the portions of the account of Caleb in Judges 1:12-20 have already been recorded in Joshua 15. However, it was argued at that time that the true timing of the event is probably now in Judges 1 but that it was recorded in Joshua 15 for the sake of the deed of inheritance.

Whether that was a correct analysis or not, these overlapping events do not need to be taken chronologically but categorically. In other words, things are being brought forward from Joshua, or they were brought back from Judges to meet the needs of what is necessary to fit a greater picture being developed.

Having said this, there is no reason to assume that the events described are not after the death of Joshua. In the wars under Joshua, the nation fought as a whole. The question now submitted to the Lord is, “Who shall go up first?”

The implication is that each tribe is going to individually continue removing the Canaanites from the land in their own inheritances. This is something that would occur after the death of Joshua.

² And the LORD said, “Judah shall go up.

vayomer Yehovah Yehuda yaaleh – “And said Yehovah, Judah shall ascend.” The word ascend is used differently at times. Here, it is to engage in battle against a defended position. As defended positions are normally elevated to obtain the advantage, those attacking are considered as “going up.”

In this case, the tribes have asked for the Lord’s determination as to who should engage first, and His response is Judah. As Judah means Praise, it forms a pun. Because the

question is asked of the Lord, the implied words are, “Who shall ascend first ‘before you Lord?’” The answer is, “Praise shall go first before Me.” And the reason is...

² (con’t) **Indeed I have delivered the land into his hand.”**

The battle is assured, and the praise shall go forth, anticipated by the tribe whose name is Praise. The same symbolism was seen when the tribes marched in the wilderness. Judah was the first to break camp and it led the procession throughout all their wanderings. Praise of the Lord led the way.

This thought is an anticipation of the coming of Messiah as well. In Genesis 49, it said –

“Judah, you *are he* whom your brothers shall praise;
Your hand *shall be* on the neck of your enemies.” Genesis 49:8

Those words look to the coming of the Messiah who will be the ultimate expression of destroying the enemies of God’s people. Judah being first is a reminder of that. With that determination made, Judah will do what is logical by inviting their brother tribe to join them...

³ **So Judah said to Simeon his brother, “Come up with me to my allotted territory, that we may fight against the Canaanites;**

vayomer Yehuda l’shim’on akhiv aleh iti b’gorali v’nilakhamah ba’k’naani – “And said Judah to Simeon his brother, ‘Ascend with me in my lot and we will fight in the Canaanite.’” Here, the use of “ascend” is not specifically speaking of the fighting to take place as it was in the previous verse.

Rather, much of Judah is in the mountainous areas, but Simeon’s lot is in the lower areas of the Negev and the Shephelah. Hence, though they are speaking about fighting, the terminology will be different for Simeon in the next clause because of this.

Judah and Simeon were both sons of Leah, so there is already a special bond between them. However, what is more germane at this time is that Simeon’s tribal inheritance is contained entirely within the borders of Judah. Thus, it makes complete sense that they would work together to subdue the remaining inhabitants.

³ (con’t) **and I will likewise go with you to your allotted territory.” And Simeon went with him.**

v'halakti gam ani it'kha b'goralekha vayelet ito shim'on – “‘And I will go, also I, with you in your lot.’ And went with him Simeon.” The agreement was made and it would have been best for both of them, but especially Simeon. His numbers were small and he had to travel through Judah’s territory to reach his own. Simeon means He Who Hears.

⁴Then Judah went up, and the LORD delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand;

vayaal Yehuda vayiten Yehovah eth ha'k'naani v'ha'perizi b'yadam – “And ascended Judah, and gave Yehovah the Canaanite and the Perizzite into their hand.” The verb is singular. Thus, it means that either Judah went up alone or that Simeon is included as a part of the force of Judah.

As for the names of the enemies, these are the same two groups mentioned at the time of Abraham in Genesis 13 and again at the time of Jacob in Genesis 34.

Canaanite means Humiliated, Humbled, or even Subdued. In some of the previous sermons, I identified Perizzite as A Breach or Irruption, coming from *parats*. This is not correct. Rather, it comes from *perazi*, a hamlet dweller. Thus, it means something like Villagers or Dwellers in an Open Country.

⁴ (con't) **and they killed ten thousand men at Bezek.**

vayakum b'vezeq asereth alapim ish – “and struck in Bezeq ten thousand man.” The name Bezeq comes from the noun, *bazaq*, signifying a flash of lightning. However, this is not in reference to heat, noise, or illumination, but of the scattering effect.

Abarim notes that the unused Hebrew verb, *bazaq*, probably meant to scatter and that its Aramaic counterpart does mean this. The noun is found only once in Scripture –

“As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance *was* like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches going back and forth among the living creatures. The fire was bright, and out of the fire went lightning [*baraq*]. ¹⁴ And the living creatures ran back and forth, in appearance like a flash of lightning [*bazaq*].” Ezekiel 1:13, 14

Hence, it means Scattering or Flash of Lightning.

The number ten thousand should be taken as a large but indeterminate number. However, being a multiple of ten, it “implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete” (Bullinger).

It appears that these words anticipate the next verse. In other words, the battle is described in its overall victory and then the details are filled in. If this is not the case, then it would mean that Bezek, which is only elsewhere mentioned in 1 Samuel 11, is a district rather than a city. If so, then two separate events are described between these two verses. Either way...

⁵ And they found Adoni-Bezek in Bezek, and fought against him;

vayimtsu eth adoni vezeq b'vezeq vayilakhamu bo – “And they found Adoni-Bezek in Bezek and fought in him.” The word Adoni is not a name but a title. Adon means Master, Sir, or Lord, and the i makes it possessive. Thus it is My Lord or Lord Of. Therefore, the entire name is [My] Lord of Scattering, or [My] Lord of Lightning Bolt.

Saying they found him may mean that they came upon him suddenly and completely surprised him. Also, saying “fought against him” is a way of saying they fought against his army. The singular speaks of all under him. As such, it appears that the entire army was completely unprepared for what came upon them.

^{5 (con't)} **and they defeated the Canaanites and the Perizzites.**

Again, it is singular, “and they struck the Canaanite and the Perizzite.” The meaning is that the Canaanites and Perizzites were completely defeated, not that every one of the people groups was killed. Both names will be seen again later in Scripture.

⁶ Then Adoni-Bezek fled, and they pursued him and caught him and cut off his thumbs and big toes.

There is no way to satisfactorily translate this in English. There is one word, *bohen*, to describe both thumb and big toe. A literal translation, using one word, would be “his thumbs – hands and his feet.”

Of this, Adam Clarke and others say, “That he might never be able to draw his bow or handle his sword, and great toes, that he might never be able to pursue or escape from an adversary.”

This cannot be the reason. If it were so, it would mean that they would do this to every foe they encountered. That would be similar to what is recorded by Cambridge –

“A barbarity frequently practised in ancient warfare to mark the humiliation of the captives and prevent them from further mischief. Thus the Athenians are said to have decreed that the right thumb of every Aeginetan taken prisoner should be cut off ‘that they may be incapable of carrying a spear, but not incapable of working an oar,’ Aelian, *Var. Hist.* ii. 9.”

This is the only time this punishment is meted out in Scripture, and thus it cannot be that they were worried about this guy fighting back, running away, or any other such thing.

⁷ And Adoni-Bezek said, “Seventy kings with their thumbs and big toes cut off used to gather scraps under my table;

More precisely, it reads, “Seventy kings, thumbs – their hands and their feet – cut off, have been gathering under my table.” Of this, Charles Ellicott says –

“The peculiar appropriateness of the punishment in this instance arose from the *Lex talionis*, or ‘law of equivalent punishment,’ which Moses had tolerated as the best means to limit the intensity of those blood-feuds.”

That only applied to those under the law. This may be a case of “he got what he dished out,” but it is not a case of judgment under the *lex talionis*, except as it would apply to an offense against God Himself.

As for the number seventy, being a multiple of 7 and 10, Bullinger says it, “signifies perfect spiritual order carried out with all spiritual power and significance. Both spirit and order are greatly emphasised.”

As for his offense against God, this is what he acknowledges...

⁷ (con’t) **as I have done, so God has repaid me.”**

ka’asher asiti ken shilam li elohim – “According to which I have done, thus repaid to me God.” How does one explain this when it was a common practice among the Athenians and other people groups? It isn’t like God repaid all of the others who did this in the same manner. And yet, Adoni-Bezek ascribes it to the doings of God.

Two possible answers seem to make sense. He could be saying, “thus repaid to me gods.” The word *elohim* can be referring to one god or many, the true God or a false god. He could be saying that the gods of his enemies have repaid him as he had done to those men who served them.

Or he could be acknowledging Israel’s God as the true God. As Israel is the Lord’s people, what they have done is to be considered as if it was done by God. Israel must have heard of Adoni-Bezek’s common practice and decided that they would do to him what he had done to others. This is not unlike what is seen in 1 Samuel 15 and elsewhere –

“But Samuel said, ‘As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women.’ And Samuel hacked Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.” 1 Samuel 15:33

It is also how the Lord dealt with Babylon as noted in Jeremiah –

“Because the plunderer comes against her, against Babylon,
And her mighty men are taken.
Every one of their bows is broken;
For the LORD *is* the God of recompense,
He will surely repay.” Jeremiah 51:56

This same thought carries into the New Testament as well. Paul says that it is “a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you” (2 Thessalonians 1:6, etc.). Such things as this demonstrate that God is just and fair. Whether in this life or the next, every offense will be judged and brought to account.

As for Adoni-Bezek...

^{7 (con’t)} **Then they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died.**

The words here are not unlike those of 1 Samuel 17 –

“And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his armor in his tent.” 1 Samuel 17:54

Jerusalem was not under Israel’s control at the time when David did this, and it was not under the control of Israel at the time of Adoni-Bezek’s capture. There are various views

about why they brought him to Jerusalem, but the next verse seems to explain the matter.

Judah will fight against Jerusalem and take it, striking it with the edge of the sword and setting it on fire. Adoni-Bezek may have been brought there as an example of what those in Jerusalem could expect when they were overthrown.

Ellicott says they may have even spared his life, sending him to Jerusalem to be “as a living monument of God’s vengeance.” This would 1) presuppose that he was from Jerusalem, and 2) be a violation of the law –

“When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, ²and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them *and* utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them.” Deuteronomy 7:1-3

⁸ Now the children of Judah fought against Jerusalem and took it;

vayilakhamu bene Yehudah birushalim vayilkdu otah – “And fought sons Judah in Jerusalem and took her.” The KJV, following the Geneva Bible, incorrectly states this in the past tense – “had fought and had taken.” The supposition is that this is referring to Joshua 12:10 where it noted that the king of Jerusalem was defeated.

Just because a king is defeated in battle, it does not mean that the city was taken, nor does Joshua 10, where the battle is described, say anything about that. This is an action now being taken by Judah. As for the name, Jerusalem, it has a variety of meanings, but Foundation of Peace is sufficient. As for the city...

^{8 (fin)} they struck it with the edge of the sword and set the city on fire.

The terminology is rare: *vayakuha l’pi kharev v’eth ha’ir shil’khu ba’ets* – “And they struck her to mouth sword and the city cast in the fire.” The city was taken, and the inhabitants were put to the sword. After that, it was as if the city was literally picked up and tossed into a burning fire.

Despite this, Israel will not gain full control of the city until the time of David. Jebusites continued to dwell there and it is called Jebus in Judges 19. It is during this siege and destruction that Adoni-Bezek finally bought the farm.

*Adoni-Bezek will never bother again
He is finished up and has seen his last
He caused trouble to many, many men
But he is dead; his time is past*

*A new Leader has taken control
And a new direction is laid out ahead
On Him we can every care and worry roll
Because Adoni-Bezek our foe is dead*

*The enemy can no longer afflict us
We have a new hope because he is dead
Thank God for our Lord, our precious Jesus
Thank God that He is there as our Head*

III. Cool, Even Nifty, Typology

This passage follows directly after Joshua. Therefore, the previous book is alluded to by noting the death of Joshua, the Lord is Salvation, in verse 1.

That looks to the death of Christ, the Lord who is Salvation. Obviously, Jesus' resurrection can't be noted in an Old Testament passage like this because Joshua is still in the ground. But Jesus' death includes His resurrection, so it is implied. After His death, a war is required. Paul clearly notes this several times in several different ways.

He notes that we are soldiers and the implements of warfare we use. He directs Timothy to "wage the good warfare" (1 Timothy 1:18), etc.

The question is, "Who will go up first (lit: in the beginning) to fight the Canaanites?" But even before the question, it said, "asked sons Israel 'in Yehovah.'" It is a picture of those "in Christ."

As for noting the Canaanites (Humbled, Subdued), they are already defeated by Christ (as will be seen in a minute), but who still have to be defeated in the ongoing war that

Christ has won. The response to who will engage the war first is, “Judah shall go” (verse 2).

Judah here is synonymous with Jewish believers, the first to believe in Jesus. Paul then further explains their state in Romans 2 by making a pun on the name of Judah through the use of the word praise –

“For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, nor *is* circumcision that which *is* outward in the flesh; ²⁹ 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.” Romans 2:28, 29

Hence, Jewish believers in Christ are those being referred to. They are the first (lit: in the beginning) to begin the war after Joshua’s (Jesus’) death. The Lord confidently tells them (verse 2) that the enemy is already defeated – “I have delivered the land into his hand.”

Notably, it says in verse 3 that Judah invited his brother Simeon, He Who Hears. This speaks of anyone who is saved. As they are not of Judah (the Jews), it means that they typologically include Gentiles. As Simeon is within Judah’s land grant, it reflects the truth that Gentiles are included in the New Covenant and are a part of the commonwealth of Israel (Ephesians 2:12).

Even though Simeon is no longer mentioned in this passage, the typology is set. Judah and Simeon will work together to effect the purposes of the Lord. As for noting the Perizzite, Villagers, in verse 4, I can only speculate on that. Unwalled villages are defenseless and thus already defeated, just as are the Humbled/Humiliated Canaanites. It speaks of defeat on their part.

As for the number killed, ten thousand, it speaks of a large but indeterminate number. Being a multiple of ten, it “implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete” (Bullinger).

The war will be complete when the church age is done, nothing will be wanting, perfection will be realized, and the cycle of the dispensation will be complete. The name Bezek, according to Abarim, signifies Scattering. That takes us back to Genesis 11, even if a different word, *puts*, is used –

“And they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top *is* in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad [*puts*] over the face of the whole earth.’” Genesis 11:4

This is no different than two different words being used for the same thought in Psalm 68 –

“Let God arise,
Let His enemies be scattered [*puts*];
Let those also who hate Him flee before Him.” Psalm 68:1

“Rebuke the beasts of the reeds,
The herd of bulls with the calves of the peoples,
Till everyone submits himself with pieces of silver.
Scatter [*bazar*] the peoples *who* delight in war.” Psalm 68:30

Verse 5 then introduced Adoni-Bezek, Lord of Scattering, in Bezek, and they fought him, noting that the Canaanites and Perizzites were defeated.

Verse 6 noted that they pursued Adoni-Bezek and caught him, cutting off his thumbs and big toes. The thumb is used for grasping and thus, it is that which speaks of power and strength that can be wielded. The big toe is what provides support for standing and directing motion. These were taken from him, leaving him powerless, crippled, and defeated.

That was noted as divine retribution for his own actions of having done the same to seventy kings (verse 7). That pictures the removal of the power of the seventy nations noted in Genesis 10, the Table of Nations, and their own scattering as noted in Genesis 11.

Just as the nations were divided into language groups, they were united by language in Acts 2. That power of the Spirit remains to this day due to the defeat of the enemy. The Bible is translated into the languages of the people groups of the world.

In the establishment of the nations the perfect spiritual order was carried out with all spiritual power and significance. That was reflected in the words of Genesis 11 –

“And the LORD said, ‘Indeed the people *are* one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them.’” Genesis 11:6

That cooperation had to be cut off because of pride in man and rebellion against God. The defeat of Adoni-Bezek thus pictures the divine justice against that. Just as pride and rebellion cut off man’s ability to wield power and properly move about, the Lord cut that off in man, restoring the ability to work with, not against, God once again. Think of the power of the Spirit and how Bullinger explains the number seventy where “both spirit and order are greatly emphasised.”

The final note of verse 7 was that Adoni-Bezek was brought to Jerusalem where he died. The city first in the law is the last place to be subdued. Irony abounds.

That is actually completed in verse 8 where it notes that Jerusalem, Foundation of Peace, was taken, defeated by the mouth of the sword, and cast in the fire.

Jerusalem, the city of the law and thus the city of boasting in self-achievement before God (Galatians 6:13, etc.) was defeated with the sword (*kherev*). It is a picture of Christ’s prevailing over the law given at Horeb (*khorev*). They are spelled the same in the Hebrew – חרב.

Casting the city into the fire makes a marvelous picture of the complete ending of the law. Thus, it truly is the Foundation of Peace. The place where Christ was crucified is the place where the law is ended and peace with God is established. The idea is fully supported by Paul’s words of Galatians 4:21-31.

It must be remembered that it was God’s law that got man into a pickle in the first place when the Lord gave Adam the law about eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in Genesis 2. Thus, those seventy nations, pictured by the seventy kings of this chapter, were affected by law. The presentation is totally consistent with the typology presented.

It is law that separates us from God, not because there is anything wrong with the law, but because of our actions under the law. If believers were under law today, we would lose our salvation lickity split. But we are not under law. Rather, we are under grace.

And more, because we are not under law, we can no longer be imputed sin, which is exactly what separates us from God. There are just a few verses in today’s passage, but

once again, the truth is revealed that what man needs is not more law but God's grace. That is what is offered in the giving of His Son for us.

Let us ever be grateful to Him for the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Closing Verse: *"And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? ⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹ Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." Acts 2:8-11*

Next Week: Judges 1:9-15 *The typology is a pretty sweet thing...* (Upper Spring and Lower Spring) (2nd Judges sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Judah Shall Go Up

Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass
That the children of Israel asked the LORD
Saying, "Who shall be first to go up for us against the Canaanites
To fight against them according to Your word?"

And the LORD said, "Judah shall go up, please understand
Indeed I have delivered the land into his hand"

So Judah said to Simeon his brother
"Come up to my allotted territory with me
That we may fight against the Canaanites
And I will likewise go with you to your allotted territory"

And Simeon went with him
Surely confident to the brim

Then Judah went up
And the LORD delivered, giving the enemy heck
The Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand

And they killed ten thousand men at Bezek

And they found Adoni-Bezek in Bezek

And fought against him

And they defeated the Canaanites and the Perizzites

For them, things turned rather grim

Then Adoni-Bezek fled, and they pursued him, so it goes

And caught him and cut off his thumbs and big toes

And Adoni-Bezek said, "Seventy kings with their thumbs

-----and big toes cut off

Used to gather scraps under my table, so I confide

As I have done, so God has repaid me"

Then they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died

Now the children of Judah

Fought against Jerusalem and took it, they didn't quit

They struck it with the edge of the sword

And set the city on fire, maybe roasting marshmallows in it

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word

Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You

May we carefully heed each thing we have heard

Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone

We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise

Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown

Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 1:9-15 (UPPER SPRING AND LOWER SPRING)

The cult mindset is something that is extremely difficult, and at times impossible, to defeat. People find reasons to ignore the obvious, or even the facts, when they contradict the paradigm in which they live.

I used to believe in evolution. That is what I was taught at school, and I accepted it. “They are teachers, I am the student, they know more than I do through training, studying, and so forth.”

However, I never had a cult mindset against any other view. I just didn’t realize there was another view. I’m sure I heard about creation and even read about it, but the Bible wasn’t something I ever processed as “inspired,” “infallible,” etc.

Once I was presented with the biblical creation account and the obvious disconnect between evolution and creation, I studied, verified, contemplated, and considered. Without much difficulty, I accepted the creation model and eventually completely aligned it with Scripture.

However, even with the most incredible evidences imaginable, the cult of evolution overlooks the most obvious telltale signs of creation. The thought of a young earth and a Creator God simply does not align with its adherent’s view about how things are.

The same is true with flat earthers. No matter how utterly ridiculous their logic is, and no matter how evident the case for a spherical earth is, they are unwilling to entertain the thought of the earth being anything but pizza-shaped. Mmmm pizza.

Text Verse: *“Come now, and let us reason together,”
Says the LORD,
‘Though your sins are like scarlet,
They shall be as white as snow;
Though they are red like crimson,
They shall be as wool.’” Isaiah 1:18*

When I attended Southern Evangelical Seminary, the founder, Norman Geisler, used the first clause of Isaiah 1:18 constantly. “Come now, and let us reason together.” Those

words float in my mind anytime I am faced with an alternate view concerning something I believe. It reminds me to stop and think.

Some people will simply not reason things out. They refuse to consider any other option than the one they believe. The timing of the rapture is one that will cause believers to cover their ears and shout loudly to stop any other view from coming in and infecting theirs. King James Only believers can be shown an actual contradiction in their translation, and they will walk away completely denying what they were shown. It is as if they never saw it.

People stuck in cults will completely ignore anything but what they have been taught. They will even call into question the reliability of their own Scriptures to hold to their personal view of what they claim their own Scriptures teach.

For example, take the Mormons. Paul anticipated their cult nineteen hundred years before it came to be when he penned the warning in Galatians 1:6-9. But if you show a Mormon that, he will do what any member of a cult will do: ignore the obvious and continue down Apostasy Avenue. Showing them Paul's warning simply doesn't work.

What is presented in today's passage probably won't convince them either. But the typology is so clear that I hope some reasonable Mormon, someday, will click onto the sermon, watch it till the end, and say, "I've been wrong about my faith." I'm not holding my breath, but it sure would be nice.

Lots of great doctrines are cleared up in the typology presented in the Old Testament. Yep, such great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. A Blessing for Achsah (verses 9-15)

⁹ And afterward the children of Judah went down

v'akhar yaredu bene yehudah – "And after descended sons Judah." Judah means Praise. Hence, it is the sons of Praise. In verse 4, it said that Judah went up to engage in battle. Now, it notes that they descended. The last thing noted in the previous passage was that Judah fought against Jerusalem.

In Scripture, one always goes up to Jerusalem or down from it. Understanding that, the next words logically follow...

⁹ (con't) **to fight against the Canaanites who dwelt in the mountains, in the South, and in the lowland.**

It is singular, speaking of a single people: *l'hilakhem ba'k'naani yoshev ha' har v'ha'negev v'ha'sh'phelah* – “to fight in the Canaanite dwelling the mountain, and the Negev, and the Shephelah.” Canaan signifies Humbled, Humiliated, or Subdued.

In descending from Jerusalem, Judah fought the Canaanite in:

- 1) The mountain. A mountain (*har*) is a lot of something gathered. It is synonymous with a large but centralized group of people.
- 2) The Negev. The word *negev* means south, but it comes from a word meaning parched.
- 3) The Shephelah. The word comes from *shaphel*, to become low or abased.

The mountain is the highland area of Canaan. It runs through the whole of the land with the exception of the plain of Jezreel. The Negev comprises much of the area where Simeon's inheritance was. The Shephelah is a transitional region. It has soft-sloping hills, and it is located in the south-central area of Canaan between the mountains of Judah and the coastal plains. Next...

¹⁰ **Then Judah went against the Canaanites who dwelt in Hebron.**

vayelek yehudah el ha'k'naani ha'yoshev b'khevron – “And went Judah unto the Canaanite, the dweller in Hebron.” Hebron means Alliance. This battle was recorded in Joshua. However, as was noted then, it is likely that it actually occurs chronologically now.

The details in Joshua were recorded in advance for the sake of inheritances. As for Hebron, or Alliance, that is further detailed...

¹⁰ (con't) **(Now the name of Hebron was formerly Kirjath Arba.)**

v'shem khevron l'phanim qiryath arba – “And name Hebron to faces Kirjath Arba.” Saying “to faces” is a Hebrew idiom meaning “before,” as if someone is looking back on

the faces of the past. In Jeremiah 7:24, however, it is used to produce a contrast: forward instead of backward –

“Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but followed the counsels *and* the dictates of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward [*l’phanim*].”

Kirjath Arba means City of Four. A city in the Bible is generally reflective of man deciding his own fate, independent of God. God created a place suitable for man to fellowship with his Creator, the garden. Man builds a place suitable for himself apart from God in the building of a city.

However, a city can also be a place of fellowship with God once again, as is seen in the New Jerusalem “whose builder and maker *is* God” (Hebrews 11:10).

In this case, it is the City of Four. Four “is emphatically the number of Creation; of man in his relation to the world as created ... It is the number of things that have a beginning, of things that are made, of material things, and matter itself. It is the number of material completeness. Hence it is the world number, and especially the ‘city’ number” according to Bullinger.

As for this battle, it next says...

¹⁰ (con’t) **And they killed Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi.**

vayaku eth sheshay v’eth akhiman v’eth talmay – “And they struck Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmi.” This was recorded in Joshua 15:13, 14.

Sheshai means Whitish. Akhiman means My Brother is a Gift. Talmi means Plowman. These three were already named in Numbers 13, many years before. Therefore, it is likely that this is referring to people groups descended from these three named clan leaders.

¹¹ **From there they went against the inhabitants of Debir.**

Rather than “they,” the verb is masculine singular: *vayelex misham el yoshve debir* – “And [he] went from there unto inhabitants Debir.” The words are closely repeated from Joshua 15:15. There it said, “And ascended...” Here it says, “And went.” Other than that, they are identical.

Using the singular here instead of the plural as in the previous verse, it is a reference to Caleb who will be noted in the next verse. Debir means Place of the Word. That is then further defined as...

11 (con't) (The name of Debir was formerly Kirjath Sepher.)

v'shem debir l'phanim qiryath sepher – “And name Debir to faces Kirjath Sepher.” Debir is noted as having been called Kirjath Sepher. The word *sepher* is singular and means book.

However, to get the right idea, you would call it “Book City,” and thus “City of Books,” a name connected to Place of the Word. It was the place where the scrolls of writings were maintained, like a library today.

It was important because of this. Of the battle, it next says...

12 Then Caleb said, “Whoever attacks Kirjath Sepher and takes it,

The entire verse is a letter-for-letter copy of Joshua 15:16: *va'yomer kalev asher yakeh eth qiryath sepher ul'khadah*– “And said Caleb, ‘Who strikes Book City and takes her...”

Rather than Debir, Caleb notes the former name when planning its attack. This is supposition on my part, but perhaps they wanted to capture the scrolls in order to get a better understanding of the layout of the land, the structure of cities, etc., by obtaining any such documents maintained there. So important was this mission that a great honor is offered.

12 (con't) to him I will give my daughter Achsah as wife.”

v'natati lo eth akhsah biti l'ishah – “and I will give to him Achsah my daughter to wife.” Achsah comes from *ekes*, meaning a fetter (Proverbs 7:22) or an anklet (Isaiah 3:18). That comes from *akas*, to shake bangles as seen in Isaiah 3 –

“Moreover the LORD says:
‘Because the daughters of Zion are haughty,
And walk with outstretched necks
And wanton eyes,
Walking and mincing *as* they go,
Making a jingling with their feet,

¹⁷ Therefore the Lord will strike with a scab
The crown of the head of the daughters of Zion,
And the LORD will uncover their secret parts.” Isaiah 3:16, 17

The offering of a daughter in this manner is not unusual. Throughout Kings and Chronicles, intermarriages are noted where one king gives a daughter to another, such as in 1 Kings 3:1. It is also something Saul promised to the victor over Goliath –

“So the men of Israel said, ‘Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to defy Israel; and it shall be *that* the man who kills him the king will enrich with great riches, will give him his daughter, and give his father’s house exemption *from taxes* in Israel.’” 1 Samuel 17:25

As for the prize named Achsah, she goes to...

¹³ And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother, took it;

The words are similar to Joshua 15:17 with two exceptions. The first is that Othniel is noted as Caleb’s younger brother. The second is that a preposition meaning “from him” is included: *va’yilkdah athniel ben qenaz akhi kalev ha’qaton mimenu* – “And took her, Othniel son Kenaz, brother Caleb, the younger, from him.” This is the difference when put side by side –

“And took her, Othniel son Kenaz, brother Caleb, the younger, from him.”
“And took her, Othniel son Kenaz, brother Caleb.”

Only one translation, Smith’s Literal Translation, even bothers translating the “from him” part. But it is such a noticeable difference from Joshua that it is hard to imagine it not being translated.

By adding the word translated as “from him,” it makes much of the rest of the verse parenthetical, “And took her...from him.” One assumes that the words “from him” are speaking of the Canaanite of verse 9. He had the city, and Othniel took her from him.

As for the words, “Othniel son Kenaz, brother Caleb,” it seems to place Caleb’s father as Kenaz. That is incorrect. Caleb’s father is Jephunneh (Numbers 13:6, etc.).

The Hebrew could mean either Othniel or Kenaz is Caleb's brother. Hence, it could mean that Othniel was "son Kenaz and brother of Caleb," and thus Othniel marries his niece, or "son Kenaz, who was Caleb's brother," and thus Achsah is his cousin.

The correct reading/translation is that Othniel is Caleb's brother, and both are sons of Jephunneh. The words *ben qenaz*, or "son of Kenaz," mean "descendant of Kenaz," and thus, Othniel is – like Caleb – a Kenizzite as noted in Numbers 32:12.

Saying "son of Kenaz" thus identifies him as belonging to the clan of Kenaz, the Edomite noted in Genesis 36:15 –

"These were the chiefs of the sons of Esau. The sons of Eliphaz, the firstborn son of Esau, were Chief Teman, Chief Omar, Chief Zepho, Chief Kenaz."

Caleb means Dog. Othniel means either Force of God or Lion of God. The NAS uses a different root to translate it which renders it Burning of God. Because he is the one to prevail over the city, Achsah goes to her uncle as his wife.

The meaning behind Kenaz, or Hunter, is that it signifies a person who seeks after wisdom.

The purpose of the words is to show that both Caleb and Othniel are reckoned as descendants of this Gentile, Kenaz. As for Othniel's great victory...

¹³ (con't) **so he gave him his daughter Achsah as wife.**

The clause is letter for letter the same as the corresponding clause in Joshua 15:17: *vayiten lo eth akhsah bito l'ishah* – "And gave to him Achsah his daughter to wife." Achsah is accounted under both Caleb and Othniel in this matter. Yet she will be given a set inheritance within Judah as the narrative continues...

¹⁴ **Now it happened, when she came to him, that she urged him to ask her father for a field.**

With one exception, the words are identical to Joshua 15:18: *v'hi b'boah va'tsithehu lishol me'eth abiha ha'sadeh* – "And it was in her coming and she poked him to ask from her father the field." Joshua 15:18 says "field" without the article. This verse says, "**the** field." It is a particular field she has in mind.

The word *suth*, translated as “urged,” comes from *shayith*, a thorn. Hence, it figuratively means to poke or entice. The meaning is that in her coming to Othniel as wife, she used that opportunity to get him to either ask Caleb directly or he allowed her to ask personally for this field.

What is apparent is that he didn’t heed her poking. It could be that despite being confident in battle, he was too shy to ask for a favor. Whatever caused him to not yield to her urgings, she was unafraid of poking at her father. Therefore...

¹⁴ (con’t) **And she dismounted from *her* donkey, and Caleb said to her, “What do you wish?”**

va’titsnakh me’al ha’khamor va’yomer lah kalev mah lakh – “And jumped down from upon the donkey, and said to her, Caleb, ‘What to you?’” A difficulty in the Hebrew has ended in a wide variety of translations. The word *tsanakh* is found in only two accounts, this one and that of Jael in Judges 4 –

“Then Jael, Heber’s wife, took a tent peg and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple, and it **went down** into the ground; for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died.” Judges 4:21

What seems the best explanation of this comes from Adam Clarke, where he says, “she hastily, suddenly alighted, as if she had forgotten something, or was about to return to her father's house.”

One can imagine the scene. She is being conducted to the house of her new husband. She leans over and says, “We really need this field with the water. Let me ask him for it.” With that, she jumps down as if she refuses to go further unless she gets what she wants. Caleb is caught completely off guard and asks, “What’s the matter with you?” And then...

¹⁵ **So she said to him, “Give me a blessing;**

The words are slightly different than the account in Joshua 15: *vatomer lo havah li v’rakha* – “And said to him, ‘Give to me blessing.” The differences are seen when put side by side –

“And said, ‘Give [*nathan*] to me blessing.”

“And said to him, ‘Give [*yahav*] to me blessing.”

The words *nathan* and *yahav* both have the same meaning and they both come from roots signifying to put or set forth. It could be that both words have been used to show that the accounts are not mere copies of one another, even if they say the same thing.

In other words, with the additional information and different context, this isn't just a repeat of Joshua 15, but it is presenting a different aspect of the same general information.

As for the words, "Give to me a blessing," they mean, "Give to me a gift." She wants something tangible from him. With that, she explains what...

15 (con't) since you have given me land in the South, give me also springs of water."

The words are identical to the corresponding clause from Joshua 15: *ki erets ha'negev n'thatani v'nathatah li guloth mayim* – "For land the south given me, and give to me springs water."

There is a dual meaning being conveyed. The word *negev* means south, but it comes from a word meaning parched. Therefore, the land is pointless to possess unless water is available. In essence, she is saying, "For you have given me parched land, so give me springs of water."

The word translated as springs, *gullah* comes from *galal* meaning to roll. Thus, the water comes up as round and bubbling. Stanley described it in the 1860s, saying –

"Underneath the hill on which Debir stood is a deep valley, rich with verdure from a copious rivulet, which, rising at the crest of the glen, falls, with a continuity unusual in the Judæan hills, down to its lowest depth. On the possession of these upper and lower 'bubbings,' so contiguous to her lover's prize, Achsah had set her heart." Stanley's *Lectures*, i. 264.

With that noted, the next words are given...

15 (con't) And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

It is surprisingly different than Joshua 15, even if it says the same thing: *va'yiten lah kalev eth guloth ilith v'eth guloth takhtith* – "And gave to her Caleb springs upper and springs lower." The differences can be seen when placed side by side –

“And gave to her springs upper [*iliyoth*] and springs lower [*takhtiyoth*].”

“And gave to her Caleb springs upper [*ilith*] and springs lower [*takhtith*].”

Keil explains the difference, “The forms עליות and תחתיות (Judges 1:15), instead of עליות and תחתיות (Joshua 15:19), are in the singular, and are construed with the plural form of the feminine גלות, because this is used in the sense of the singular, ‘a spring.’”

As for the words themselves, the word translated as upper, *ili*, is only found in this account (in Joshua and Judges). It comes from *alah*, to ascend. Thus, it is an upper spring. The word signifying lower, *takhti*, comes from *takhat*, under. Thus it is the lower or lowest spring.

The account of Caleb, Othniel, and Achsah with the lands they possess is specifically stated here, just before the naming of the cities of Judah, to show what was rightfully theirs is to be reckoned within the overall inheritance of Judah.

*The inheritance is within part of the commonwealth
And so, any can receive what it contains
But you cannot obtain it by trickery or stealth
Rather, such things can never remove your chains*

*To have the freedom found in the waters that bubble
You must pay heed to that word
It is the remover of every care and trouble
When you accept the message you have heard*

*And it is not one spring, or seven, or three
No, the streams are numbered at only two
It is in them together that you can be free
Just these two springs will work; nothing else will do*

II. Explaining the Achsah Typology

This passage follows logically after the previous section where the nations were scattered by language in Genesis 11. However, they were united by the language of the Spirit again in Acts 2.

It was noted that power of the Spirit remains to this day due to the defeat of the enemy, and that the Bible is translated throughout the people groups of the world.

The passage ended with the note that Jerusalem, the city of the law and thus the city of boasting in self-achievement before God, (Galatians 6:13, etc.) was defeated with the sword (*kherev*).

That was a picture of Christ's prevailing over the law given at Horeb (*khorev*). Both are identical in the Hebrew – חרב. In its defeat, the city was cast into the fire. The place where Christ was crucified is the place where the law ended and peace with God is established.

The verses today began with the children of Judah (Praise) going down, meaning from Jerusalem, to fight against the Canaanite (Humbled) who is in the mountain (a large centralized group of people), the Negev (Parched), and the Shephelah (Low or Abased).

It speaks about Jesus going forth from the sons of the Lord (Praise). He is 1) the gatherer of God's people; 2) the Giver of water (life through the word) in the otherwise parched world; and 3) the One who abased Himself in order to bring the humbled to God.

Judah first (verse 10) went against the Canaanites in Hebron (Alliance), also called Kirjath Arba (City of Four). It speaks of the Alliance of the world represented by the number four explained by Bullinger –

It is "the number of Creation; of man in his relation to the world as created ... Hence it is the world number, and especially the 'city' number." Think of the followers of Jesus going out into the world of humbled humanity after Christ completed His work.

Next, in verse 10, it noted the striking of Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai. The names are given to explain the position of those who are a part of this joining together.

Ahiman, My Brother is a Gift, is the relationship of the believer to Christ who is the Gift. Sheshai, Whitish, looks to the purification of the believer because of Christ. Talmai, Plowman, looks to the one who puts his hand to the plow and doesn't look back as he is a believer in Christ.

Verse 11 moves from this battle to Debir, Place of the Word. The subject was masculine singular. Thus, it was referring to Caleb (Dog, and thus a Gentile in type).

This sets the tone for the rest of the typology to come. He has already been shown in Joshua to have an inheritance among the sons of Judah. In other words, the Gentiles are being grafted into the commonwealth of Israel (Ephesians 2:12).

Still in verse 11, Debir was also noted as Kirjath Sepher. Jesus is the Oracle, the Place of the Word. But He is to be found in the scrolls (as seen in the City of Books) that speak of Him. Caleb determines to go there to dispossess the inhabitants and gain possession of it.

In verse 12, it notes that whoever attacks the City of the Books and takes it will get Achsah, Caleb's daughter, as his wife. Her name means Anklet, an adornment of the foot. The foot signifies possession. She is the reward for the one who obtains the City of Books. And the victor in verse 13 is "Othniel son Kenaz, brother Caleb, the younger."

Othniel, or Force of God, is also the son of Kenaz, or Hunter. That was explained in Joshua 14 by Abarim as a name based on a profession, similar to many of our own names. Hence it is someone who seeks a form of wisdom like any such profession would.

In his case, it would be as a hunter of men in the sense that he is seeking the wisdom not only for himself, but for others as well. Thus, Othniel is typifying those who expend themselves in the pursuit of the knowledge of God and in conveying that to others.

This then would explain why the word translated as "from him" was added. Othniel, in type a Gentile who is expending himself in order to convey the knowledge of God to others, took the city from the Canaanite. As Jews are a part of the world, represented by the Canaanite, it means that the City of Books is now something that has been taken by the Gentiles.

But more, he is also identified in the passage for the first time as *ha'qaton*, the younger. The word literally means small, lesser, little, unimportant, etc. Translating it as younger is for clarity. This then isn't just referring to Gentiles but to believing Gentiles –

"For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*.²⁷ But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;²⁸ and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,²⁹ that no flesh should glory in His presence." 1 Corinthians 1:26-29

It is to Othniel, typical of believing Gentiles, that Achsah (Anklet) is given. As an adornment of the foot, she would indicate open and showy possession. But in receiving her after his victory over the City of the Books, he also inherits more.

At her prodding, not only will there be a possession of parched land, but there is also request for, and granting of, bubbling waters.

The whole picture can be seen: Caleb, signifying the Gentiles being brought into the commonwealth of Israel (Joshua 9), is also guaranteed the inheritance (Joshua 14). But there is more. Caleb possesses the inheritance. The City of Books is subdued (Joshua 15 and Judges 1).

It is the Bible that tells of Jesus that eventually comes under the responsibility and care of the Gentiles. This was anticipated in Genesis 9. The spiritual banner that belonged to the line of Shem, specifically going to the Jewish people, would – for a period of time – go to the line of Japheth. This is how Noah prophesied of this event –

“And he said:
‘Blessed *be* the LORD,
The God of Shem,
And may Canaan be his servant.
²⁷ May God enlarge Japheth,
And may he dwell in the tents of Shem;
And may Canaan be his servant.’” Genesis 9:26, 27

It is to this line of Japheth that Paul’s epistles are addressed. It is this line of Gentiles that have predominantly carried the spiritual banner for two thousand years. Achsah is the prize, the “showy possession,” for the victory. But it is not just a lifeless inheritance that is obtained.

In verse 14, the union between Achsah, the showy possession, and Othniel, Force of God, is highlighted in the anticipation of something special. She pokes at him, urging him for a particular field. The *sadeh*, or field, represents the world (Matthew 13:38). It is an open place of productivity.

Without indicating, Othniel obviously approved because she immediately jumped off her donkey. The *khamor*, or donkey, comes from *chamar*, to be red. It is a picture of humanity in Adam, which the name implies. *Adam* (ruddy) comes from *adom*, to be red.

Caleb, the Gentile, asks what is wrong with her. That is when she asks for a blessing (verse 15). And that requested blessing is, “For land the south given me, and give to me springs water.” The picture is of the Gentiles being given the spiritual banner of what

God is doing in the plan of redemption, but if it is simply a banner in the parched (*negev*) world, it will be rather unproductive.

Hence, she asked for bubbling, rolling waters – waters of liberty, as the name implies. With that, it then says, “And gave to her Caleb springs upper and springs lower.” Keil noted the use of the singular here indicating “a spring lower and a spring upper” and thus two springs. This could be inferred from Joshua 18, but it is made explicit here.

The waters given to Achsah (and thus to Othniel) are reflective of the living oracles of God, the two testaments, signified by the upper and lower springs, the New and Old Testaments. It is these that bubble up and provide life in the otherwise parched land of existence. They have become the possession of the Gentiles.

It is the Gentiles who have treasured them, maintained them, translated them, searched them out, passed on the understanding and knowledge of them, etc., during this dispensation.

And yet, this inheritance is still within the commonwealth, the borders, of Judah as was meticulously described in the Joshua sermons. And so, it cannot be said that these are denied to the Jews. The commonwealth of Israel has never ceased to exist. It is the Gentiles who have been grafted into it.

The word has never been unavailable to the Jews, but these oracles have become the passion and possession of the Gentiles. The mantle of the spiritual blessing has gone to them while Israel as a nation has fallen away, just as the blessing upon Japheth by Noah in Genesis Chapter 9 prophesied.

This is what is being conveyed in this marvelous passage. Gentiles are not subservient within Israel, and in many ways, they have taken the lead role for an extended amount of time.

While the Jews have frittered away the last 2000 years, the Gentiles have been sharing the gospel of Christ, teaching the word, searching out the riches of the word, and – above all – glorying in the Lord Jesus who is revealed in the word.

Understanding this explains why this account comes right after chopping off the thumbs and toes of Adoni Bezek in the previous account. The world, represented by the seventy nations, was left powerless, crippled, and defeated by him. He was then left powerless, crippled, and defeated through Judah’s defeat of him.

Because of Jesus, that is restored. It started with the Jews, but almost immediately went to the Gentiles, just as this passage started with Judah and almost immediately went to the account of Caleb, Othniel, and Achsah.

In Joshua 15, this same account noting the lands Caleb possessed was specifically placed just before the naming of the cities of Judah to show that what was rightfully theirs was to be reckoned within the overall inheritance of the sons of Praise, the commonwealth of Israel.

The account here in Judges doesn't change that at all. Rather, its placement in the narrative supports it and further explains what is going on.

God is telling a story to us through this word, and He is providing insights into the future, revealing the ongoing narrative in typology, and allowing us to see and understand these things. Thus, He is confirming that we are on the right path as we continue.

As explained in the Joshua 15 sermon, Achsah was given two springs, not three. But Mormonism would necessitate there being three springs with their inclusion of "The Book of Mormon – Another Testament of Jesus Christ." Too bad, so sad for them. God has shown, in advance, that this is not what is going on in the redemptive narrative.

He has methodically been covering every base for us to see what is and is not acceptable. Nothing is left out, nothing is overlooked, and everything finds its place later that is hinted at in advance.

Be sure to consider the stories you read as you wind your way through Scripture. Don't jump to rash conclusions, and don't quickly dismiss anything either. Reason things out concerning what these precious stories are trying to tell us.

There is such wonderful treasure to be found in this precious and sacred word. Seek the Lord while He may be found by seeking the Lord where He may be found. And for sure, He is to be found in this gift we call the Holy Bible.

Closing Verse: *"The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple." Psalm 119:130*

Next Week: Judges 1:16-26 *It rhymes with zip-a-dee-doo-dah...* (So the Lord Was With Judah) (3rd Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Upper Spring and Lower Spring

And afterward the children of Judah
Went down to fight against the Canaanites, so we understand
Who dwelt in the mountains
In the South, and in the lowland

Then Judah went against the Canaanites
Who dwelt in Hebron by and by
(Now the name of Hebron was formerly Kirjath Arba)
And they killed Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi

From there they went against the inhabitants of Debir
(The name of Debir was formerly Kirjath Sepher, in a former life)
Then Caleb said, "Whoever attacks Kirjath Sepher
And takes it, to him I will give my daughter Achsah as wife"

And Othniel the son of Kenaz
Caleb's younger brother
Took it; so he gave him his daughter Achsah as wife
He got her and not another

Now it happened, when she came to him
That she urged him to ask her father for a field, that cute little dish
And she dismounted from her donkey
And Caleb said to her, "What do you wish?"

So she said to him, "Give me a blessing
Since you have given me land in the South, for it my heart sings
Give me also springs of water"
And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard

Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone

We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise

Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown

Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 1:16-26 (SO THE LORD WAS WITH JUDAH)

Despite the sermon title, there is more than just Judah referred to in today's passage. The story of the Kenite is brought again into the biblical narrative and Simeon (who hasn't been seen since early in the chapter) is brought back into focus. An account from the time during the wilderness wanderings is mentioned as well.

These and many other details are introduced and then quickly resolved before another short account is highlighted. Each has its own historical reference and each also develops into a typological picture of other things.

As for who compiled all these things? That was discussed in the introduction to Judges. It is worth citing two contradictory thoughts that were expressed by scholars in regard to the words of verse 21 which will be expounded upon today –

"...in Jerusalem, unto this day] There were no Israelites in Jerusalem at the time of the Levite's visit, Jdg 19:12. The writer's 'day' was after the capture of the city by David (2 Samuel 5:6-8), who spared the old inhabitants (*ib.* 2 Samuel 24:18 ff.); they and the new-comers continued to live side by side." Cambridge

"Unto this day - As the Jebusites dwelt in Jerusalem till the days of David, by whom they were driven out, and the author of the book of Judges states them to have been in possession of Jerusalem when he wrote; therefore this book was written before the reign of David." Adam Clarke

Text Verse: *"For all those things My hand has made,
And all those things exist,
Says the LORD.
'But on this one will I look:
On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit,
And who trembles at My word.'"* Isaiah 66:2

Cambridge concluded that these accounts were compiled after the time of David. Their reason is a fallacy known as an argument from silence – "Nothing is said of this, and so it proves that such a thing never happened."

On the other hand, Adam Clarke logically identifies what must be the case. It had to be compiled prior to David because David is the one to have driven out the Jebusites.

The reason Cambridge took the position that the account was compiled after David is evident from many of their other comments about this chapter. Whoever did this portion of their commentary doesn't trust the biblical narrative, finds error in what is presented, picks the word apart as if he is able to know what was on the mind of the author, etc.

This person doesn't tremble at the word of God. Rather, he thinks he can improve upon it. As we go through the verses today, consider that. I personally found nothing off with what is presented in the passage. It is logical, orderly, and insightful into other doctrines found in Scripture.

Have care when you consider the word. It is not something to be taken lightly but should be handled with the utmost respect. It is, after all, God's superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. He Showed Them the Entrance to the City (verses 16-26)

¹⁶ Now the children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law,

u-bene qeni khoten Mosheh – “And sons Kenite, in-law Moses.” The words of this verse are complicated and the commentaries go on extensively.

As for the name Kenite, it is a patronym derived from Qayin, or Cain. That name is derived from *qanah*, to acquire. However, it is also etymologically connected to *qayin*, spear. To further complicate things, Jones' Dictionary takes the meaning from Numbers 24:21, tying it to the word *qen*, or nest. Thus, various names can be considered: Acquire, People of the Spear, Nestling, etc.

As for the seemingly contradictory words, “Moses' father-in-law,” they seem at odds with other verses already seen where the names Jethro, Reuel (Raguel), and Hobab are all said to be his father-in-law. Long lists and commentaries are set forth to explain these names and their connection to Moses.

The most reasonable explanation is that the noun *khathan* does not have to mean “father-in-law.” It comes from the verb *khathan* which signifies being a relative by marriage. Thus, the thought extends to any joining in affinity.

Therefore, it could be that the term “father-in-law” is too specific and it may simply mean “Moses’ in-law.” That is not the point of this explanation. It’s just provided for whoever is curious as to the seemingly contradictory English translation.

Regardless of these things, the line of the Kenites has been famous and will remain so throughout the Old Testament. They will be seen as late as 1 Chronicles 2:55 where they are noted as the clan of the Rechabite. That family is noted in Jeremiah 35 where they are greatly honored by the Lord for their exemplary conduct and way of life. Of this group, it says they...

16 (con’t) **went up from the City of Palms**

The verb is plural: *alu meir hatmarim* – “ascended (pl.) from City the Palms.” In other words, the clans that were living in this area went up from there together. As for the City of the Palms, this is noted as Jericho in Deuteronomy 34:3.

As Jericho was destroyed and cursed in Joshua 6, it would explain why it is not called Jericho. The name was blotted out. However, the Kenites continued to live in the area, being troglodytes or cave dwellers. There are innumerable caves in the surrounding area where they could have dwelt.

Concerning the *tamar*, or palm, it is a symbol of uprightness. Thus, the city could be identified as the City of Upright Ones. As for the Kenite’s going up, it was...

16 (con’t) **with the children of Judah into the Wilderness of Judah,**

eth bene Yehudah midbar Yehudah – “with sons Judah, wilderness Judah.” Judah means Praise. The wilderness here doesn’t mean a complete wasteland or barren desert but rather an uncultivated area. It is the area mentioned in the gospels where John baptized and where Jesus went during His time of temptation.

In the Bible, the wilderness is a place of God’s grace and of closeness to Him, but it is also a place of testing. For some, such as Israel, the testing resulted in disobedience. For others, such as Christ when He was tested, it is a place of fellowship through obedience.

The wilderness and the law are closely connected because it is by law that testing is accomplished. This is seen in the word itself, *midbar*. It is derived from the verb *davar*, to speak, and the noun *davar*, meaning word. The Lord spoke the Ten Commandments (words/*d'varim*) in the desert (*midbar*) of Sinai.

Thinking on these things, one can see the connection between Jesus, the Word of God, and His testing in the wilderness as well. Little details point to great pictures that are being developed. As for the account now, they went into the wilderness...

16 (con't) **which *lies* in the South *near* Arad;**

asher b'negev arad – “which in Negev Arad.” The area of the king of Arad was noted as being defeated by Israel in Joshua 12:14. However, the king of Arad was also noted in Numbers 21:1 and Numbers 33:40. To really understand what is going on, you would have to go back and watch the sermon from Numbers 21.

The Negev, or South, comes from a root signifying parched.

The name Arad comes from the verb *arad*, to flee or be free. Thus, it means something like Fugitive or Freed One. Abarim also gives a meaning of Wild Ass.

The mentioning of the Kenites now is to help set forth a basis for understanding later events in Scripture. How did the Kenites wind up where they are? Why were they noted at this particular time and among this people group? Etc.

For example, the next words are necessary to understand events coming at the time of Saul...

16 (con't) **and they went and dwelt among the people.**

It is now singular: *vayelek vayeshv eth ha'am* – “and went (sg) and dwelt (sg) with the people.” The reason for the change is because it is now speaking of the Kenite as a single entity –

Now the sons of the Kenite went up (pl.).
And went and dwelt (sg.) [the Kenite].

The people being mentioned here may be referring to Judah, but more likely it is referring to the Amalekites. The Kenites left the City of Palms and dwelt in this area where the Amalekites were. Thus, this explains what occurs in 1 Samuel 15 –

“Then Saul said to the Kenites, ‘Go, depart, get down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them. For you showed kindness to all the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt.’ So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites.” 1 Samuel 15:6

The reason for all of this is to confirm the promise of Moses to this people as they departed from Sinai in Numbers 10 –

“Now Moses said to Hobab the son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses’ father-in-law, ‘We are setting out for the place of which the LORD said, ‘I will give it to you.’ Come with us, and we will treat you well; for the LORD has promised good things to Israel.’ ³⁰And he said to him, ‘I will not go, but I will depart to my *own* land and to my relatives.’ ³¹So Moses said, ‘Please do not leave, inasmuch as you know how we are to camp in the wilderness, and you can be our eyes. ³²And it shall be, if you go with us—indeed it shall be—that whatever good the LORD will do to us, the same we will do to you.’” Numbers 10:29-32

With this matter settled, the account next says...

¹⁷ And Judah went with his brother Simeon,

This is in accord with the words of verse 1:3, “So Judah said to Simeon his brother, “Come up with me to my allotted territory, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I will likewise go with you to your allotted territory.” Simeon means He Who Hears.

¹⁷ (con’t) and they attacked the Canaanites who inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed it.

Rather: *vayaku ha’k’naani yoshev tsephath vayakharimu otah* – “And struck the Canaanite inhabiting Zephath and anathematized her.” Tsephath comes from *tsaphah*, to look out, spy, or keep watch. Thus, it means Watchtower. However, Abarim also provides a meaning of Covering. Canaanite means Humbled, Humiliated, or Subdued.

This is the fulfillment of a vow made in Numbers 21 –

“The king of Arad, the Canaanite, who dwelt in the South, heard that Israel was coming on the road to Atharim. Then he fought against Israel and took *some* of them prisoners. ² So Israel made a vow to the LORD, and said, ‘If You will indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities.’ ³ And the LORD listened to the voice of Israel and delivered up the Canaanites, and they utterly destroyed them and their cities. So the name of that place was called Hormah.” Numbers 21:1-3

¹⁷ (con’t) **So the name of the city was called Hormah.**

It is singular and thus personal: *vayiqra eth shem ha’ir kharemah* – “And called (sg.) name the city Hormah.” The meaning is that Israel called the name of the city Hormah, meaning Devoted, Dedicated, or Anathema in Numbers 21:2. It can also mean Asylum based on the context.

Israel the people made the vow. When the vow was accomplished, Israel the people gave the name according to the vow.

¹⁸ **Also Judah took Gaza with its territory, Ashkelon with its territory, and Ekron with its territory.**

As cities are feminine, it more closely reads: “And took Judah: Gaza and her territory, and Ashkelon and her territory, and Ekron and her territory.” Interestingly, the Greek translation reads just the opposite, saying that they did not take these cities and the surrounding area.

That would seem to correspond to what is said in the next verse, Judges 3:3, and elsewhere. However, it could be that they took it but did not keep it, or they placed the inhabitants under tribute. Either way, the naming of the cities is the main focus.

Azah means Strong. Ashqelon comes from *shaqal*, to weigh, as in weighing money. Hence it is the Market. Ekron comes from *aqar*, to pluck up or uproot. But that is from the same as *equer*, an offshoot or descendant. Hence, the name could mean either Offshoot or Uprooted.

¹⁹ **So the LORD was with Judah.**

vayhi Yehovah eth Yehuda – “And was Yehovah with Judah.” The meaning is based on what was just said and with what follows. The Lord was with them...

19 (con't) And they drove out the mountaineers,

Rather than “they” it is singular: *vayoresh eth ha’har* – “And dispossessed [sg. Judah] the mountain.” The word *yarash* means both to possess and to dispossess. As the mountainous area was occupied, they dispossessed it and then possessed it.

As has been seen previously, a mountain (*har*) is a lot of something gathered. It is synonymous with a large but centralized group of people. As for the rest of the area of Judah...

19 (con't) but they could not drive out the inhabitants of the lowland,

The words do not say “could not” (*yaklu*). Rather, they are carefully constructed to avoid such a notion: *ki lo l’horish eth yoshve ha’emeq* – “For no to dispossess inhabitants the valley.” The Lord was with them, but they were not with the Lord. They lacked faith in His presence...

19 (con't) because they had chariots of iron.

It is singular: *ki rekhev barzel lahem* – “for chariot iron to them.” This was the complaint of the children of Joseph in Joshua 17. They claimed they could not drive out the inhabitants because they had the iron chariot. Joshua, however, said that despite having such, they were able to drive them out.

As for typology, iron represents strength, be it in binding together, in government, in hard service, or in bondage. In the immediate context, it is the faithlessness of the people, not the presence of the Lord, that caused the failure to dispossess the lowland. As for the mountain country...

20 And they gave Hebron to Caleb, as Moses had said.

Rather than “said,” the Hebrew says, “spoke.” Moses directed it to be so; Judah complied with the spoken word. This was recorded in Numbers 14 as words from the Lord. It was repeated by Moses in Deuteronomy 1. Saying that Moses spoke when it was the Lord who spoke once again reveals the process of divine inspiration –

“But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it.” Numbers 14:24

As for the names, Hebron means Alliance. Caleb means Dog. Moses means He Who Draws Out.

In giving Hebron to Caleb, it then notes...

²⁰ (con't) **Then he expelled from there the three sons of Anak.**

Rather than “Then,” it simply says, “And.” This is not happening now. Rather, it has already taken place. Also, it reads, “three sons the Anak.” In other words, these are the people of Anak, just as we would say, “the twelve sons of Israel” even if they are long dead. It is those who descended from these three sons of the Anak that are being referred to.

The recording of this again is not superfluous. Rather, even if Caleb had previously driven out these people, he couldn’t truly possess it if Judah didn’t fully possess the land where Hebron was located. A process is being detailed from beginning to end. Each step is methodically recorded and repeated as needed.

Anak means Long Neck or Necklace, coming from the word *anaq* which means being fitted out with supplies, and thus furnished liberally, just as a necklace is generally made up of many pieces. They were a clan known for their unusually long or thick necks, or the adornments worn on their necks. Next...

²¹ **But the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who inhabited Jerusalem;**

It is singular, referring to the people group as a whole – “And the Jebusite inhabiting Jerusalem, no did dispossess sons Benjamin.” A similar statement is made in Joshua 15 –

“As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem to this day.” Joshua 15:63

The difference between the two is evident from a literal translation of both verses –

Judah: not able sons Judah to dispossess.

Benjamin: not did dispossess the sons of Benjamin.

Jerusalem was a border city, partly belonging to both Judah and Benjamin. There was a stronghold on Benjamin's side of the border. Thus, Judah could not drive them out. Benjamin, however, was content to simply not drive them out.

Benjamin means Son of the Right Hand. Jebusite means Treading Down or Trodden Underfoot.

This verse foreshadows the importance of the city, being so markedly noted as the first thing mentioned in Judges concerning Benjamin. That continues with...

²¹ (con't) **so the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.**

It is again singular, "And dwells the Jebusite with sons Benjamin in Jerusalem unto the day, the this." This is a confirmation that this was not a later addition after the time of the kings when this could not have been a true statement. It was accomplished at the time of David.

It is true that even after David conquered Jerusalem in 2 Samuel 5 Jebusites continued to live there. This is attested to in 2 Samuel 24, but that is not what this is referring to. Rather, it is speaking about the unconquered city. Next...

²² **And the house of Joseph also went up against Bethel, and the LORD *was* with them.**

vayaalu beith Yoseph gam hem beith el v'Yehovah imam – "And ascended house Joseph – also they – Bethel, and Yehovah with them." The words "also they" are in relation to Judah's ascending to battle earlier in the chapter. What happens here is given to contrast the sons of Benjamin and the house of Joseph.

The house of Joseph is inclusive of Ephraim and Manasseh. Geographically, the tribes of Judah and Simeon are in the southern area of Canaan, and the narrative moved northward to the central area.

Bethel means House of God. Joseph means both He Shall Add and Take Away.

Bethel is a border city between Benjamin and the house of Joseph. As an inheritance, it was placed within the borders of Benjamin. However, being a border city...

²³ **So the house of Joseph sent men to spy out Bethel.**

vayatiru beith Yoseph b'beith el – “And spied, house Joseph, in Bethel.” Nothing was said of this with Benjamin and Jerusalem. The house of Joseph is taking advantage of the situation to gain the city. With that noted, next comes a phrase seen elsewhere...

²³ (con't) **(The name of the city was formerly Luz.)**

This is noted at other times, but then it is also noted that Luz is separate from Bethel. It was seen in Joshua 16:2 and again in Joshua 18:13. It is a city near to, but separate from, Bethel. However, the one name is assigned to both at times.

Luz means Almond, but it comes from the verb *luz*, meaning to turn aside, often in a negative way. Hence, it can mean Departure, but also Twisted or Perverse. Bethel means House of God.

²⁴ **And when the spies saw a man coming out of the city, they said to him, “Please show us the entrance to the city, and we will show you mercy.”**

More precisely: “And saw, the watchers, man coming from the city. And they said to him, ‘Show, we pray, entrance the city, and we have made with you mercy.’” This is a violation of the law –

“When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, ² and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them *and* utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them.” Deuteronomy 7:1, 2

Despite their wrongdoing in relation to the law, they were able to glean the information they needed...

²⁵ **So he showed them the entrance to the city,**

There was obviously a hidden entrance along a hill line, within a cave, or in some other location. For instance, the Persians were able to take Sardis by discovering a path used by a soldier who had dropped his helmet. He went out of the fortress to pick it up and the entrance was made known.

With the necessary information made known, it next says...

²⁵ (con't) **and they struck the city with the edge of the sword;**

vayaku eth ha'ir l'pi kharev – “And struck the city to mouth sword.” As always, the sword is depicted as a devouring instrument where its edge is considered a mouth that consumes the souls it meets in battle.

²⁵ (con't) **but they let the man and all his family go.**

v'eth ha'ish v'eth kal mishpakhto silekhu – “and the man, and all his family, they sent away.” Like Rahab, despite not perfectly upholding the law in making an agreement to show mercy, they upheld their promise to the man.

²⁶ **And the man went to the land of the Hittites,**

It is unknown where this is. There remained Hittites in Israel long after this. Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba, was a Hittite. However, it does note this in 1 Kings 10:29 –

“Now a chariot that was imported from Egypt cost six hundred *shekels* of silver, and a horse one hundred and fifty; and thus, through their agents, they exported *them* to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria.”

Noting that things were exported means that it was outside of Canaan. It is believed by many that the land of the Hittites was north of Canaan. Hittite means Terror, Terrible, or Fearsome. Wherever this location was, he...

²⁶ (fin) **built a city, and called its name Luz, which is its name to this day.**

vayiven ir vayiqra shemah luz hu shemah ad ha'yom ha'zeh – “And built city and called her Luz. It her name unto the day, the this.” Without anything biblical to go on, Charles Ellicott notes, “The Talmud says that *this* Luz was famous for its purple dye, and partly on this account Thomson identifies it with Kulb Louzy, not far from Antioch. It was not uncommon in ancient days for the fugitives from a city to build another city elsewhere of the same name.”

*Each foe will be defeated throughout the land
We shall prevail over all who stand against us
This is the result of the power of God's right hand
Yes, it shall all be accomplished by the Lord Jesus*

*Those who stand against us are defeated
All who stand contrary to us will be no more
Their source of power shall be unseated
The Lord alone shall reign forevermore*

*Jesus has gained the victory!
In Him the battle is won for us
Look at His deeds! Open your eyes and see
Look at the glorious work of our Lord Jesus*

II. Pictures of Christ

The first two sermons in Judges 1 dealt with 1) the matter of Adoni-Bezek who was defeated, and then 2) the subduing of foes within Judah and the taking of Kirjath Sepher. The victor over Kirjath Sepher was given Achsah as his wife.

The typology was explained for each. There was the bringing together of the people groups of the world through the gospel in the first account. In the second, the completed work of Christ was seen to go from Jewish believers to Gentile believers.

The passage today follows along that same general theme. It began with the sudden introduction of the children of the Kenite, Moses' *khathan*, or in-law. Despite being related to Moses, the Kenite is a Gentile group.

Of them, it says they went up from the City of the Palms or, figuratively, City of the Upright Ones, with the sons of Judah (Praise) into the Wilderness of Judah – a place of testing, but also of God's grace and closeness to Him.

That was then said to be "in Negev Arad." The Negev signifies the parched world that needs the water of the word. That was said to be near Arad (Fugitive or Freed One). There, it said they dwelt among the people.

The account speaks of those Gentiles who have Acquired (Kenite) salvation through Christ, the fulfillment of the law (Moses). They are united to Him by affinity through His imputed righteousness.

As already seen in Judges, a city is generally reflective of man deciding his own fate, independent of God. However, a city can also be a place of fellowship with God once

again, as is seen in the New Jerusalem “whose builder and maker *is* God” (Hebrews 11:10). In this case, they go up from the City of the Palms or City of the Upright Ones.

Thus, it refers to those who belong to the city of God. They went with the children of Judah (Praise: Christ is the Praise of God) into the Wilderness of Praise. It signifies those who are in a close relationship with God, in His grace, even if it is in a life of testing.

Noting they were in the Negev Arad is a way of saying they are in the parched (Negev) world despite being Freed Ones (Arad). It is the state of believers in the world. With that, the section ended with, “and went (sg) and dwelt (sg) with the people.”

The Kenite, the Gentile who has acquired salvation, has gone into the parched world and dwelt among the people for two thousand years. At the same time, the Jews have remained separate from the people even while they have been exiled among them.

The passage gives a snapshot of the church age.

From there, Judah and Simeon are noted again as in verse 3. It said that together they struck the Canaanites (Humiliated) who inhabited Zaphath (Watchtower). With that, it says the city was called Hormah (Anathema).

Galatians 2 shows this typology directly. He is a Jew (Praise – Romans 2:29) writing to believers (He Who Hears) about those who stand against the faith represented by the Canaanites (Humbled because of rejecting Christ). The Zaphath (Watchtower) comes from *tsaphah*, to look out, spy, etc.

This is what the Jews of Galatians 2 were doing –

“Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas [a Jew], and also took Titus [a Gentile] with *me*. ² And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain. ³ Yet not even Titus who *was* with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. ⁴ And *this occurred* because of false brethren [Canaan – Humiliated] secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out [*tsaphah*] our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), ⁵ to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.” Galatians 2:1-5

It would be difficult to write a single paragraph that could more perfectly fit the typology. The note that they called Zaphath Hormah (Anathema) could also not be more exactly described by Paul as he opened the epistle –

“I wonder that ye are so quickly removed from Him who did call you in the grace of Christ to another good news;

⁷ that is not another, except there be certain who are troubling you, and wishing to pervert the good news of the Christ;

⁸ but even if we or a messenger out of heaven may proclaim good news to you different from what we did proclaim to you -- anathema let him be!

⁹ as we have said before, and now say again, If any one to you may proclaim good news different from what ye did receive -- anathema let him be!”

-Galatians 1:6-9 (YLT).

That section ended with the note that Judah took Gaza (Strong), Ashkelon (Market), and Ekron (Offshoot/Uprooted) along with their territories. Three separate notes of doctrine are intended –

“For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds [Gaza], ⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, ⁶ and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.” 1 Corinthians 10:4-6

“For we are not, as so many, peddling [Ashkelon] the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.”

-2 Corinthians 2:17

“These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving *only* themselves. *They are* clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots [Ekron]; ¹³ raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.” Jude 1:12, 13

Verse 19 said that the Lord was with Judah, that they drove out the mountain, and that they did not drive out those in the valley.

Without any particular key words to help pinpoint the meaning, and simply going by how the church normally operates, I would surmise this is referring to the church being

its own entity where the masses of people (the mountain) are identified as believers, but that it is still filled with corrupt people (the *emeq*, or depth) who also fill it. Typologically, it fits because it is a truth seen in the church throughout the ages.

The next short section again dealt with Caleb (Dog, and thus representing the Gentile). This time, it notes that he was given Hebron (Alliance) as Moses prophesied in Deuteronomy 32 –

“Rejoice, O Gentiles, *with* His people;
For He will avenge the blood of His servants,
And render vengeance to His adversaries;
He will provide atonement for His land *and* His people.” Deuteronomy 32:43

He is said to have expelled the sons of Anak (from *anaq*, being fitted out with supplies). Despite having all the resources of the world at their disposal during the Gentile-led church age, those who oppose God’s purposes cannot prevail and they will be removed.

From there, it next mentioned the sons of Benjamin (Son of the Right Hand) not driving out the Jebusites (Treading Down) in Jerusalem (Foundation of Peace).

Again, I have to admit it is speculation, but it appears to be speaking of believers not overtaking the Jews who are opposed to the gospel during the church age. That is only something that will occur after the rapture of the church.

It fits the typology, but without more specific keywords to definitely say otherwise, it remains speculation. The words ended, “so the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.” This confirms the state in the world today.

The last five verses gave the details concerning the house of Joseph (He Shall Add/Take Away) going up against Bethel (House of God), which was formerly called Luz (Departure, often with a negative connotation as in Twisted or Perverse). Rather than saying the children of Joseph, it mentions the House. It is the collective church being identified.

In spying out the city, a person is seen leaving it and is told by the spies that they would make mercy with him if he would tell them how to gain access. He did and they took the city striking it with the mouth of the sword. From there, he left and went to the land of the Hittites (Terror) and built a new city named Luz.

The picture reveals the process of obtaining salvation. Those who are in the church are brought in through faith in Jesus, pictured by the house of Joseph – He Shall Add both Jew and Gentile and Take Away their reproach. They were once in a fallen state (Luz), but through the Lord are given access to the House of God (Bethel). And that was done through the mouth of the sword.

As seen in numerous sermons, sword and Horeb (the law) are identical in the Hebrew – חרב. The imputation of Christ's prevailing over the law is what removes the believers' reproach and adds them to the House of God.

But some never come to the Lord and return to Luz –

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart [Luz] from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, ² speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, ³ forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴ For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; ⁵ for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.” 1 Timothy 4:1-5

The context of Paul's words is not the end of the church age, but the entire church age, reflected in the words “latter times.” Unlike Rahab, the person in this story chose the world of terror (Hittite) apart from Christ rather than uniting with His people. Paul's words exactly describe the situation.

So far, the first chapter of Judges has been one that has carefully matched details later to be found in Christ, in His people, and in the state of His church.

We will continue the chapter next week and see what is presented there. Using Israel and their conquests, the Lord is telling us a story through types and pictures of what He would do in the world.

Seeing these things, and seeing how carefully they match the overall redemptive narrative in Scripture, I would hope, and even beg, that you would take the time to read the Bible each day.

Learn the doctrines found in the New Testament. If they are hinted at in type in the Old, it should assure you that He expects you to know them from the New. This is the sacred

charge that is set before you. Take hold of it, learn it, and apply it to your life from day to day.

Think of the presentations! From the time of the law, we are given hints of the ineffectiveness of the law to save. God is asking us to trust in His grace as has been presented to us in the giving of His Son. And then, we are asked to live in that grace in a manner becoming of His people. Let us do this, to His glory. Amen.

Closing Verse: *"If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed." 1 Timothy 4:6*

Next Week: Judges 1:27-36 *The word is giving us valuable insights...* (The Boundary of the Amorites)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

So the Lord Was with Judah

Now the children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law
Up from the City of Palms with the children of Judah went
Into the Wilderness of Judah, which lies in the South near Arad
And they dwelt among the people; that's where their time
-----was spent

And Judah went with his brother Simeon
And they attacked the Canaanites who inhabited Zephath, oohrah
And utterly destroyed it
So the name of the city was called Hormah

Also Judah took Gaza with its territory
Ashkelon with its territory too
And Ekron with its territory
Lots of territory for the taking, it's true

So the LORD was with Judah
And they drove the mountaineers out

But they could not drive out the inhabitants of the lowland
Because they had chariots of iron, strong and stout

And they gave Hebron to Caleb, as Moses had said
Then from there the three sons of Anak he expell-ed

But the children of Benjamin did not
Drive out the Jebusites who inhabited Jerusalem, sad to say
So the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin
In Jerusalem to this day

And the house of Joseph also went up against Bethel
And the LORD was with them, quite obviously
So the house of Joseph sent men to spy out Bethel
(The name of the city was Luz formerly)

And when the spies saw a man
Coming out of the city, they said to him (maybe his
-----name was Percy)
“Please show us the entrance to the city
And we will show you mercy”

So he showed them the entrance to the city
And they struck the city with the edge of the sword
But they let the man and all his family go
His life was his reward

And the man went to the land of the Hittites, built a city to stay
And called its name Luz, which is its name to this day

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise

Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 1:27-36 (THE BOUNDARY OF THE AMORITES)

While typing the first half of the sermon, I was almost depressed by the state of the content of what is being presented. A tribe is introduced into the narrative and it immediately says that the tribe failed to drive out the inhabitants.

By the time my friend Sergio woke up and greeted me, which was when half the day was already over, I gave him this short reply, “Judges 1:27-36. Depressing. They didn’t dispossess. Again and again, it says this.”

Under law, they were commanded to dispossess the inhabitants. Tribe by tribe their failure is recorded. In his commentary on verse 28, Charles Ellicott cited a lengthy article by someone named Mozley. It was as depressing to me as the narrative in Judges 1. A short portion of it says –

“As to the morality of these exterminating wars, we must bear in mind that men and nations must alike be judged by the moral standard of their own day, not by the advanced morality of later ages. We learn from unanimous testimony that the nations of Canaan had sunk to the lowest and vilest depths of moral degeneracy. When nations have fallen thus low, the cup of their iniquity is full; they are practically irreclaimable. To mingle with them would inevitably be to learn their works, for their worst abominations would find an ally in the natural weakness and corruption of the human heart. The Israelites therefore believed that it was their positive duty to destroy them, and the impulse which led them to do so was one which sprang from their best and not from their worst instincts. It must not be forgotten that the teaching of Christ has absolutely changed the moral conceptions of the world. It intensified, to a degree which we can hardly estimate, our sense of the inalienable rights of humanity and of the individual man.” (Mozley, *Lectures on the Old Testament*, p. 103). Ellicott 1:28

Text Verse: *“They did not destroy the peoples,
Concerning whom the LORD had commanded them,
³⁵ But they mingled with the Gentiles
And learned their works;
³⁶ They served their idols,
Which became a snare to them.” Psalm 106:34-36*

Israel was told to destroy the inhabitants of Canaan. This wasn't simply because Israel "believed it was their positive duty." Instead, it was because the law commanded them to do so. Thus, their failure is a violation of the law.

As for the comments about Christ absolutely changing the moral conceptions of the world, that is so out of touch with reality that it is hard to imagine Ellicott would cite the commentary. Israel was under law. We are under grace. The reason Christians don't go killing pagans and heathens has nothing to do with moral conceptions. There is simply no allowance for it.

The church is not a nation, and it has no divine mandate for such things. Mozley even admits that nothing has changed in moral conceptions by saying, "When nations have fallen thus low, the cup of their iniquity is full; they are practically irreclaimable."

That is the state of most of the world today. The rest that aren't there yet are catching up quickly. The only difference between the culling of the peoples that Israel was supposed to effect and the culling of the world that will come about in the (probably near) future is who will accomplish it.

The purpose of the law was to lead people to the understanding of their need for Christ. Sin is the problem, and it must be judged. God will not overlook a single sin ever committed. The difference between believers and unbelievers is that sin in believers is judged in Christ. Unbelievers will be held accountable for their sins.

Judges 1 provides a snapshot of God's work in Christ in a positive way. It takes real stories of real events that took place, including the disobedience of Israel, and shows us how God, through Jesus, is completing what Israel could not complete, meaning the restoration of the human family into one group.

And He is doing it in this chapter through ten named sons of Israel. Of the number ten, Bullinger states –

"Completeness of order, marking the entire round of anything, is, therefore, the ever-present signification of the number ten. It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete." E.W. Bullinger

God is using Israel to show us other, more wonderful things in typology. It is a marvelous way for us to see clearly what is going on in the history of redemption. It's all to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and...

May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Epic Fail (verses 27-36)

In the previous verses, the land of Judah, which includes Simeon whose inheritance is within Judah's borders, was described (1:1-20). That was followed by a note concerning Benjamin's failure to drive out the Jebusites from Jerusalem (1:21).

After that, we see the combined house of Joseph in a brief conquest (1:22-26). This broad brushstroke of tribal matters that started in the very southern part of the land continued northward. This continues with words that closely follow Joshua 17:11-13, beginning with...

²⁷ However, Manasseh did not drive out *the inhabitants of* Beth Shean and its villages,

Literally: *v'lo horish m'nasheh eth beith sh'an v'eth benotekha* – "And no dispossess Manasseh Beth Shean and her daughters." The term daughters is referring to the smaller villages that surround the main city.

Here, we have a look at the failures of the tribes west of the Jordan located north of Benjamin to properly eradicate the inhabitants of the land. The list begins with the half-tribe of Manasseh and moves northward to the central and northern areas of Canaan.

Notice the progression: First Benjamin, then the house of Joseph, and here it continues with Manasseh and then Ephraim, the two sons of Joseph. This is likely to draw attention to the success of the house of Joseph when they worked together, but when they did not, their failures are noted.

As for the names, Manasseh means both To Forget and From a Debt. Beth Shean means House of Ease or House of Security. Next...

²⁷ (con't) or Taanach and its villages, or the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, or the inhabitants of Ibleam and its villages, or the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages;

The meaning of Taanach is uncertain. Some think it is derived from an Egyptian or Arabic word. There is no corresponding root word found in Scripture. *Jones' Dictionary of Old Testament Proper Names* cites an equivalent Arabic verb that means to wander and thus translates it as Wandering Through.

Dor means To Dwell, but it is identical to the word translated as generation, as in the time period of one's dwelling. Ibleam means Devouring the People or The People Flow Forth. Megiddo comes from *gadad*, to penetrate or cut. Hence, it signifies Invading or Intruding.

The cities just mentioned are listed as belonging to the half-tribe of Manasseh in Joshua 17:11. However, they are actually located within other tribal inheritances –

“And in Issachar and in Asher, Manasseh had Beth Shean and its towns, Ibleam and its towns, the inhabitants of Dor and its towns, the inhabitants of En Dor and its towns, the inhabitants of Taanach and its towns, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and its towns—three hilly regions.”

The meaning is probably that the tribes failed to work together. A state of spiritual lethargy has settled in. Rather than relying on the Lord and join with their brothers, they have thrown up their hands and are unwilling to do what is necessary to drive the inhabitants out. The reason for the failure, an inexcusable reason, is next provided...

²⁷ (con't) **for the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land.**

It is singular: *v'yoel ha'k'naani la'shevet ba'arets ha'zoth* – “and determined the Canaanite to dwell in the land the this.” The words of this clause are taken letter for letter from Joshua 17:12. Canaanite means Humiliated, Humbled, or Subdued.

The inhabitants were determined, so Manasseh chose to live with them. This shows a lack of trust in the power of the Lord, and an unwillingness to ask the other tribes to assist them in destroying the natives. This is evident from the next words...

²⁸ **And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites under tribute, but did not completely drive them out.**

With a few minor word and spelling differences, the words are very close to those of Joshua 17:13.

And it was when strong sons Israel, and they gave the Canaanite to forced labor, and disposing [וְהוֹרִישׁ] not he dispossessed him. Joshua 17:13

And it was when strong Israel, and he put the Canaanite to forced labor, and dispossessing [וְהוֹרִישׁ] not he dispossessed him. Judges 1:28

The differences are enough to let us know the words were not simply copied from one account to the next, and yet, the one confirms the other because of the high level of similarity between the two.

If they were able to make these people submit to forced labor, then they were able to exterminate them. They just didn't. This became a marriage of convenience for Manasseh and of inconvenience, but acceptable tolerance, to the Canaanite. With this sad commentary concerning Manasseh complete, it next turns to his younger brother, Ephraim...

²⁹ Nor did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; so the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them.

It is singular in reference to both entities: *v'ephrayim lo horish eth ha'k'naani ha'yoshev b'gazer vayeshev ha'k'naani b'qirbo b'gazer* – “And Ephraim no dispossessed the Canaanite, the dweller in Gezer. And dwelt the Canaanite in his midst in Gezer.”

Notice that nothing is said of them being brought under forced labor. Because of this, it is common for scholars to say that they made a covenant of friendship with them or something similar. This is incorrect. It expressly says that they were put to forced labor in Joshua 16:10.

Ephraim means both Twice Fruitful and Ashes. Gezer means Part or Portion. Gezer will remain under the control of the Canaanites until the time of Solomon –

“(Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up and taken Gezer and burned it with fire, had killed the Canaanites who dwelt in the city, and had given it *as* a dowry to his daughter, Solomon's wife.)” 1 Kings 9:16

Like their brother Manasseh, this became a marriage of convenience for Ephraim and of inconvenience, but acceptable tolerance, to the Canaanite. Likewise...

³⁰ Nor did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron or the inhabitants of Nahalol;

v'zevulun lo horish eth yoshve qitron v'eth yoshve nahalol – “And Zebulun no dispossessed dwellers Kitron and dwellers Nahalol.” Zebulun means Glorious Dwelling Place. The name Kitron is found only here in Scripture. Nahalol is certainly the same place spelled elsewhere as Nahallal and Nahalal. Thus, both cities are probably variant spellings of the first two cities mentioned in Joshua 19:15 –

“Included were Kattath, Nahallal, Shimron, Idalah, and Bethlehem: twelve cities with their villages.”

Kitron comes from one of several possible roots. The first is *qitor*, thick smoke. That is derived from the verb *qatar*, to make sacrificial smoke. As such, it would mean something like Place of Incense Burning. It may also come from *qaton*, to be small. If so, it would mean Little One.

Nahalol is identical to *nahalol*, found only in Isaiah 7:19. There, it is translated as pastures or watering holes. Young’s says, “commendable things.” That then comes from *nahal* to lead or guide to a watering place or a place of rest. The most known use of that is found in Psalm 23 –

“He leads [*nahal*] me beside the still waters.” Psalm 23:2

Strong’s defines it as Pasture. I define it as Led to Rest.

³⁰ (con’t) **so the Canaanites dwelt among them, and were put under tribute.**

More precisely: “And dwelt the Canaanite in his midst and were to force labor.” The same pattern of disobedience in driving out the inhabitants has been seen in each tribe thus far mentioned. As for Asher...

³¹ **Nor did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Acco or the inhabitants of Sidon, or of Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, or Rehob.**

This continues the unhappy list of disobedience. One tribe after another is failing to do what the Lord instructed through Moses.

Asher means Happy or Blessed. Acco is only found here. Where its root is from is not certain. Some say it is Egyptian, some Chaldean, some Arabic. Others think it may be Greek. Abarim gives its best shot with Serpent or Sun Struck. Strong’s suggests it comes from a root meaning to hem in.

Sidon means Hunting Place or Fishery. Akhlav is found only here. It comes from *khelev*, fat. Thus, it means Fertile or Abundant. Akhziv comes from *akhzav*, deceptive or disappointing. That comes from *kazav*, to be a liar. Thus, it literally means Lying or Liar, but the intent is probably Deceptive or Disappointing. Strong’s says Deceive.

Khelbah also comes from *khelev*, fat. Thus, Strong's defines it as Fertility. Aphik is the same as Apheq mentioned elsewhere. It comes from *aphaq*, meaning to contain, refrain, or be strong. Hence, it is Fortress. Rekhev means Wide Space or Open Place.

³² So the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land;

Rather, it is singular mixed with the plural: "And dwelt the Asherite in midst the Canaanite, inhabitants the land." Instead of placing the Canaanite in the midst of whatever particular tribe, as has been seen in the previous verses, it places the Asherite in the midst of the Canaanite.

³² (con't) for they did not drive them out.

It is referring to the Canaanite: *ki lo horisho* – "for no did drive him out." Of this, Cambridge says, "Originally no doubt the text ran 'was not able to drive them out' (LXX)." In other words, they believe that the Greek translation, which says, "was not able to" is the original.

That doesn't bear up at all with the first clause nor with the number of cities that were left in Canaanite hands. Rather, the Hebrew is correct. Thus, it is a resounding note of abject failure on the part of Asher. Along with them, the list of botch jobs continues...

³³ Nor did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh or the inhabitants of Beth Anath;

Naphtali followed suit with the others and failed to do as instructed.

Beith Shemesh means House *of the* Sun. Beith Anath comes from *beith*, house, and *anah*, a word having four distinct meanings: to answer or respond; be occupied with; to afflict, oppress, or humble; or to sing. Thus, it can mean House of Answer, House of Business, House of Affliction, or House of Singing.

³³ (con't) but they dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land.

Each is referred to in the singular: "And he dwelt in midst the Canaanite, inhabitants the land." Like Asher, Naphtali is placed among the Canaanites rather than the Canaanites dwelling among him. But Naphtali at least made it hard on those around them...

³³ (con't) **Nevertheless the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath were put under tribute to them.**

Like other cities in some of the tribes, Naphtali got the upper hand on the inhabitants and profited off of them. But they failed to do as instructed in the law. Being the first chapter of Judges, it is a depressing anticipation of the problems that lie ahead for Israel because of their faithlessness to the Lord. Next...

³⁴ **And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountains, for they would not allow them to come down to the valley;**

The lack of properly translating the words as given in the text is maddening. It reads, "And pressed the Amorite sons Dan the mountain-ward, for not would he give him to come down to the valley." It carries the sense of Dan trying to come down the side of the mountain but the Amorite was so numerous and strong that they literally pressed Dan toward the mountainous area, keeping them from the *emeq*, or depth, below it.

Amorite means Renown. Dan means Judge. A mountain (*har*) is a lot of something gathered. It is synonymous with a large but centralized group of people. The reason for Dan's failure is stated as follows...

³⁵ **and the Amorites were determined to dwell in Mount Heres, in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim;**

Rather, "And was determined the Amorite to dwell in Mount Heres, in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim." Kheres is found only here. It comes from *kheres*, the sun. Strong's defines it as Shining. Abarim goes with Sun or Irritant.

Aijalon comes from *ayyal* or deer. Hence, it signifies Place of the Deer. However, that comes from the same root as *ayil*, or ram, which is derived from a word indicating strength. Hence, Place of Strength is not out of line.

Shaalbim comes from *shual*, fox. Thus, most commentators call it Foxes or Place of Foxes. That, however, comes from *shoal*, hollow hand or handful, and the meaning extends to this. The connection is that foxes will dig out a hollow to live in.

In the gospels, Jesus said, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head" (Matthew 8:20). We also see this in Luke –

“On that very day some Pharisees came, saying to Him, ‘Get out and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You.’”³² And He said to them, ‘Go, tell that fox, “Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third *day* I shall be perfected.”’”³³ Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the *day* following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.” Luke 13:31-33

Thus, the meaning would extend to Place of Hole-diggers, meaning those who would try to trip others up.

³⁵ (con’t) **yet when the strength of the house of Joseph became greater, they were put under tribute.**

The sense is correct, but it reads: “and became heavy hand house Joseph and they were to forced labor.” The house of Joseph must be speaking of Ephraim and Manasseh together. It appears to indicate that they were willing to work together and bring their combined hand down upon these inhabitants.

However, instead of destroying them, they put them to forced labor. It is a final failure in a chapter that has highlighted many failures of the tribes of Israel beginning in verse 1:19. With that complete, a final word concerning the Amorite is provided...

³⁶ (fin) **Now the boundary of the Amorites was from the Ascent of Akrabbim, from Sela, and upward.**

v’g’vul ha’emori mimaleh aqrabim meha’sela va’moe’lah – “And border the Amorite from Ascent Akrabbim, from the crag and upward.”

Maaleh Aqrabim means Ascent of Scorpions. There are scorpions in this barren area, but in Scripture, the scorpion is also used figuratively for a scourge. If Sela is the name of a location, this is the only time it is mentioned. But *ha’sela* means “the crag.” It speaks of a craggy rock or a cliff.

Because of this, Barnes thinks it is referring to the same location where Moses and Aaron were told to bring water from the rock (*sela*). Whether that is correct or not, and there is no reason to assume it is not, the *sela* is used to refer to Jesus typologically in Numbers 20 as the Giver of the water of life.

It is debated what these words are telling us. They are affixed at the end of the chapter and so they are summing something up. Some think it is telling us that it is a way of saying that only the southern area of the land was secured. Ellicott says –

“This notice is added to account for the obstinate resistance of the Amorites, by showing the extent of their domain, which reached far to the south of Petra [meaning Sela is referring to Petra]. ... Another opinion given is, that the verse is added to sum up the chapter, by showing that neither the northern, eastern, nor western boundaries were thoroughly secured, but only that of the southern tribes.”

What I submit is that we are being told a sad truth. The Ascent of Akrabbim is at the most southern point of the land of Israel. It was referred to when the Lord determined the borders in Numbers 34:4. It was noted again in Joshua 15:3 when describing the southern boundary of Judah. This is the last time it is mentioned in Scripture.

In Joshua 24:12, the “two kings of the Amorites” were mentioned. This was not speaking of the two kings, Sihon and Og, on the eastern side of Jordan. Rather, it was collectively speaking of the inhabitants, placed under the Amorites on the east and the Amorites on the west in relation to the Jordan.

Directions are not described as north being up and south being down, as we refer to them. However, the word *alah*, up or above, does refer to that which follows, such as in 1 Samuel 16:13 –

“Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward [*va'mae'lah*]. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah.”

As this chapter has been dealing with the tribes within Canaan beginning with Judah in the south and going forward, this final verse is essentially saying, “And the border of the Amorite is from the Ascent of Akrabbim, from the crag (a noticeable crag where the most southern tip of Canaan is located) and upward (meaning all the way north through the tribal inheritances in Canaan).”

We can first look at the victory of the Lord in Joshua as the book closed out as evidence–

“I sent the hornet before you which drove them out from before you, *also* the two kings of the Amorites, *but* not with your sword or with your bow. ¹³ I have given

you a land for which you did not labor, and cities which you did not build, and you dwell in them; you eat of the vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant.”

-Joshua 24:12, 13

Immediately after these words, Judges 2 will begin with –

“Then the Angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said: ‘I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers; and I said, “I will never break My covenant with you. ² And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.” But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this? ³ Therefore I also said, ‘I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be *thorns* in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you.’ ⁴ So it was, when the Angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voices and wept.”

-Judges 1:1-4

Despite Canaan being given to Israel, and despite the Lord defeating the Amorite continuously under Joshua, the people failed to continue with what he began. The land of Canaan was filled with the Amorite.

*An inheritance awaits us that is sure and true
It is given to all who come forward and receive
It was secured by Christ Jesus, who makes all things new
It is ours for the taking if we just believe*

*Calling on Jesus is what is good in God’s sight
The inheritance is ours, though we did nothing it to receive
Eternal life, dazzling and bright
Is ours for the taking if we just believe*

*Don’t fail to come forward; hear the plea
It is waiting, if you will but receive
You and all the saints, around the glassy sea
It is yours for the taking if you just believe*

II. Epic Fail, Israel; Epic Achievement, Christ

The first two sermons in Judges 1 dealt with 1) the matter of Adoni-Bezek who was defeated, and then 2) the subduing of foes within Judah and the taking of Kirjath Sepher. The victor over Kirjath Sepher was given Achsah as his wife.

There was the bringing together of the people groups of the world through the gospel in the first account. In the second, the completed work of Christ was seen to go from Jewish believers to Gentile believers.

In the third sermon, shorter snapshots were seen giving pictures of the church age, of doctrines both false and proper, the continued obstinacy of the Jews to come to Christ until after the church age, the process of salvation, etc.

The verses here begin with Manasseh. As always, the name anticipates Christ who forgets our sins, having paid our sin debt. In relation to Manasseh was Beth Shean, House of Security. It is the state of the believer in Christ. Taanach, Wandering Through, is our state in the world as we anticipate the rapture and glorification.

That continues to be explained by Dor, To Dwell, specifically the time of one's dwelling. The next name, Ibleam, The People Flow Forth, speaks of the multitude who are reckoned among the church. Megiddo, Invading, refers to the progress made into the world of fallen man, even if it is not all-encompassing, signified by the determination of the Canaanites to not be dispossessed.

Finally, we see, "And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites under tribute, but did not completely drive them out." The church is in the commonwealth of Israel. While national Israel has been on the outs, the church has grown strong, but has not (nor will it) completely subdue the world.

Ephraim (Twice Fruitful and Ashes) was then brought in. As always, he anticipates Christ who brings in both Jews and Gentiles through the work of His afflictions. It is He who grants our Portion, signified by Gezer.

Zebulun (Glorious Dwelling Place) was next named in connection with Kitron (Place of Incense Burning). Christ is the One who grants the Glorious Dwelling Place for His people through His sacrifice. The word *qatar* doesn't just signify manufactured incense, but that of sacrifices and offerings, such as –

"You shall receive them back from their hands and burn [*qaatar*] *them* on the altar as a burnt offering, as a sweet aroma before the LORD. It *is* an offering made by fire to the LORD." Exodus 29:25

What we have seen in Judges 1 is a contrast between Israel under the law and the work of Christ in the church because of the grace of Christ. Through accepting His sacrifice, the next location Nahalol, Led to Rest, is realized.

After Zebulun, Asher (Happy or Blessed) was named. It is the state of the believer because of the work of Christ. The name Acco is obscure, so I won't even attempt its meaning. However, Sidon (Fisher) logically points us to Jesus' words about His followers being fishers of men.

Ahlab (Fertile or Abundant) follows after that in the harvest that has come. The next Achzib, Deceive, refers to those who claim the gospel but never believe. Paul speaks of such in 2 Timothy –

“But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.” 2 Timothy 3:13

Helbah (Fertility) speaks of the state of the world ready to be evangelized. Aphik (Fortress) refers to the secure state of those in Christ while Rehob (Wide Space) speaks of their freedom in Him, no longer bound by the constraints of the law and thus freedom from sin.

Naphtali (My Wrestlings) was next named. It speaks of the work of Christ on behalf of believers. In connection with that is named Beth Shemesh (House of the Sun). As seen in Joshua, it is a reference to Malachi 4:2 –

“But to you who fear My name
The Sun of Righteousness shall arise
With healing in His wings;
And you shall go out
And grow fat like stall-fed calves.” Malachi 4:2

Also, Beth Anah is a name that fully depends on one of four roots, each of which could point to the work of Christ. House of Singing is sufficient. That would be an apt description of believers in the Lord.

Lastly, Dan (Judge) was named. Christ is the One to Judge His people and to Judge for His people. In connection with Dan was noted the Amorite (Renown). As seen elsewhere, the name can be used positively about believers or negatively about nonbelievers. In this case, it is referring to those who have their renown because of Christ.

The named cities are Mount Kheres, the mount is a large but centralized group of people. Mount Kheres, or Shining, would thus refer to the glorious church Paul refers to in Ephesians 5:27.

Aijalon (Place of Strength) refers to the state of the church in Christ (Philippians 4:13, etc.). And Shaalbim, Place of Foxes and thus Place of Hole-diggers, looks to the church where Satan and those opposed to the gospel are continuously trying to trip up believers to be ineffective.

With that noted, the final part of verse 35 said, “when the strength of the house of Joseph became greater, they were put under tribute.” It speaks of the final state of the world of believers in Christ.

Joseph (He Shall Add/Take Away) will eventually completely prevail over those who have come against it. Jesus is the One to add to His church, both Jews and Gentiles, having taken away their reproach. At this time, it is a Gentile-led body with some Jews included. Someday, the house of Joseph – believers in Christ, will be fully formed from both.

With this overall snapshot of what is going on in the church as opposed to what was seen in the history of Israel, verse 36 abruptly introduced the words, “And border the Amorite from Ascent Akrabbim, from the crag and upward.”

It speaks of those in the church (Renown) who began with the work of Christ (Akrabbim), signified by His scourges and which allowed the water of life to flow from Him (*ha’sela*: the Rock) and then continue from that point on. It takes the flow of Judges 1 directly back to the first account in the chapter, that of Adoni Bezek.

The uniting of the family of God was realized in the pouring out of the spirit. The seventy kings (representing the seventy main families of all people on earth) who were disabled at the dividing of the tongues (Babel) are brought back together under Christ into one family because of the giving of the Spirit.

Each of these accounts of the ten named tribes has given details of the work of God in Christ and how it relates to His people. Some have given more detail, such as Judah mentioning Caleb to introduce the Gentiles, in order to complete a picture of what is going on.

The shorter accounts, such as that of Zebulun, are no less important. They just focus on a particular aspect. The really interesting part of it all is that ten sons are named in the

process, even though Levi is obviously not mentioned because he has no tribal inheritance. But what about Issachar?

Those names are: Judah, Simeon, Benjamin, Joseph, Manasseh, Ephraim, Zebulun, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan. By naming Joseph separately, which is inclusive of Manasseh and Ephraim, this was made possible.

Think of it! To fit the typology, Joseph was included in this chapter along with his sons Manasseh and Ephraim. If he wasn't, it would mean that only nine tribes were named. Nine is the number of finality and judgment. That is not the focus of Judges 1.

Likewise, if Issachar (whose name doesn't fit the typology) was named, the number would be eleven, the number of disorder, disorganization, imperfection, and disintegration would be the result. That wouldn't make any sense at all.

The cycle, from the account of Adoni-Bezek to the last cryptic words of the chapter, is seen to be complete in the typology presented. The overall picture is very well displayed in what has been provided.

Be confident that even such hopeless and depressing accounts of Israel's failures are there for a greater purpose. Their failures, and ours, only highlight the incredible splendor of what God has done in Christ.

Having said that, don't shoot for failure so that God will be magnified even more. Paul warns us about such an attitude in our closing verse today. Rather, shoot for your very best because You are then honoring the very Greatest – JESUS!

Closing Verse: *"But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.) ⁶ Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world? ⁷ For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? ⁸ And why not say, 'Let us do evil that good may come'?"—as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just."* Romans 3:5-8

Next Week: Judges 2:1-10 *Water gushing out of them peepers...* (The Weepers) (5th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

The Boundary of the Amorites

However, Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants
Of Beth Shean and its villages, or Taanach and its villages too
Or the inhabitants of Dor and its villages
Or the inhabitants of Ibleam and its villages, this they failed to do

Or the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages as they had planned
For the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land

And it came to pass, when Israel was strong
But obviously not strong enough, no doubt
That they put the Canaanites under tribute
But did not completely drive them out

Nor did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites who in Gezer dwelt
So the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them, together
-----they did melt

Nor did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron
Or the inhabitants of Nahalol, darnit and shoot
So the Canaanites dwelt among them
And were put under tribute

Nor did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Acco
Or the inhabitants of Sidon, or of Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik
-----or Rehob also
So the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants
-----of the land
For they did not drive them out; they did not make them go

Nor did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh
-----or the inhabitants of Beth Anath
But they dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land
Nevertheless the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath

Were put under tribute to them and at their command

And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountains
For they would not allow them down to the valley to come
And the Amorites were determined to dwell
In Mount Heres, in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim making Dan glum

Yet when the strength of the house of Joseph became greater
They were put under tribute, like a plucked bird
Now the boundary of the Amorites
Was from the Ascent of Akrabbim, from Sela, and upward

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 2:1-10 (THE WEEPERS)

My brother and I were talking many years ago about politics and the like. He said, "Liberty is not congenital." I had no idea what that meant, but I agreed because I didn't want to look stupid. Eventually, I found out that it means a condition or trait present at birth.

It is true. Liberty is not something that is passed on simply because you are born into it. In a single generation it can be lost. Each generation must work to maintain what they have and then carefully instruct the next generation to safeguard it as well.

The same is true with faith. It is not congenital. Nobody is born with faith, in the sense that they know who to worship, how to properly worship, and that you must have a heart for that worship. These things have to be learned through instruction.

And these things can be trained out of a person before they ever come to be. In other words, a person may ask his mom, "Mom, why are we here? How did we get here?" Mom, being ultra-atheist, explains, "It was because of a big bang. And then, we evolved from goo, went to the zoo, and eventually became me and you."

Children brought up in such an environment can easily have any hope of faith in God taught out of them in advance of it ever arising. But it can also be overcome later in life.

Text Verse: *"That which has been is what will be,
That which is done is what will be done,
And there is nothing new under the sun." Ecclesiastes 1:9*

Israel was given a charge by the Lord. They failed to heed that charge, and they suffered greatly because of it. But that was not the first time it happened. In fact, it happened over and over again for Israel. It has happened within the church as well.

Once great denominations are nothing more than cesspools of stinking sewer. Seminaries established to instruct in proper Christian theology don't even accept Christianity as true anymore. Churches that start out teaching the word of God often wind up doing nothing more than bringing money in and blowing it on things that have nothing to do with the word of God or sharing the gospel.

Unless the fear of the Lord and proper worship of Him in spirit and in truth are taught, those things will fly away in a jiffy. Unless the word is held as sacred and precious, it will be anything but to those who enter into the doors of a church. These things are certain.

Very infrequently, someone may have a desire to open the Bible and discover its truths for living. Normally, it takes people already set and grounded in the word to call people back to what is right. That is what we will see in our passage today.

Such great lessons as this are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The People Lifted Up Their Voices and Wept (verses 1-10)

¹ Then the Angel of the LORD

There is no article before angel. Rather: *vayaal malakh Yehovah* – “And came up messenger Yehovah.” The same term is used of Haggai (Haggai 1:3) and priests in Malachi 2:7. Other similar uses of messenger without the article are found in Isaiah 42:19 and Malachi 3:1. These are referring to people, not the Lord.

It is seen in Scripture that when an angel speaks, it is to individuals. When a messenger speaks, it is to multitudes. In this case, the messenger is speaking to multitudes. Thus, it is probable that this is a human messenger conveying the word of the Lord.

Having said that, the coming words are in the first person, and the messenger does not say something like, “Thus says Yehovah.” However, the instance in Malachi 2:7 says –

“For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, And *people* should seek the law from his mouth; For he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.”

A priest spoke on behalf of the Lord as His messenger. Therefore, this could simply be Phineas conveying the word of the Lord. Without the article included, this is a good supposition. Adding in the article gives a false sense of what is being said. Ironically, the translators leave out the article in the next clause....

¹ (con’t) **came up from Gilgal to Bochim,**

Rather: *min ha'gilgal el ha'bokhim* – “from the Gilgal unto the weepers.” This messenger is coming from Gilgal, which was the location of the tabernacle of the Lord until it moved to Shiloh. Hence, the words now could have been recorded prior to or at the time of the move to Shiloh, which was first seen in Joshua 18:1. I believe this occurs at the time of Joshua 9. The reason for that will be seen as we continue.

As for the name here, it is not yet the name of the location. Rather, it is the state of the people. The word is prefixed by an article: *ha'bokhim* – the weepers. That anticipates the words of verse 4.

Gilgal comes from the word *gilgal*, meaning a wheel. It thus means A Circle, A Wheel, or, figuratively Liberty (as in a rolling away). Hence, it is The Liberty. The word *bokhim* is only seen here and in verse 5. It comes from *bakah*, weeping. Being plural, it means weepers. The place derives its name from the event.

¹ (con't) **and said: “I led you up from Egypt;**

The verb is imperfect: *va'yomer aaleh etkhem mi'mitsrayim* – “And said, I will bring you up from Egypt.” Due to the imperfect, this is a reference to the words of Exodus 3, which will be cited in the coming clauses.

The imperfect is being used to remind the people of what was recorded in the Scriptures. Thus, it appears to provide evidence that this is a priest acting as a messenger of the Lord rather than the Angel of the Lord. Egypt means Double Distress or Double Trouble. Next...

¹ (con't) **and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers;**

Again, the verb is imperfect: *va'avi etkhem el ha'arets asher nishbati la'avotekhem* – “And I will bring you unto the land which I swore to your fathers.” The entire sentiment is as if it is being remembered from Exodus 3 –

“Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, ‘The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared to me, saying, “I have surely visited you and *seen* what is done to you in Egypt; ¹⁷ and I have said I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey.’” Exodus 3:16, 17

¹ (con't) **and I said, 'I will never break My covenant with you.**

va'omar lo apher beriti itkhem l'olam – “And said, ‘No annul my covenant with you to forever.’” The messenger uses the word *parar*, to break, make void, annul, etc. What is this referring to? Cambridge says –

“[*I will never break my covenant*] The allusion is not to the ‘oath sworn to the forefathers,’ but, as the phrases in the next verse shew, to the covenant at Sinai, Exodus 34:10 ff. For the expression cf. Deuteronomy 31:16; Deuteronomy 31:20 JE; Leviticus 26:44, Genesis 17:14 P; it is used rather frequently in the later prophetic style, e.g. Isaiah 24:5, Jeremiah 11:10, Ezekiel 44:7 etc.”

Of the Mosaic Covenant (Sinai), it says this in Hebrews –

“For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, ¹⁹ for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, *there is the* bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.” Hebrews 7:18, 19

If this is referring to the Mosaic covenant, then either the Lord’s word isn’t true, or the word *l'olam* is referring to the end of the age rather than forever in the absolute sense. However, this promise was never made through the Mosaic Covenant. Cambridge is incorrect. It is referring either to what was said to Noah or Abraham –

“It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; ¹⁵ and I will remember My covenant which *is* between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.” Genesis 9:14, 15

“And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. ⁸ Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.” Genesis 17:7, 8

As the covenant with Noah was to all people and over all the earth, that isn’t what is being referred to. However, the covenant to Abraham was made with the descendants of Abraham, and it included a land grant concerning Canaan. Thus, this is what the messenger is referring to.

This is confirmed by the Lord's words to Israel in Leviticus 26 when referring to the Abrahamic Covenant –

“Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, nor shall I abhor them, to utterly destroy them and break [*parar*] My covenant with them; for I *am* the LORD their God.” Leviticus 26:44

Only after saying this does the Lord appeal to the Mosaic Covenant –

“But for their sake I will remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God: I *am* the LORD.” Leviticus 26:45

The sequence of thought is –

- 1) The Lord will lead the people up from Egypt.
- 2) The Lord will bring the people into the land sworn to the fathers (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob).
- 3) The Lord will never break His covenant with the people, as noted concerning the Abrahamic covenant in Leviticus 26.

Therefore...

² And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land;

The words are emphatic: *v'atem lo tikretu berith l'yovosheve ha'arets ha'zoth* – “And you, no shall cut covenant to inhabitants the land, the this.” Cambridge is correct that this is a precept of the Mosaic Covenant, but that covenant stems from the Abrahamic Covenant. However, it is not all-inclusive of it.

The land grant is a part of it, but it does not represent the totality of the covenant. Paul explains this in Galatians 3. The law is what provides the conditions for receiving the land promised under the Abrahamic Covenant, how to obtain and keep it, etc. Because of this, the Lord had commanded...

^{2 (con't)} **you shall tear down their altars.'**

There is a strong emphasis in the words: *mizb'khotehem titosun* – “their altars you shall (surely) tear down.” They were not given any choice in the matter but were emphatically instructed to take this action. The words are repeated from Exodus 34 –

“Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going, lest it be a snare in your midst. ¹³ But you shall [surely] destroy their altars, break their *sacred* pillars, and cut down their wooden images ¹⁴ (for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name *is* Jealous, *is* a jealous God), ¹⁵ lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they play the harlot with their gods and make sacrifice to their gods, and *one of them* invites you and you eat of his sacrifice, ¹⁶ and you take of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters play the harlot with their gods and make your sons play the harlot with their gods.” Exodus 34:12-16

² (con't) **But you have not obeyed My voice.**

v'lo sh'matem b'qoli – “And no have heard in my voice.” To hear is to obey. The words went into their ears, but they were not acted upon. Rather, the people failed to do as instructed. An infraction of the law has taken place. Specifically, they cut a covenant with the inhabitants of the land –

“Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; but they did not ask counsel of the LORD. ¹⁵ So Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them to let them live; and the rulers of the congregation swore to them.”

-Joshua 9:14, 15

During this time, the sanctuary was at Gilgal. The messenger of the Lord, probably Phineas, came with the word of the Lord to the people, repeating the precepts of the law that promised them life and prosperity in the land. They did not heed the words of the Lord. Therefore, the question is asked...

² (con't) **Why have you done this?**

It is the same question spoken to Eve in the Garden of Eden. The only difference is that here it is in the plural: *mah zoth asitem* – “What this you (all) have done?” The emphasis is on the first word, “What?” It is almost as if the Lord is incredulous. “You are just like your first mother, Eve. She refused to hear My words, and now you have followed suit!”

Just as Eve was deceived by the serpent, so Israel was deceived by the ruse of the Gibeonites. However, there is a difference between what happened with Adam and Eve in the Garden and what will happen to Israel in the Land of Promise...

³Therefore I also said, 'I will not drive them out before you;

v'gam amarti lo agaresh otam mipnekhem – “And also, I said, ‘No I will drive them from your faces.’” This was not explicitly stated in the law, even if it was inferred. For this reason, some translations make this a statement of determination by the Lord, such as the NKJV renders the words starting in verse 2, “You have not obeyed my voice. Therefore...” This may be the intent. However, it was also stated in Joshua’s farewell addresses to the leaders and to the people –

“Or else, if indeed you do go back, and cling to the remnant of these nations—these that remain among you—and make marriages with them, and go in to them and they to you, ¹³ know for certain that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations from before you. But they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the LORD your God has given you.” Joshua 23:12, 13

“If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you, after He has done you good.” Joshua 24:20

If this is, as I am convinced, something that occurred at the time of Joshua 9, then this is not a statement of determination but a warning. It would explain the reason why Joshua told the people they could not obey the Lord in his farewell address.

But think on this and on the contrast to what occurred in the garden where the same word, *garash*, is used –

“Then the LORD God said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever’ — ²³ therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴ So He drove [*garash*] out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.”

-Genesis 3:22-24

Through disobedience, the man was driven out of Eden and away from the presence of the Lord. He would live in a land where thorns and thistles would be brought forth for him (Genesis 3:18).

However, in Canaan – a land completely filled with literal thorns and thistles – the enemy will not be driven out. Instead, they will remain and afflict the people, as it next says...

³ (con't) **but they shall be *thorns* in your side,**

The words seem incomplete: *v'hayu lakhem l'tsidim*– “And they shall be to you to sides.” There is a wide variety of translations for the word “sides.” Some opinions are distress, snares, vanity, poverty, thorns, thorns in your sides, to trap you, enemies, adversaries, etc. The answer seems to be in Numbers 33:55 –

“But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall be that those whom you let remain *shall be* irritants in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall harass you in the land where you dwell.”

The messenger is using a literary device, kind of like a portmanteau, by taking a familiar passage and combining two words into one. The word thorns is *tsanim*. The word sides is *tsidim*. There is a single letter difference between the two. By saying “to sides,” he is implying “to thorns in your sides” as is recorded in Numbers 33.

Therefore, they are in a land of literal thorns and a land of figurative thorns as well.

³ (con't) **and their gods shall be a snare to you.”**

v'lolehem yihyu lakhem l'moqesh – “and their gods shall be to you to snare.” This was explicitly stated by Moses –

“Also you shall destroy all the peoples whom the LORD your God delivers over to you; your eye shall have no pity on them; nor shall you serve their gods, for that *will be* a snare to you.” Deuteronomy 7:16

Canaan was to be as a symbolic return to the presence of the Lord for Israel. There was to be a close and personal relationship with Him. But just as in the Garden where the serpent deceived Adam and his wife, these gods would be a snare to the people in Canaan.

It is a repeat of what has already taken place. It is, as Solomon said in our text verse. “That which has been *is* what will be.” In this case, it is because man cannot pay attention and learn from the past. Adam was told of the consequences of eating the forbidden fruit – his point of law. He failed because he followed another god (himself – “You shall be like God...”), his spiritual connection to the Lord was severed, and he was expelled from Eden to the east.

Israel has been told the consequences of violating their law. They have failed, they will follow other gods, their spiritual connection to the Lord (the tabernacle/temple) will be severed, and they will be expelled out of Canaan to the east.

Despite this, the words of verse 1 still apply, “And said, ‘No annul my covenant with you to forever.’” Even if Israel falls under the curse of the Mosaic Covenant, the covenant to them because of the fathers (the Abrahamic Covenant) still stands.

This is repeated in Jeremiah 31 at the time that the Lord promises a New Covenant to Israel –

“Thus says the LORD,
Who gives the sun for a light by day,
The ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night,
Who disturbs the sea,
And its waves roar
(The LORD of hosts *is* His name):
³⁶ ‘If those ordinances depart
From before Me, says the LORD,
Then the seed of Israel shall also cease
From being a nation before Me forever.’
³⁷ Thus says the LORD:
‘If heaven above can be measured,
And the foundations of the earth searched out beneath,
I will also cast off all the seed of Israel
For all that they have done, says the LORD.’” Jeremiah 31:35-37

Some people will abscond with the blessings of Israel and apply them to the church. They will do this by misusing, verses from the New Testament. For example, Paul says this to us –

‘For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you *are* Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Galatians 3:26-29

Those who hold to replacement theology will say that Israel is out and that the church is now spiritual Israel, having received the promise of the Abrahamic Covenant. The logic of this is that because we are Abraham’s seed, the promise now belongs to the church.

The problem with that is that the prophecies refer to the seed of Israel. That term is never used of the church. Further, the seed of Israel is equated to the nation of Israel. The nation of Israel is comprised of Jacob’s twelve sons by birth and Joseph’s two sons through adoption, not the church.

However, another counterargument is that Paul also said this in Galatians 3 –

“Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as of many, but as of one, ‘And to your Seed,’ who is Christ. ¹⁷ And this I say, *that* the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. ¹⁸ For if the inheritance *is* of the law, *it is* no longer of promise; but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.” Galatians 3:16-18

The incorrect logic suggested here by replacement theology is that if Christ is the Seed, and the church is in Christ, then the transfer from Israel to the church has taken place. The problem with that is that the law is not Israel. The law was given to Israel. Likewise, the New Covenant was given to Israel –

“Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— ³² not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. ³³ But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”
-Jeremiah 31:31-34

It cannot be that the church is Israel because the New Covenant established the church, which did not exist when the covenant was made. Rather, it was made with Israel while Christ was still alive and in anticipation of His coming death –

“And He took bread, gave thanks and broke *it*, and gave *it* to them, saying, ‘This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’

²⁰ Likewise He also *took* the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup *is* the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you. ²¹ But behold, the hand of My betrayer *is* with Me on the table. ²² And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!’” Luke 22:19-22

The Lord did not establish a covenant with an entity that did not yet exist except potentially. Rather, the church arose out of the New Covenant. That is explicitly stated in Hebrews 9 –

“And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.” Hebrews 9:15

The New Covenant was given for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant. The church was never under the Mosaic Covenant. For now, the verses continue with...

⁴ So it was, when the Angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voices and wept.

Rather, it is a single voice that is raised: “And it was, according to speaking messenger Yehovah the words, the these, unto all sons Israel, and lifted the people their voice and wept.” The people speak with a united voice. This explains the name given to the location.

Using the word *bakah*, the words say: *vayisu ha’am eth qolam vayivku* – “and lifted the people their voice and wept.” There are many weepers lifting a united voice. Thus, *ha’bokhim* means the weepers.

These events now being recorded, but actually belonging at the time of Joshua, would explain why he was faithful in his time after the events of Joshua 9 with the Gibeonites. It would also explain why he was adamant to instruct Israel in his farewell addresses to

the leaders and the people. It would further explain why he made a covenant before the Lord concerning this issue –

“So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made for them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. ²⁶ Then Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God. And he took a large stone, and set it up there under the oak that *was* by the sanctuary of the LORD. ²⁷ And Joshua said to all the people, ‘Behold, this stone shall be a witness to us, for it has heard all the words of the LORD which He spoke to us. It shall therefore be a witness to you, lest you deny your God.’ ²⁸ So Joshua let the people depart, each to his own inheritance.”
-Joshua 24:25-28

And more, it would explain why this account is given right after the opening chapter of Judges. It sets the tone for everything that follows. Despite the lesson at Gibeon, despite the protestations of Joshua, and the covenant that was made, the failures that lie ahead are marked out by the example and the warnings that were so carefully presented during the life of Joshua.

⁵ Then they called the name of that place Bochim;

As noted in verse 1, the name of the place is derived from what occurred in verse 4: *vayiqreu shem ha'maqom ha'hu bokhim* – “and called name the place, the it, Weepers.”

The Concise Bible Dictionary goes one step further and states the obvious for us, saying, “Bochim symbolically is not simply ‘weepers,’ but ‘weepers over disobedience.’” That is correct.

Cambridge, as they usually do, tears things apart in an attempt to look smarter than they are. They say, “such a form as Bochim, active ptcpl. plur., is very unusual in a place-name, and it has probably been adapted to suit the present occasion.”

They completely miss the point of what is being said. The name is to be a reminder to the people of the cost of disobedience which these people were weeping over. Therefore, it next says...

⁵ (con't) and they sacrificed there to the LORD.

vayizb'khu sham l'Yehovah – “And sacrificed there to the Lord.” Either this was at Shiloh or it was at Gilgal. Those are the two locations where it was noted that the tabernacle

was located in Joshua. As verse 1 said that the messenger of Yehovah came up from Gilgal, it appears that this is where the event occurred.

Therefore, the sacrifices were conducted at the tabernacle in order to atone for their wrongdoing and to restore a right and propitious relationship with the Lord. They had made a covenant with the people of Gibeon instead of destroying them and tearing down their altars. In their heartfelt repentance and sacrifices, the Israelites sought to be restored to the Lord. Next, it says...

⁶ And when Joshua had dismissed the people, the children of Israel went each to his own inheritance to possess the land.

vayshalakh Yehoshua eth ha'am vayelkhu bene Yisrael ish l'nakhalato la'resheth eth ha'arets – “And sent Joshua the people. And went sons Israel man to his inheritance to possess the land.” It is the same thought as that which closed Joshua 24 –

“And sent, Joshua, the people; man to his inheritance” (CG).

This supports the idea that the previous verses occurred at the time of Joshua 9. The narrative sums up the faithfulness of Joshua after the events at Gibeon.

No other such thing is recorded during the entire time of his leadership. The error was identified, the sacrifices were made, and the warning was heeded. The words in this verse are closing out the life of Joshua just as did the words of Joshua 24. That is why the next three verses are included in this narrative now...

⁷ So the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua,

The words here are identical to Joshua 24:31 with the exception of the first two words in the Hebrew –

Joshua 24:31 – And served Israel Yehovah all days Joshua.

Judges 2:7 – And served the people Yehovah all days Joshua.

^{7 (con't)} and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua,

The words here are letter for letter identical to Joshua 24:31 with the exception the spelling of Joshua's name –

Joshua 24:31 – יהושע

Judges 2:7 – יהושוע

Judges 2 adds in a *vav*, the sixth letter of the Hebrew aleph-beth. Out of over 200 references to Joshua, the only other time this *vav* is seen in Joshua's name is in Deuteronomy 3:21. Six represents man, especially fallen man. In Joshua, he was being used a type of Christ. Here, he is being represented as a fallen man needing to sacrifice. It would explain the difference in spelling.

^{7 (con't)} **who had seen all the great works of the LORD which He had done for Israel.**

There is much more variation in the corresponding clause in Joshua 24:31 –

Joshua 24:31: and who had known all work Yehovah which He had done to Israel.

Judges 2:7: who had seen all work Yehovah, the great, which He had done to Israel.

There is an intimacy in what the people had known in Joshua. There is the visible experience in what the people had seen according to Judges. The work of the Lord is also noted as great in Judges.

⁸ **Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died *when he was* one hundred and ten years old.**

It is letter for letter identical to the corresponding clause of Joshua 24:29.

⁹ **And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Heres,**

There is one significant difference in these words and the corresponding words of Joshua 24:30 –

Joshua 24:30 – “And they buried him in border his inheritance in Timnath Serakh.”

Judges 2:9 – “And they buried him in border his inheritance in Timnath Kheres.”

The words are the same letters, but the first and last are transposed:

Joshua 24:30 – סרה

Judges 2:9 – חרס

Timnath Serah means Extra Portion. Timnah Heres means Portion of the Sun. The name of the place in Joshua typologically referred to the full scope of Christ's work as noted in Isaiah 49:6. His work includes not only Israel but the Gentiles as well, making the effect of it the Extra Portion.

In Judges, this typology is not needed and the name of the place is called Portion of the Sun. The earthly Joshua would find his portion in the Sun of Righteousness, who is Christ (Malachi 4:2).

⁹ (con't) **in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash.**

The words are identical to the corresponding clause in Joshua 24, with one exception –

Joshua 24:30: Which in Mount Ephraim from north to Mount Gaash.

Judges 2:9: In Mount Ephraim from north to Mount Gaash.

Noting these differences, we next read...

¹⁰ **When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers,**

v'gam kal ha'dor ha'hu neespu el avotav – “And also all the generation, the it, was gathered to its fathers.” This refers to verse 7, which spoke of those who outlived Joshua. At that time, when the last of that generation was gone...

¹⁰ (con't) **another generation arose after them**

vayaqum dor akher akharehem – “And arose generation another after them.” The words are painfully ominous. After reading about the people serving the Lord, one can only wince at what he knows must be coming. It is the Bible's way of introducing such things...

¹⁰ (fin) **who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel.**

More precisely, it reads, “which not did know Yehovah and also the work which He had done for Israel.” This explains the addition of the word “great” to the works of the Lord in verse 7. It reveals the contrast. His work was great, and yet the people did not remember His work. That sets the tone for what lies ahead.

*Sons of God through faith in His promise
This is how the deal is sealed
One cannot be a doubting Thomas
And expect for his spirit to be healed*

*But if we trust in what God has done
If we hold fast to the promise
Believing in the word concerning His Son
He our fears will take and calm us*

*Then all good things will come to us
God will be pleased with the faith we possess
Yes, if we place our trust in the Lord Jesus
And Him as Lord we do confess*

*This is what God would ask of you
This is what He expects you to do*

II. An Explanation of the Typology

Despite the detailed wording of these verses, the typology is brief and not overly complicated. I am confident that the story belongs chronologically at the time of Joshua 9, but it would have been inappropriate to the tenor of Joshua to include this in the book where he so poignantly pictures Christ.

However, it is included in Judges to show us the effects of the work of Christ after its completion.

A messenger came from the Gilgal, the Liberty, to the weepers. The messenger is not identified. He is simply a messenger of the Lord. He reminds the people of what the Lord had done. He speaks on behalf of the Lord in the first person. This unnamed messenger is typical of the Bible.

The Lord had said He would bring the people up from Egypt (Double Trouble). That typologically is bringing us out of the bondage of sin. Man is born in sin, and he cannot redeem himself. Thus, he is in double trouble.

He then said He would bring the people up to a land which He swore to their fathers. The land of Canaan is typical of being saved, something that the Lord said He would do for His people.

He also said that He would never break His covenant with them. It is typical of eternal salvation. Despite Israel's rejection of Him, He has never broken this word to them. Likewise, despite our turning from Him, He will never break His word to us.

From there, He reminded the people that they were not to make covenants with the inhabitants of the land and they were to tear down their altars. However, Israel had not heeded His voice. Likewise, many of those saved by the Lord don't heed the voice of His word.

And so, just like Eve in the Garden and just like Israel with the Gibeonites, the Lord would ask us, "What this you (all) have done?" Further, He notes that with this attitude, He will not drive out the enemies before the people.

If we don't know the Bible, there is no way we can defeat the enemy. The Lord will not work through those who are disobedient and who do not apply His word to their lives. For example, it is one thing to claim the spiritual armor of Ephesians 6, and it is another to actually know what the words are speaking of and how to apply them.

Instead, the Lord tells them that the inhabitants will be "to your sides," meaning thorns in their sides. We can trust in our own abilities, or we can rely on the Lord. Even the apostle Paul understood this –

"And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. ⁸ Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. ⁹ And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong." 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

The fiery darts of the wicked one (Ephesians 6:16) will not be overcome when we are not living rightly before the Lord and when we are not clearing out what is improper from our lives.

Next, it noted that all the people lifted their voices and wept. How many revivals in church history reflect what is stated here? Churches are dead, believers have left their first love, and then they come to their senses. It is the state of the church at any given time when their failure to adhere to the Lord becomes evident.

And more, it is the state of any person who truly understands his salvation or who remembers his salvation after turning back to the Lord. As for Israel, they called the place Weepers. However, as the Concise Bible Dictionary said it, these are weepers over disobedience.

Until we identify and acknowledge our failures before the Lord, we cannot properly turn to, or back to, Him. Upon realizing the error of their ways, the people made a sacrifice to the Lord. If it is a new believer, the sacrifice is accepting Jesus. If it is one turning back to the Lord, David gives the appropriate sacrifice –

“The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit,
A broken and a contrite heart—
These, O God, You will not despise.” Psalm 51:17

The last verses of the passage today were sufficiently explained in Joshua 24, but the differences were noted and explained. Our text verse noted that things continuously repeat. This is true in both the world and in the people of God.

We keep turning from the Lord, the Lord initiates the process of restoration, and for those who accept it, God forgives and heals. He accepts our faith because it is truly all we have to offer Him. Even loving God is an act of faith because we have not seen Him. We receive His word by faith, and we fall head over heels for Him by faith.

Let us remember the lesson of Israel and instead of falling into disobedience, let us remain faithful to the Lord all our days. But let us also remember that when we fail Him, He has promised to never leave us or forsake us.

Israel has been kept through thousands of years of failure. And because of Jesus, we – His people – are in Christ. Therefore, He will keep us through each and every failure. Praises be for the love of God that is found in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Closing Verse: *“Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, ¹⁷ comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.” 2 Thessalonians 2:16, 17*

Next Week: Judges 2:11-15 *This is what happens when people are not productive and get bored...* (Evil in the Sight of the Lord) (6th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

The Weepers

Then the Angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim
-----and said:

"I led you up from Egypt and to the land brought you
Of which I swore to your fathers; and I said
'I will never break My covenant with you, so it is true

And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land
You shall tear down their altars, but you were quite remiss
And you have not obeyed My voice
Why have you done this?

Therefore I also said
'I will not drive them out before you, this I will not do
But they shall be thorns in your side
And their gods shall be a snare to you

So it was, when the Angel of the LORD
Spoke these words to all the children of Israel
That the people lifted up their voices and wept
They knew things would not go well

Then they called the name of that place Bochim
And they sacrificed there to the LORD, an offering from their hand
And when Joshua had dismissed the people, the children of Israel
Went each to his own inheritance to possess the land

So the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua
And all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua
-----during that whole spell
Who had seen all the great works of the LORD

Which He had done for Israel

Now Joshua the son of Nun
A man who was strong and bold
The servant of the LORD
Died when he was one hundred and ten years old

And they buried him within the border
Of his inheritance at Timnath Heres, where he did abide
In the mountains of Ephraim
On Mount Gaash's north side
Then all that generation had been gathered to their fathers
Another generation arose (and it is a sad story to tell)
After them who did not know the LORD
Nor the work which He had done for Israel

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 2:11-15 (EVIL IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD)

A key point in Israel's history is noted in the words of verse 12, "the Lord brought Israel out of the land of Egypt." It is mentioned repeatedly throughout the law, the historical books, the Psalms, and in the prophets.

Over and over, the words are brought back into the redemptive narrative to remind Israel of where they were and how they got out of that state. Stephen reminded the people of it in Acts 7. Almost as often as it is mentioned, there is an accompanying note about Israel's rebellion.

"The Lord did this for you, but you turned away despite that." In the case of Stephen, he reminded them of what the Lord had done, and then he reminded Israel of their rejection of Moses who gave them the law of the Lord. Instead of obedience to Him, they fashioned a golden calf, sacrificed to idols, and rejoiced in the work of their own hands.

Likewise, the author of Hebrews mentions this incident while citing the promise of the Lord that there would be a New Covenant to replace the one that continuously resulted in disobedience and failure...

Text Verse: *"For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. ⁸ Because finding fault with them, He says: "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— ⁹ not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD."*

-Hebrews 8:7-9

The author of Hebrews didn't just pull his words out of thin air. Rather, he was citing the prophet Jeremiah, a prophet under the Mosaic Covenant. The New Covenant, therefore, isn't just a nutty idea proposed by a wandering rabbi named Jesus without any merit at all.

Rather, it is the word of the Lord to the people of Israel that what they had been living under, meaning the Old Covenant, was not the end of the story. It is, instead, a

steppingstone on the way to something far, far better. And this is a good thing not only for Israel but for the whole world. Israel is just the immediate proof of that.

Where there was a failure to continue holding fast to the Lord in the Mosaic covenant, leading to being disregarded by Him, there is victory in the New Covenant, leading to being reconciled to God once and forever. The book of Judges is an integral part of understanding this, and our verses today are a necessary portion for understanding why.

The ongoing lesson of Scripture is that God is working, even through our disobedience, to bring full, final, and forever reconciliation between Himself and us. It is a marvelous lesson, and it is to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. As the Lord Had Sworn to Them (verses 11-15)

What is presented in these verses, beginning with verse 11 and going through the rest of the chapter, is a summary of the rest of the book of Judges. Joshua and his generation are dead and buried. From there, the deeds of the quickly apostatizing nation are highlighted. This was seen as the previous verses closed out –

“So the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD which He had done for Israel. ⁸ Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died *when he was* one hundred and ten years old. ⁹ And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Heres, in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash. ¹⁰ When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel.” Judges 2:7-10

The inevitable result of not driving out the inhabitants of the land, as noted in Chapter 1, is now seen...

¹¹ Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD,

More precisely, it reads: *vayaasu bene Yisrael eth ha’ra b’ene Yehovah* – “And did sons Israel the evil in eyes Yehovah.” Saying “the evil” adds its own stress to the words.

It is a phrase commonly used in Deuteronomy. This is the first of eight times it will be seen in Judges, and it will continue throughout the Old Testament, especially in the books of Kings and Chronicles.

For example, the word *ra*, or evil, is used nineteen times in Judges, but eight times it includes the article, *ha'ra*, the evil, when referring to the people's conduct before the Lord. Each time, it says the evil was done *b'ene Yehovah*, or "in the eyes of Yehovah." Thus, the offense is personal in the relationship between the people and the Lord.

What is interesting is that in Judges, the use of the article, *ha*, is always said in relation to the conduct of the sons of Israel, meaning the people collectively. However, later, when kings rule the land, that same term will usually refer to the conduct of the king, he being the one to do "the evil."

One can see the contrast. During the time of the Judges, the Lord is the ultimate leader of the people. It is the judge, the Lord's temporarily appointed leader, who is called to bring the people back from doing "the evil." Once the kingdom is established, it is the king himself who causes the people to err or who brings them back to the Lord.

As for this instance of doing "the evil," it is...

¹¹ (con't) **and served the Baals;**

vayaavdu ha'baalim – "and served the Baalim." The word *baal* simply means a master, owner, lord, etc. Among other things, for example, it can refer to a husband in relation to a wife, the owner of a piece of property, a master of assemblies, or the captain of the guard.

In this verse, it is used in the sense of gods. They can be general gods, such as worshiping the sun or stars, or they can be the names of specific gods, such as Baal-Zebub, Baal-Berith, etc. This type of worship was specifically warned against by Moses in Deuteronomy 4:15-31 (and elsewhere). In those verses, he says –

"When you beget children and grandchildren and have grown old in the land, and act corruptly and make a carved image in the form of anything, and do evil [*ha'ra*: the evil] in the sight of the LORD your God to provoke Him to anger, ²⁶I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that you will soon utterly perish from the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess; you will not prolong *your* days in it, but will be utterly destroyed." Deuteronomy 4:25, 26

John Lange gives a good sense of the meaning of *baal* –

“Baal (בַּעַל), as deity, is for the nation, what as master he is in the house, and as lord in the city. He represents and impersonates the people’s life and energies. Hence, there is one general Baal, as well as many Baalim. The different cities and tribes had their individual Baalim, who were not always named after their cities, but frequently from the various characteristics for which they were adored. The case is analogous to that of Zeus, who by reason of his various attributes, was variously named and worshipped in Greece.”

Serving the Baals is what describes the evil committed in the sight of the Lord. This is especially so because in serving the Baals it means something else also takes place...

¹² and they forsook the LORD God of their fathers,

Israel has proved itself to be a nation of liars. This is exactly what they ardently claimed would never happen –

“So the people answered and said: ‘Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; ¹⁷ for the LORD our God *is* He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way that we went and among all the people through whom we passed.’” Joshua 24:16, 17

The words are also closely connected to the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 29 which speak of the time when Israel falls under the curses of the law. This is rather ominous, considering that these words come just after the record of the death of Joshua. Here is what Deuteronomy said –

“Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them out of the land of Egypt.”

-Deuteronomy 29:25

This thought here falls exactly in line with the words of Jesus –

“No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” Luke 16:13

Some translations capitalize Mammon, personifying it. As it is set in contrast to the true God, that appears proper. The same idea is seen here in Judges. The people's attention was directed to the Baals of the land, and their hearts were thus torn away from *Yehovah elohe avotam*, Yehovah God of their fathers...

^{12 (con't)} **who had brought them out of the land of Egypt;**

Rather, the words are personal, using a verb as a noun: *ha'motsi otam me'erts mitsrayim* – “the Bringer Out you from land Egypt.” The Lord is set in direct contrast to the Baals. They had done nothing for the people; He had brought them out of Egypt.

As Egypt is a picture of bondage, the parallel to Jesus in the New Covenant cannot be overlooked. He brought Israel out of bondage to the law. However, as it is by law that the knowledge of sin comes about, He didn't just bring Israel out of the bondage to sin, but all men, even those not under the Law of Moses.

This is because Adam was a man under law. In his disobedience to the law, his transgression spread to all men. Paul explains this in Romans 5, explicitly stating it in verse 12 –

“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—”

The Law of Moses only highlighted the work of sin through law, but it could not remove sin from man because the offense of Adam had already been committed. However, Jesus was born under the law but not bearing Adam's sin. Thus, He was able to not only be the Bringer Out from Adam's transgression but also from the transgressions committed under the Law of Moses for Israel.

What we are seeing in Judges is a typological representation of the greater work of Jesus Christ. Let us not be like Israel who was brought out...

^{12 (con't)} **and they followed other gods**

vayel'ku akhare elohim akherim – “and walked after gods other.” The words continue to follow the thought of Deuteronomy 29:26, “And they walked and served gods other.”

Israel was called by the Lord, was delivered from the bondage of Egypt to serve Him, and the people were given the law to direct them in how to serve Him. In observing the law, they would be kept from serving other gods.

This was the intent of the law. It wasn't just, "Here is what you are to do to actively serve the Lord," but it was also, "Here is what you are not to do in order to properly serve the Lord." Hence, the law included Moses' words of Deuteronomy 4, cited earlier.

"Israel, you are to do this and not do that. In performing according to this word, you will do well." However, they did what they were not to do by walking after other gods. In doing that, they also failed to do the other things they should have done. This is the natural result of serving other gods...

12 (con't) from *among* the gods of the people who *were* all around them,

Rather than "the gods" and "people," it is both less and more specific, saying, "from gods the peoples who around them." It is as if Israel simply followed gods in a willy-nilly manner, bumbling around to whatever god they could latch onto from whatever people group happened to be nearby.

This thought also follows from Deuteronomy 29, "gods that no they did know and no He had given to them." This walking after these various gods is then explained saying...

12 (con't) and they bowed down to them;

It is an exact repeat from Deuteronomy 29:26: *vayishtakhavu la'hem* – "and bowed down to them." The people didn't just follow after these gods, but they subordinated themselves to them and worshiped them, as the act of bowing down implies. This is one generation after the people were brought into the land.

In other words, some of the people alive at this time were young men and women who actually saw the Jordan stop flowing and who then crossed over into the Promised Land. They had been partakers of the manna until that day, and yet, they were unable or unwilling to ensure that what their eyes had beheld was properly communicated to their own children...

12 (con't) and they provoked the LORD to anger.

vayakisu eth Yehovah – “And enraged Yehovah.” The word *kaas* means to be vexed or angry. In this case, it is the actions of the people that caused the Lord to become angry. This was exactly what Moses warned of in the verses already cited from Deuteronomy 4–

“When you beget children and grandchildren and have grown old in the land, and act corruptly and make a carved image in the form of anything, and do evil [*ha’ra*: the evil] in the sight of the LORD your God to provoke [*kaas*] Him to anger...”

-Deuteronomy 4:25

Though Israel’s history at this point is not yet that far along, the inevitable result of their actions is spelled out in the continued words of Deuteronomy 29 –

“Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against this land, to bring on it every curse that is written in this book.” Deuteronomy 29:27

This shows the longsuffering of the Lord. Israel almost immediately turned away from Him. And yet, it would be many hundreds of years and generations of falling away before they were first exiled. Still, from that first generation after entering Canaan...

¹³ They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths.

Rather, it is singular and the action is directed: *vayaazvu eth Yehovah vayaavdu la’baal v’la’ashtaroth* – “And forsook Yehovah and served to the Baal and to the Ashtoreths.” Instead of serving *I’Yehovah*, or “to Yehovah,” they are serving “to the Baal” and “to the Ashtoreths,” trading the glory of the Lord for what He had created or for what man has devised.

What we cannot miss is that they have not only given allegiance to other gods but that they have failed to give honor to the Lord. That is seen, for example, in Deuteronomy 32–

“They have corrupted themselves;
They are not His children,
Because of their blemish:
A perverse and crooked generation.
⁶Do you thus deal with the LORD [*I’Yehovah*],
O foolish and unwise people?

Is He not your Father, *who* bought you?

Has He not made you and established you?" Deuteronomy 32: 5, 6

In serving other gods, they are dealing falsely with the Lord. It is reflected in the name Israel – He Strives with God. Israel strives with God (for God) or he strives with God (against God). Either way, Israel strives with God. So it is when they worship the Lord or when they worship other gods. Within just one generation, Israel was striving against God...

¹⁴ And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel.

v'yikhar aph Yehovah b'Yisrael – "And burned nostril Yehovah in Israel." This is what Deuteronomy 29:27 said would be the case, "And burned nostril Yehovah in the land." In order to correct their deficient thinking and aberrant conduct, it next says...

¹⁴ (con't) So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them;

So far, God's judgment on Israel has followed according to the words of Deuteronomy. The exception to that is that the words Baal and Ashtaroth have been substituted for the heavenly host –

"And take heed, lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which the LORD your God has given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage." Deuteronomy 4:19

"They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths." Judges 2:13

The male singular, Baal, with the feminine plural, Ashtoreths, is notable. Baal is probably speaking of the sun, which would then encompass all lesser Baals, of which there were many and which are derived from it. Ashtoreths is probably referring to the moon-goddess Astharte of the Canaanites and any other associated female deities. This is speculation, but it would explain the matter.

Thus, Moses' words concerning the sun, moon, stars, etc., have been realized in these false gods. Here, however, a new thought is introduced. It is the consequence of their actions. The words speak of a singular hand of many enemies: *vayitnem b'yad shosim vayashosu otam* – "And gave them in hand plunderers and plundered them."

There are two new words here. The first is the noun *shasah*, plunderer. The second is the verb *shasas*, to plunder, from which the noun is derived.

They had accumulated all of the wealth of those they had conquered. They had also gained the wealth of those they subdued but failed to exterminate, as noted in Judges 1. However, along with having them under tribute, Israel began to mingle with them and serve their gods while simultaneously forsaking the Lord.

Therefore, what they had gained from the Lord's care for them, they lost because of their neglect of Him. But more than just plundering, it next says...

¹⁴ (con't) **and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around,**

Again, it is one hand of many enemies – “And He sold them in hand their enemies from around.” The idea of the Lord selling Israel is not that He has made a profit off them. Rather, it is that He simply handed them over to their enemies as if they were property to be disposed of. “Here, I don't want this anymore. Do what you will with it.”

Moses spoke of exactly this in the Song of Moses –

“For they *are* a nation void of counsel,
Nor *is there any* understanding in them.
²⁹ Oh, that they were wise, *that* they understood this,
That they would consider their latter end!
³⁰ How could one chase a thousand,
And two put ten thousand to flight,
Unless their Rock had sold them,
And the LORD had surrendered them?” Deuteronomy 32:28-30

But because the term “sold” is used, it must carry more meaning than the word “gave” seen in the previous clause. There, the Lord opened His hands and gave Israel into the hands of the plunderers. But this was because of their actions. Therefore, the selling must be what they did as well. This is seen in Isaiah 52 in reference to Jerusalem, the city that represents the Lord's people –

“For thus says the LORD:
‘You have sold yourselves for nothing,
And you shall be redeemed without money.’” Isaiah 52:3

The truth of the matter is that Israel sold themselves to their enemies. Because of their actions, the Lord allowed it to happen. Thus, it can be said that the Lord sold them...

¹⁴ (con't) **so that they could no longer stand before their enemies.**

v'lo yaklu od la'amod liphne oyvehem – “And no able again to stand to faces their enemies.” This is a specific curse stated in the law in both Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26:17 –

“I will set My face against you, and you shall be defeated by your enemies [*liphne oyvehem*: to faces your enemies]. Those who hate you shall reign over you, and you shall flee when no one pursues you.” Leviticus 26:17

Instead of being able to stand against the faces of their enemy in battle, they would be defeated before them, unable to face off with them. And remember, this all began within the first generation after the death of Joshua.

¹⁵ **Wherever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for calamity,**

b'kol asher yatsu yad Yehovah haytah bam l'ra'ah – “In all where went out, hand Yehovah in them to evil.” In other words, not only was the power (the hand) of the Lord not with them, it was actively fighting against them, frustrating their efforts.

This is certainly not only referring to the previous two verses concerning being plundered and unable to face their enemies, but in industry, agriculture, contentment at home, and so forth.

As noted earlier, these verses are an opening summary to what is contained in the rest of the time of the Judges, which also encompasses the book of Ruth chronologically. In it, there will be strife, drought, oppression, inter-tribal warfare, and so forth.

This is exactly the opposite of what is promised in the blessings noted in the law when Israel was obedient –

“You shall not make idols for yourselves;
neither a carved image nor a *sacred* pillar shall you rear up for yourselves;
nor shall you set up an engraved stone in your land, to bow down to it;
for I *am* the LORD your God.

² You shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary:

I *am* the LORD.

³ 'If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them,
⁴ then I will give you rain in its season, the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.

⁵ Your threshing shall last till the time of vintage, and the vintage shall last till the time of sowing;
you shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely.

⁶ I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none will make *you* afraid;

I will rid the land of evil beasts,
and the sword will not go through your land.

⁷ You will chase your enemies, and they shall fall by the sword before you.

⁸ Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight;

your enemies shall fall by the sword before you.

⁹ 'For I will look on you favorably and make you fruitful, multiply you and confirm My covenant with you.

¹⁰ You shall eat the old harvest, and clear out the old because of the new.

¹¹ I will set My tabernacle among you, and My soul shall not abhor you.

¹² I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people.

¹³ I *am* the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt,
that *you* should not be their slaves;

I have broken the bands of your yoke and made you walk upright."

-Leviticus 26:1-13

Israel failed at the "You shall not's," the "You shall's," and the "If you's" of the opening verses of Leviticus 26. And so, instead of the many blessings they could have received, they immediately began to fall under the penalty of the curses...

15 (con't) **as the LORD had said,**

Rather: *ka'asher dibber Yehovah* – "according to which spoke Yehovah." The Lord didn't say. Instead, He spoke His commands, and that was that. The words are not conditional, nor do they allow for the input of the people. Further...

15 (con't) **and as the LORD had sworn to them.**

"And according to which swore Yehovah to them." This is in accord with all of the words of Leviticus 26:14-43 and the other words of cursing throughout the law. Israel failed to

heed, they turned from the Lord, and they were hemmed in, crushed, oppressed, and greatly chastised by the Lord...

^{15 (fin)} **And they were greatly distressed.**

The word translated as distressed is rare: *vayetser lahem meod* – “and distressed to them very.” The only other time the word *yatsar*, or distressed, has been seen was in Genesis 32 –

“Then the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, ‘We came to your brother Esau, and he also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men *are* with him.’” ⁷ So Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people that *were* with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two companies. ⁸ And he said, “If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the other company which is left will escape.” Genesis 32:6-8

Jacob actually thought he had met his end and began to divide up the family in hopes of saving some of them. It was a time of great uncertainty, but also of prayer, petition, and reminding the Lord of His promises. This is just what the chastening of the Lord is intended to bring about for Israel now and throughout their history.

The corrective measure for the stubborn heart and the stiff neck is the heavy hand of the Lord. That is what Israel faced because of their careless attitude towards Him.

*The god of self will fail you every time
Just as Baal and the Ashtoreths will
When one is under law, there is multiplied crime
And that, my friend, is a very bitter pill*

*But in Christ Jesus there is grace
There is reconciliation for the wayward soul
Through Him is granted one's heavenly place
Because He alone has it all under control*

*You must choose what God or gods you will serve
Only one path will lead to restoration and life
Choose the grace of Christ; this you shall observe
Through Him alone is ended the enmity and strife*

II. Which by Nature Are Not Gods

During the analysis of these verses, I mentioned the work of Christ in relation to the law, noting that the law is a type of bondage intended to highlight the sin nature in man. That is not a small point of theology merely to be tucked away and referred to only during a sermon on tithing.

Rather, it is the key and central point of all of God's dealing with man in Scripture. It began with the first words ever spoken by the Lord to His creature –

“The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. ⁹ And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life *was* also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”

-Genesis 2:8, 9

“Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’”

-Genesis 2:15-17

With those words, law was established. With the violation of the law, sin entered the stream of human existence. Later, when the law was given through Moses, a standard for right conduct was set, but sin was already present in man. Therefore, the law was unable to take away sin in fallen man. Instead, it only magnified it.

In Galatians 4, Paul says this to those who had been saved through acceptance of the gospel –

“Now I say *that* the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, ² but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father. ³ Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. ⁴ But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’ ⁷ Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. ⁸ But then, indeed, when you

did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods. ⁹ But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how *is it that* you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? ¹⁰ You observe days and months and seasons and years. ¹¹ I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.” Galatians 4:1-11

Paul explained the work of Christ in relation to those under the law. However, apart from any Jews that may have come to the Lord through Paul’s ministry, the church at Galatia was a Gentile church.

Paul’s point was that Judaizers had come in and infected their thinking. They were never under the law, and yet they were observing the law that Christ had fulfilled. They had set aside grace and were placing themselves back under bondage.

But what does Paul say in verse 8? “But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods.” That sounds just like Israel in Judges 2. They are serving those which by nature are not gods. They are nothing at all.

For the Galatians, there was no knowledge of the true God, let alone how to serve Him properly. Like people from any pagan culture, some may have known there was a God who created all things, but they only had that knowledge from general revelation. They had no specific knowledge of Him as the Jews did.

In an attempt to either be reconciled to the God they were sure existed, or to appease the “gods” they thought controlled their lives and destiny, they served idols. They became slaves to these false gods. They were under a type of bondage to them in that they felt obligated to them through sacrifices, rites, gifts, etc.

When they heard and received the gospel of God’s grace in Christ, they were freed from these things. They were no longer under bondage but liberated to serve the true God as sons with the promise of a full inheritance.

Paul showed the Galatians where they had been, where they were in Christ, and where they were heading because of the lies of the Judaizers. He is making a logical defense against the insertion of the Law of Moses into their lives by carefully showing them these things.

And so, Paul directly questioned the Galatians in verse 9. The word “But” implies a contrast. They did not know God, and at that time, they “served those which by nature

are not gods.” In contrast to this state, he then says, “But now after you have known God...”

The word translated as “known” is not the same as in the previous verse. Instead of ignorance, they had now obtained knowledge concerning God. And yet, to qualify the thought, he then says, “...or rather are known by God.”

God has testified that He knows those who are His. Paul’s qualification of his first words is because it is God who “has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into” their hearts. God has known them and testified to the fact that they are His by the giving of the Spirit.

Because of this, they moved from bondage to freedom. Next, to show the utterly absurd nature of what they were doing by accepting the premise of the Judaizers and inserting the law into their lives, he then asks, “How is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements...?”

Paul is incredulous that they would give up on the marvel of being reconciled to God through the grace of Jesus Christ and turn to the law. The law couldn’t save a single Jew in all of history. It only showed them how sinful their sin was and that they needed something else.

He spoke about the dilemma of being under the law in Romans 7 –

“For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. ²³ But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴ O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵ I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!” Romans 7:22-25

It is this type of dilemma that caused Paul to call the law and its accompanying precepts “weak and beggarly elements.” It was ineffective in bringing salvation. In fact, even if someone delighted in the law, all it could do was make him miserable.

Further, the more they delighted in it, the more misery it would produce! But Paul notes that by turning to the law, it appeared that they “desire again to be in bondage.”

He, in a sense, says, “Wasn’t freedom in Christ enough? Wasn’t the reception of the Spirit sufficient? Did you find bondage that wonderful?” Paul is stunned at the situation! If he were alive today, he would continue to be stunned.

This pernicious infection is still seen in God's people in one form or another 2000 years later. Countless souls have said, "Christ's work isn't enough!" In so doing, they disgrace that great and exalted Name and the work He so faithfully accomplished.

Israel continuously rejected the Lord who gave them the law in order to serve other gods. Israel rejected the Lord who fulfilled the law, instead pursuing the god of self-righteousness.

And both Jews and Gentiles continue to work at destroying the grace of God that is found in Jesus Christ to this day by imposing the law on those who are unschooled in what the meaning of the word "grace" is.

One can join with Israel the nation of today, having not yet come to Christ, and stand under the condemnation of the law or he can stand with the Israel of God and be freed from condemnation through the grace of the Lord.

As a point of doctrine, this does not mean that a Gentile becomes a Jew when saved. What it does mean is that he joins the commonwealth of Israel and of those Jews – of the stock of Israel – who have followed the truth of the gospel. What we need is grace, not more law. And that is how the Bible ends when John proclaims, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

The time of the Judges is a time under the law. It is a cyclical time of rebellion and restoration as the people swerved away from or back to the Lord based on that law. We live in the time of grace. In grace, there is no condemnation or fear, only fellowship and reconciliation.

Let us learn the lesson of Israel by learning the lesson of the law versus grace. To this day, Israel the nation is still stuck under the first, and they are in bondage to it. For those who come to Christ, there is freedom and sonship. Choose wisely. Choose Jesus.

Closing Verse: *"And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God." Galatians 6:16*

Next Week: Judges 2:16-23 *What brought it about wasn't pretty...* (The Lord Was Moved to Pity) (7th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Evil in the Sight of the Lord

Then the children of Israel did evil
In the sight of the LORD, yes committing many bothers
And served the Baals
And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers

Who had brought them out of the land of Egypt
And they followed other gods, worshipping with clangor
From among the gods of the people who were all around them
And they bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD
-----to anger

They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths
And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel
So He delivered them into the hands
Of plunderers who despoiled them, a sad story to tell

And He sold them into the hands
Of their enemies all around
So that they could no longer stand
Before their enemies, but retreated from their ground

Wherever they went out
The hand of the LORD was against them for calamity
As the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn to them
And they were greatly distressed from the lack of amity

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise

Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 2:16-23

(THE LORD WAS MOVED TO PITY)

In past sermons, we have highlighted the literary form known as a chiasm. That is a device where a series of thoughts is presented in an order. There is then usually an anchor, a main verse, on which the chiasm turns.

After that anchor, the text turns around and says the same thing in reverse, repeating each previous thought as it goes. Such a device helps explain what is going on and why things are happening in the greater story being presented.

Another useful tool the Bible employs is called parallelism. This device uses successive verbal constructions in the text that are parallel, such as grammatical structure, meter, meaning, sound, etc.

The passage today uses parallelism between verses 16 & 17 and 18 & 19. The structure helps unlock the thought process being presented –

* 16 And raised up, Yehovah, judges.

** 16 And delivered them from hand their plunderers.

X

*** 17 And also unto judges no listen.

- 17 for harloted after gods other, and bowed down to them.

% 17 They turned quickly [rebellion] from the way which walked their fathers.

- 17 To listen commandments Yehovah. No did thus.

* 18 And for raised Yehovah to them judges. And was Yehovah with the judge.

** 18 And delivered them from hand their enemies all days the judge.

X For sighs, Yehovah, from their groaning from faces their oppressors and their pushers.

*** 19 And it was in dying the judge, they turn back and corrupted from their fathers [they didn't listen]

- 19 To walk after gods other, to serve them, and to bow down to them.

% 19 No cast from their practices and from their way the stubborn [rebellion].

Text Verse: *“As the deer pants for the water brooks,
So pants my soul for You, O God.
² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
When shall I come and appear before God?” Psalm 42:1, 2*

One can easily see the parallelism in the psalm once the device is explained. The as/so gives an immediate parallel thought. Likewise, thirsting for is set in parallel to coming and appearing. There is the desire in both.

There are more parallels in the surrounding verses in Joshua 2. For example, it says in verses 2:14 and 2:20, *vayikhar aph Yehovah b’yisrael* – “And burned nostril Yehovah in Israel.”

Following these similar words can help eliminate confusion, explaining what otherwise seems a giant heap of seemingly indiscernible thoughts that have no cohesion with one another.

Chapter 2 of Judges is like a bridge between the book of Joshua and what lies ahead in Judges. Things that appear to have been intentionally left out of Joshua are explained here. Things that will occur in Judges are first noted here. Paying heed to the connecting words and thoughts will help bring the narrative into focus.

As for Christological typology, there is not much revealed in our verses today. Despite this, they definitely show us the need for a Savior. Where Israel is shown to fail, we know that Jesus – the greater Israel – prevailed.

The Bible is making a point about the world’s need for a Messiah. Israel is being used to show us this. Such great truths are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Lord Raised Up Judges (verses 16-19)

¹⁶ Nevertheless, the LORD raised up judges

vayaqum Yehovah shophtim – “And raised up, Yehovah, judges.” It is a key thought in the book as it sets the pattern for what will occur throughout it. As the people are humbled or as they depart from the Lord, Yehovah will raise up a judge who will attend to the particular matter that has arisen.

This is the first time that the word *shophtim*, or judges, is used in the book. The word comes from a primitive root meaning to judge. It has been seen in all of the books of the Bible so far, but this is the first time that it is used in the sense of a national hero filling the role designated by the Lord.

For example, it says in Deuteronomy 16 –

“You shall appoint judges and officers in all your gates, which the LORD your God gives you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with just judgment.” Deuteronomy 16:18

That is not the type of judge referred to now in Judges. That was a person appointed by the people to handle matters of law within the community. Those referred to now are appointed by the Lord and are filled with the necessary endowments to meet the particular situation that has arisen within the land.

Unlike a king, they serve under the Lord without any power to make laws. Also, unlike a line of kings, there was no unbroken succession of judges. The Lord would raise up a hero, he would fulfill his time as the leader, and then someone else would eventually be selected as a judge to meet the next need of the people. Of them, Jamieson-Fausset-Brown correctly states that a judge...

“was usually accompanied by a special call, and the people seeing them endowed with extraordinary courage or strength, accepted them as delegates of Heaven, and submitted to their sway. Frequently they were appointed only for a particular district, and their authority extended no farther than over the people whose interests they were commissioned to protect. They were without pomp, equipage, or emoluments attached to the office. They had no power to make laws; for these were given by God; nor to explain them, for that was the province of the priests—but they were officially upholders of the law, defenders of religion, avengers of all crimes, particularly of idolatry and its attendant vices.”

In this role, and under the authority of the Lord, they are those...

¹⁶ (con’t) **who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them.**

Rather, it reads, “and delivered them from hand their plunderers.” This thought will occasionally be seen throughout the book. The nation will turn from the Lord, He will

allow them to be plundered, and when they cry out to Him, he will send a judge to remedy their plight.

An immediate example of everything thus far described is seen in the first judge to be named in the next chapter –

“So the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. They forgot the LORD their God, and served the Baals and Asherahs. ⁸Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and He sold them into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia; and the children of Israel served Cushan-Rishathaim eight years. ⁹When the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the children of Israel, who delivered them: Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother. ¹⁰The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the LORD delivered Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed over Cushan-Rishathaim. ¹¹So the land had rest for forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died.” Judges 3:7-11

Unfortunately, just as they failed to heed the Lord, they failed to heed their judges...

¹⁷ Yet they would not listen to their judges,

v’gam el shophtim lo shameu – “And also unto judges no listen.” The word “listen” signifies to hear and obey like it does when we say, “Go to your room! You didn’t listen to me.” The people may have heard, but they did not attend to what they heard...

¹⁷ (con’t) but they played the harlot with other gods,

ki zanu akhare elohim akherim – “for harlotted after gods other.” Throughout Scripture, idolatry is considered as spiritual adultery. Israel was wed to the Lord, and they have turned from Him.

The judge was selected to bring the people’s attention back to the Lord and what He had done or would do for the people. Despite that, they constantly fell into idolatry, turning away from Him. In turning to other gods, it next says...

¹⁷ (con’t) and bowed down to them.

The words are in violation of the Ten Commandments – “You shall have no other gods before Me” (Exodus 20:3). Included in that thought, it also said, “you shall not bow down to them nor serve them” (Exodus 20:5). Rather than hearing and obeying...

17 (con’t) They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the LORD;

The word “obeying” is the same word just used in the first clause, meaning to listen and obey. The judge was given as the representative of the Lord. He would instruct the people in the way of their fathers. The law would be presented as it had been in times past. And yet, no sooner had they heard, then they turned away, failing to obey.

17 (con’t) they did not do so.

lo asu ken – “no did thus.” These words set up what follows. In other words, this is a negative clause. The next verses will contain the word *ki*, meaning for or when, which reiterates the sequence of events just presented...

18 And when the LORD raised up judges for them,

Based on the negative clause that ended the last words, in this instance the word *ki* is more appropriately translated as “for” instead of “when.” It reads: *v’ki heqim Yehovah lahem shophetim* – “And for raised Yehovah to them judges.”

The word *qum* means to arise, stand up, stand, etc. However, it carries with it the thought of establishment, as in, “I will establish [*qum*] my covenant with you...” The Lord raises up [*qum*] the judge from the people, and He causes him to stand as his representative. In this capacity...

18 (con’t) the LORD was with the judge

Rather, it says, “and was Yehovah with the judge.” The judge that was established before the Lord had the Lord with him. It wasn’t just that the Lord put the guy in charge and let him run things. Instead, the judge represented the Lord, who is the Leader of the people. In this capacity, it says...

18 (con’t) and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge;

The judge is the instrument by which the Lord accomplished the deliverance. Thus, it is not the judge who was to be credited for the deliverance. If one reads the narrative today, or if one talks about what occurred, this is often what is presented. “Samson delivered Israel from the Philistines.”

Rather, it should read, “The Lord delivered the Philistines by the hand of Samson.” This is the proper way of considering what is presented throughout the book of Judges. He is the One who selects, directs, and empowers the judge to act. This is based on the next words...

^{18 (con’t)} **for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning**

ki yinakhem Yehovah minaaqatam – “For sighs, Yehovah, from their groaning.” The word *nakham* is variously translated here: moved to mercy, repented, moved to pity, took pity, relented, etc. It comes from a primitive root signifying to sigh, as when one breathes heavily.

This word is used to describe the action of the Lord. And yet, elsewhere, it says –

“God *is* not a man, that He should lie,
Nor a son of man, that He should repent [*nakham*].
Has He said, and will He not do?” Numbers 23:19

One could say then that there is a contradiction in Scripture. Regardless of the translation, it says in Numbers that the Lord does not *nakham* and yet it says here in Judges 2 that He does *nakham*. The matter has to be considered by the limitation of language and what gets lost in translation.

Using the word *nakham* while applying it to the Lord is a literary device known as an anthropomorphism. It is taking human attributes and ascribing them to the Lord. God is Spirit, he doesn’t actually sigh, but there needs to be a way to describe what the Lord is doing and why He is doing it. In the Song of Moses, it says –

“For the LORD will judge His people
And have compassion [*nakham*] on His servants,
When He sees that *their* power is gone,
And *there is* no one *remaining*, bond or free.” Deuteronomy 32:36

The Lord had covenanted with Israel. He promised to protect them and to deliver them forever. However, He also promised that they would be judged and punished for their actions. He would not simply let them go about disgracing His name.

Therefore, a word is chosen to describe the action of the Lord that man can relate to, even if it cannot literally be applied to the Lord. If someone is given a giant bolder to break into little rocks, the conversation after a few hours may go like this –

“You are really getting at that old bolder.”

“Yes, he is feeling the pain of the sledgehammer today.”

The rock isn’t feeling anything, but we are ascribing to it a personality and human characteristic that makes the action understandable. Likewise, the Lord is effecting His purposes upon Israel while both keeping them as His people and yet while accomplishing His promised judgments upon them at the same time.

As time and human history is moving forward, the Lord is working through Israel to teach the world a lesson about how He deals with humanity in anticipation of the coming and returning of the Messiah. This lesson is being presented to us through the nation of Israel.

As for the Lord’s response to their groaning, it is...

¹⁸ (con’t) **because of those who oppressed them and harassed them.**

mipne lokhatsehem v’dokhaqehem – “from faces their oppressors and their pushers.” Both words are derived from roots meaning “to press.” The first, *lakhats*, is quite often translated as oppress. The other is a new and rare word, *dakhaq*, found only here and Joel 2 –

“Before them the people writhe in pain;
All faces are drained of color.

⁷ They run like mighty men,
They climb the wall like men of war;
Every one marches in formation,
And they do not break ranks.

⁸ They do not push [*dakhaq*] one another;
Every one marches in his own column.

Though they lunge between the weapons,
They are not cut down.” Joel 2:6-8

The idea is that the enemy pushes into Israel to oppress them, and they push out on Israel, thrusting them away. The Lord allows this to correct them, but He also ends it to preserve them. In this, they are a microcosm of what happened at the flood of Noah.

The Lord allowed the world to be destroyed because of their wickedness. And yet, the Lord saved the world of man through the flood by preserving Noah. Everything that occurs is to uphold His word, first to the world of man as stated in Genesis 3:15, and then to the nation of Israel as seen in Exodus 34:10-28.

Proper fellowship, service, and worship of the Lord is the aim of the redemptive narrative. That is ultimately found in our relationship with Jesus, the promised One. Each step in Scripture is to bring the world to this understanding.

As for Israel and their immediate relationship with the Lord, the narrative continues, saying...

¹⁹ And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted

v'hayah b'moth ha'shophet yashuvu – “And it was in dying the judge they turn back.” What seems implied by this, and which is generally borne out by the rest of the book, is that the appointment of a judge was for his entire life.

The judge was given to lead the people in the way of their fathers. They were to follow his leading. However, this was based on his leadership, not based upon their allegiance to the Lord. As soon as the judge died, the people would turn back from the way he had led...

¹⁹ (con't) and behaved more corruptly than their fathers,

v'hishkhitu m'avotam – “and corrupted from their fathers.” The meaning of “from” is obtained from the context. In this case, it means “more than their fathers.”

In other words, if their fathers were corrupt, they corrupted from (more than) them. Each judge would turn them back to the Lord's way, but then each time the judge died, the people would become increasingly more corrupt than their ancestors...

19 (con't) **by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them.**

la'leketh akhare elohim akherim l'avedam u-l'hishtakhoth lakhem – “to walk after gods other, to serve them, and to bow down to them.” Instead of the serving and bowing down to Yehovah who delivered them and who kept His covenant promises with them, they would be faithfully unfaithful and turn to those gods that never did a thing for them. In this repetitive pattern...

19 (con't) **They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way.**

lo hipilu mimaalehem u-mi'darkam ha'qashah – “No cast from their practices and from their way the hard.” The word *qashah* is translated in various ways, but it generally signifies hard or severe. In this case, one can look back to Exodus 32:9 where it is used in conjunction with the neck –

“And the LORD said to Moses, “I have seen this people, and indeed it *is* a stiff-necked people!” Exodus 32:9

The people who were called stiff-necked by the Lord at the time of Moses remained stubborn at the time of the Judges. In fact, increasingly more so. Therefore, there would be consequences.

The same terminology is used in these verses as was stated in the warning to the leaders of Israel in Joshua 23 –

“When you have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed down to them, then the anger of the LORD will burn against you, and you shall perish quickly from the good land which He has given you.” Joshua 23:16

Those words of Joshua are now beginning to come true...

Who can find the end of God's grace?

Who can say, “It goes this far, but no further does it go!”?

Can you this attribute of God erase?

The answer comes back as a resounding “No!”

What God has done is because of who He is

When He grants salvation, it is a gift – handed out to you

*He will never take it back; He is not in that biz
His word stands firm because He is Faithful and True*

*Praise be to God who does not forget His word
But sends it forth as a testimony of His mercy and grace
To the ends of the earth, His message is heard
And those who come to Jesus, will see a smile upon His face*

II. Through Them I May Test Israel (verses 20-23)

²⁰ Then the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel;

vayikhar aph Yehovah b'yisrael – “And burned nostril Yehovah in Israel.” It is the natural and inevitable consequence of the people’s stubborn rebellion. The Lord fumes at their conduct and determines to take corrective measures because of it...

²⁰ (con’t) and He said, “Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers,

More precisely, it reads as stated in Joshua 23 – “And said, because which crossed over the nation, the this, My covenant which I commanded their fathers.” The nation of Israel is in a covenant relationship with the Lord. Their fathers had agreed to it with their mouths, and the Lord subsequently gave the commandments of the covenant to them.

However, they crossed over that covenant, as if they had removed themselves from it. He had spoken the words of the agreement, expecting compliance, not just from the fathers, but from all subsequent generations. Here, the Lord notes Israel had crossed over...

²⁰ (con’t) and has not heeded My voice,

v’lo shamu l’qoli – “and no listened to my voice.” As before, the word “listen” means to both hear and to obey. They had failed to do so. As such...

²¹ I also will no longer drive out before them any

gam ani lo osiph l’horish ish mipenehem – “Also I, no will add to dispossess man from their faces.” Of this, Keil incredibly says, “The Lord said, ‘Because this people has

transgressed my covenant, ... I also will no longer keep my covenant promise ... and will no more drive out any of the remaining Canaanites before them.”

There is never a time that the Lord will say, “I will no longer keep my covenant promise.” It is impossible for Him to violate His own word. Rather, this is exactly what He said to the people. He is simply fulfilling His covenant promises –

“But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall be that those whom you let remain *shall be* irritants in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall harass you in the land where you dwell. ⁵⁶ Moreover it shall be *that* I will do to you as I thought to do to them.” Numbers 33:55, 56

When the people respond in obedience to the word of the Lord, He keeps His covenant promises to be with them, bless them, prosper them, etc. When they fail to uphold their side of the covenant, He keeps His covenant promises to turn from them, to bring the curses of the covenant upon them, and to bring them to ruin.

It is Israel, not the Lord, who changes in relation to the covenant. To this day, much of the church has not figured this out, just like national Israel. Because of the people’s conduct, the Lord would not drive out even a man from before them...

²¹ (con’t) **of the nations which Joshua left when he died,**

Rather – “from the nations which Joshua left; and he died.” The meaning is derived from what was recorded in Chapter 1. The land was sufficiently subdued by Joshua for the people to receive their inheritance. It was their job to continue to wipe out the inhabitants after assuming their land grants.

However, they failed to do this, thus turning from the Lord. As such, the Lord says that He would no longer dispossess these people...

²² **so that through them I may test Israel, whether they will keep the ways of the LORD, to walk in them as their fathers kept *them*, or not.”**

The words are rather difficult, and so a paraphrase is needed to get what is being conveyed. However, even with paraphrasing the words, further explanation is needed.

First, it doesn’t say, “I may test.” The previous verses contain a quote from the Lord. However, these words probably are not a continuation of that. Instead, this appears to be an explanation from the chronicler as to what the quote means.

Second, a verb is being used as a noun to describe the hoped-for obedience of the people.

Literally, it reads, “To end purpose testing in them Israel, the keepers – they – way Yehovah, to walk in them, according to which listened their fathers, if not.”

By the Lord leaving the inhabitants in the land, Israel is being tested if they will be the keepers of the way (sg.) of the Lord or not. That is then defined as walking in them (pl.), meaning the commandments of the Lord, which are cumulatively seen as the way of the Lord, according to the manner which their fathers had walked.

The words are admittedly a bit confusing, but the intent is not impossible to determine despite a large amount of varying scholarly opinion. Testing Israel through the inhabitants is the stated purpose for the matter.

However, the reason here is in relation to keeping the ways of the Lord. On the other hand, the same word, *nasah*, is used again in Judges 3:1 where, on the surface, the test seems to be for an entirely different purpose. That will be seen in a minute. For now, the test is in relation to obedience. As such, it next says...

²³ Therefore the LORD left those nations,

vayanakh Yehovah eth ha'goyim ha'eleh – “And rested Yehovah the nations the these.” The word translated as “left” is not the same as in verse 2:21. There, it was the word *azav*, to leave, but in the sense of giving up on it. The Bible says a man shall leave his father and mother, uniting to his wife. He forsakes what is past. Joshua’s death meant that he could no longer pursue them.

Here, the word is *yanakh*, to leave alone, lay down, etc. It comes from the same root as *nuakh*, to rest. He is removing His hand from them at the time, not coming after them as before. Instead, they would be laid up within the land, but not necessarily permanently.

It is the same word that will be used in Judges 3:1 –

“Now these *are* the nations which the LORD left [*yanakh*], that He might test Israel by them, *that is*, all who had not known any of the wars in Canaan ² (*this was* only so that the generations of the children of Israel might be taught to know war, at least those who had not formerly known it), ³ *namely*, five lords of the Philistines,

all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites who dwelt in Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal Hermon to the entrance of Hamath.” Judges 3:1-3

These nations have been laid up according to the purpose of the Lord...

²³ (con’t) **without driving them out immediately;**

l’bilti horisham makher – “to except dispossessing them quickly.” The word “quickly” explains the situation for now. Verse 2:21 seems to indicate the Lord would no longer drive out the nations at all. However, that was a reaction to the nation passing over the covenant. In a state of disobedience, they would not be driven out.

However, the words of Chapter 3 show that Israel will be tested and taught to know war through them. As Israel turned to the Lord in faithfulness, it could be expected that the Lord would be with them to learn war and to drive out the inhabitants. It is the driving out of the inhabitants that proves obedience. Therefore, the word “quickly” allows for this. Finally...

²³ (fin) **nor did He deliver them into the hand of Joshua.**

v’lo nathanam b’yad Yehoshua – “and no gave in hand Joshua.” This tells us that withholding the inhabitants at the time of Joshua was purposeful. This goes back to what was explained in Chapter 2.

It was argued that the timing of those events was when Israel made a covenant with the inhabitants of Gibeah. In doing so, they had not obeyed the voice of the Lord. They failed to check with Him prior to making that covenant.

An unfortunate part of going through this narrative is that many translators take the simple prefix meaning “and,” and they translate it as “but,” “therefore,” “so,” “then,” “when,” “nevertheless,” etc. In doing this, they insert their presuppositions into the text. As such, it makes it much harder to determine what is actually going on.

For example, these paragraphs are not necessarily chronological. But by saying, “then,” the reader assumes they are. In saying “so” or “nevertheless,” it makes it seem like one thing is a consequence of the other. This may not be the case at all.

Looking at these verses word by word helps open up what is going on. I could be wrong about the placement of Joshua and the treaty with Gibeon being tied into these verses

in Judges (that we looked at last week), but those things happened at some point during the life of Joshua.

As nothing else in the book of Joshua even hints at the failings of the people, apart from the account of Achan, it is a reasonable, and even likely, conclusion that the assumption is correct. This necessary connection was left out of Joshua to highlight him as a type of Christ.

On the other hand, including that account now is given to highlight the tender mercy of the Lord in relation to the stubborn nature of Israel. We cannot learn the lesson of the law, it being a tutor to lead us to our need for Jesus, unless we understand how the failures of Israel demonstrate this.

We have seen that in the first two chapters of Judges. That will continue in a new way now that we have crossed this bridge, meaning Chapter 2 of Judges. It's exciting to think of what lies ahead in the rest of the book, but that doesn't compare – in the slightest – to what lies ahead for those who have called on Jesus.

He is the Subject of the Bible. He is to be the Object of our affections. He is the Way to be reconciled to God. Jesus is the point and purpose of everything we encounter in this wonderful word. That may not be seen explicitly in passages such as the one today, but it is there, nonetheless. Everything is leading us to a greater understanding of our need for Him.

So be contemplative as you read the word. Consider what it says. Mull over what God is telling you about His Son. And be sure to thank Him often for His patience with you as you, like Israel, fail Him from time to time. Your trusting in, and obedience to, the Lord after your salvation is not unlike Israel's.

The Lord has left us in a land that has been conquered, but in which there are still enemies, spiritual enemies, that will come against us. When we follow the Lord and His word, they are defeated. When we don't, they are not. We are learning war through our testing in this land.

The land of Israel belonged to Israel. Heaven belongs to believers in Christ. But until the consummation of the redemptive plans of God, we remain in our battles, awaiting the culmination of what God has ultimately prepared for us – Israel in the millennium and the church in glory.

Like Israel, the Lord will never leave you. He has covenanted with you through the cross, and He will never fail to uphold His side of that deal. Hold fast to that wonderful news. God in Christ has brought us back to Himself, and that comes with a guarantee. Let us continue in the battle we face until the day that is consummated.

Closing Verse: *"They did not destroy the peoples,
Concerning whom the LORD had commanded them,
³⁵ But they mingled with the Gentiles
And learned their works;
³⁶ They served their idols,
Which became a snare to them." Psalm 106:34-36*

Next Week: Judges 3:1-11 *It's really swell, he got the approval nudge...* (Othniel, Israel's First Judge) (8th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

The Lord Was Moved to Pity

Nevertheless, the LORD raised up judges who delivered them
Out of the hand of those who plundered them in every town
Yet they would not listen to their judges
But they played the harlot with other gods, and to them
-----bowed down

They turned quickly from the way
In which their fathers walked, so we know
In obeying the commandments of the LORD
They did not do so

And when the LORD raised up judges for them
The LORD was with the judge and delivered them
-----in country and city
Out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge
For the LORD was moved to pity

By their groaning because of those who oppressed them

And harassed them in every city, even Jerusalem

And it came to pass, when the judge was dead
That they reverted and more corruptly behaved
Than their fathers, by following other gods
To serve them and bow down to them, for other gods they slaved

They did not cease from their own doings from day to day
Nor from their stubborn way

Then the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel
And He said, "Because this nation has transgressed
My covenant which I commanded their fathers
And has not heeded My voice as I addressed

I also will no longer drive out before them
Any of the nations, so to you I tell
Which Joshua left when he died
So that through them I may test Israel

Whether they will keep the ways of the LORD, giving them a shot
To walk in them as their fathers kept them or not

Therefore the LORD
Left those nations, so we understand
Without driving them out immediately
Nor did He deliver them into Joshua's hand

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 3:1-11 (OTHNIEL, ISRAEL'S FIRST JUDGE)

In 2 Corinthians 3, Paul writes about his trust in God, knowing that our sufficiency comes from Him. In his words, he noted the believers' trust is "through Christ," but he possibly feared that this expression wouldn't be fully understood, so he expanded on it.

He points out that we are not sufficient "of ourselves." If we have trust in the things of God, then they must be from God. One cannot trust in what one does not believe in! This sufficiency from God excludes thinking that it is somehow derived "from ourselves."

In all things related to faith, God must be the Source. Our faith, our hope, our trust, our reason for our works, etc., all stem from God. Nothing that we possess in our faith can logically stem from ourselves.

This does not mean that we don't have free will. Rather, the free will we exercise stems from God as well. He is the Source of all things.

One difference between a mature believer and those who are either weak in their faith or who have almost no faith at all is that they have come to the understanding that all things are from, for, and to God. He is absolutely sovereign, and we are living within the confines of His sovereign works over and through creation.

Text Verse: *"And we have such trust through Christ toward God. ⁵ Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, ⁶ who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."*

-2 Corinthians 3:4-6

With the understanding of God's sovereignty, Paul continues his thought by acknowledging that "our sufficiency is from God." The gospel is from God. The conversion was from God. Growth in Christ was from God. Communication of the gospel to others and their reception of it is from God.

If we as believers can truly accept this, then we stand in a good spot in relation to Him. In the end, there should be no fear of failure, no fear of man, and no worry about the day ahead. God is directing all things according to His wisdom.

We are to engage our feet with this thought in mind. Let us head out each day knowing that the Lord is already aware of all that will transpire, and He is directing our steps according to that plan.

The life you have is a gift from the Lord and is to be used for the Lord. Use it to His glory, and don't fret about the path you are on. He is there with you, and He will be there at the end, waiting for you.

Such great truths as this are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Taught to Know War (verses 1-6)

¹ Now these *are* the nations which the LORD left,

The opening words of the chapter give greater detail than what was stated as Chapter 2 closed out. This is a common way that the Bible deals with a subject, first introducing it and then more fully explaining it: *v'eleh ha'goyim asher hiniakh Yehovah* – “And these the nations which rested Yehovah.” This is how Chapter 2 closed out –

“Then the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and He said, ‘Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers, and has not heeded My voice, ²¹ I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died, ²² so that through them I may test Israel, whether they will keep the ways of the LORD, to walk in them as their fathers kept *them*, or not.’ ²³ Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them out immediately; nor did He deliver them into the hand of Joshua.”

-Judges 2:20-23

The same word used in Chapter 2 is used here, *yanakh*, to leave alone, lay down, etc. It comes from the same root as *nuakh*, to rest. He removed His hand from them at the time, not coming after them as before. Instead, they would be laid up, or rested, within the land, but not necessarily permanently...

¹ (con't) that He might test Israel by them,

l'nasoth bam eth Yisrael – “to test in them Israel.” The reason for this setting aside the destruction of these nations is explicitly said to be for a testing of Israel. Again, it is the same word used as Chapter 2 ended, *nasah*, to test, try, tempt, etc.

This testing is to be for Israel. In Chapter 2, it was said to find out whether they would keep the ways of Yehovah, to walk in them as their fathers kept them or not. Now, that is further explained with the words...

¹ (con't) ***that is, all who had not known any of the wars in Canaan***

eth kal asher lo yadu eth kal mikhamoth k'naan – “all who no knew all wars Canaan.” The testing is tied into the thought of war. The purpose of the wars in Canaan was to eradicate the inhabitants. Therefore, the testing of obedience in keeping the ways of Yehovah includes this warfare.

This can be seen from what occurred in Joshua. First, Joshua was told that the Lord would be with him in battle –

“No man shall *be able to* stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. ⁶ Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. ⁷ Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go.” Joshua 1:5-7

However, when disobedience was found in the nation, this was the result –

“So the LORD said to Joshua: ‘Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face? ¹¹ Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put *it* among their own stuff. ¹² Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, *but* turned *their* backs before their enemies, because they have become doomed to destruction. Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed from among you.’”

-Joshua 7:10-12

Of this, Keil rightly says, “In the wars of Canaan under Joshua, therefore, Israel had experienced and learned, that the power to conquer its foes did not consist in the

multitude and bravery of its own fighting men, but solely in the might of its God, which it could only possess so long as it continued faithful to the Lord.”

This is what the subsequent generations would need to learn. To follow in the ways of the Lord is inclusive of performing in war, being obedient to the Lord’s precepts, and not diverting from them.

² **(this was only so that the generations of the children of Israel might be taught to know war,**

Verse 2 is parenthetical and explanatory. The Hebrew construction is quite complicated, but it bears an emphasis that falls on the first word of each main clause: *raq l’maan daath dorothe bene Yisrael l’lamdam mikhamah* – “Only, to end purpose know generations sons Israel, to teach them war.” The word *raq* signifies a limitation. The only reason for leaving these nations was for the purpose of teaching the subsequent generations of Israel war.

Think of those in the church. It is not uncommon for people to ask why the Lord doesn’t just take home and glorify believers when they come to Christ. Why leave us here to go through all the troubles of life? Because someone must teach the next generation about the Lord.

Judges are in the land, being raised up to lead the people in battle. Likewise, we are being raised up to lead people to the Lord and to disciple them in right doctrine. Israel fought earthly battles, Paul speaks of the spiritual warfare of the church, but the parallels are set to see the similarities between the two.

Remember Paul’s words of the text verse. He said, “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as *being* from ourselves, but our sufficiency *is* from God.” Joshua discovered that when Achan sinned.

The nation discovered that again when the treaty with the Gibeonites was made without first consulting the Lord. The nation needed to learn that they were wholly dependent on Him. Their sufficiency was not of themselves, but from God. And this was not a one-time event. It is something that had to be repeatedly taught...

² (con’t) **at least those who had not formerly known it),**

Rather than “it,” the word is plural, “them.” Again, the word *raq*, only, provides the emphasis: *raq asher l’phanim lo yadum* – “Only, who to faces [meaning before] no had known them.” The plural, them, refers to the wars of Canaan. John Lange rightly states –

“It is not for technical instruction in military science that He leaves the heathen nations in the land, but that Israel may know what it is to wage war, that without God it can do nothing against Canaan, and that, having in the deeds of contemporary heroes a present counterpart of the experience of their fathers, who beheld the mighty works which God wrought for Israel through Moses and Joshua, it may learn humility and submission to the law.”

Said plainly, to learn war does not mean to become proficient at killing the enemy but to acknowledge dependence on God, who alone can provide the victory. As Israel will learn, the consequences for not depending on the Lord (not learning this lesson of war) will be serving other nations. This lesson will be borne out time and again in Judges.

For Israel to learn this, a list of nations is next provided. One can see the flow if the parenthetical words of verse 2 are removed –

“Now these *are* the nations which the LORD left, that He might test Israel by them, *that is*, all who had not known any of the wars in Canaan ...”

³ ***namely, five lords of the Philistines,***

The word translated as lords, *seren*, signifies a lord, but also an axle. Hence, the word may indicate the lord is the central point upon which the city turns. It is always used in relation to the lords of the Philistines, with the exception of it being used once to describe the bronze axels of the carts in Solomon’s Temple.

As for the name Philistine, it comes from *palash*, signifying to roll in the dust as an act of mourning. They are the Grievors. Also...

^{3 (con’t)} **all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites who dwelt in Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal Hermon to the entrance of Hamath.**

The names are in the singular. The whole clause reads: “and all the Canaanite, and the Sidonian, and the Hivite dwelling Mount the Lebanon from Mount Baal Hermon unto to entering Hamath.”

Canaanite means Humbled, Humiliated, or Subdued. Sidon comes from *tsud*, to hunt. Thus, it is Hunting Place. As it is on the coast, it means to hunt fish and thus Fishery. Hivite means Villagers, or maybe more specifically, Tent Villagers.

A mountain (*har*) is a lot of something gathered. It is synonymous with a large but centralized group of people.

Lebanon means White One or even Mountain of Snow. However, it is derived from *lavan*, meaning white. This is identical to *lavan*, or brick, because bricks turn white when fired. That word carries the connotation of works because bricks imply the work of man as opposed to stone which is created by God.

Abarim provides Lord of Designation or Lord of Destruction for Baal Hermon. However, being consistent with the translation of Hermon from elsewhere, it would be Lord of Sacred, meaning that which is set apart, as in Designation.

Hamath means “Defense” or “Citadel.”

⁴ And they were *left*, that He might test Israel by them,

More exactly, the words read, “And were to test, in them, Israel.” It is through the leaving of these people groups that Israel was to be tested. Would they rely on the Lord? Would they be obedient to Him? This is next explicitly stated...

⁴ (con’t) to know whether they would obey the commandments of the LORD, which He had commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.

A verb is used as a noun: “to know the obeying, commandments Yehovah which commanded their fathers in hand Moses.” The testing is through war with these nations. Again, it is not for Israel’s education in military prowess, but for their understanding concerning the effects of war, in victory or in defeat.

If Israel obeys, they will prosper against their enemies. When they don’t, they will suffer the consequences of their disobedience through the wars waged against them. As such...

⁵ Thus the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

Rather, the word Canaanite appears to be used as all-encompassing. That is then subdivided into the individual people groups, all of which are in the singular: “And sons Israel dwelt in midst the Canaanite: the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite.”

Of those not already described, Hittite means Terror, Terrible, or Fearsome; Amorite – Talkers (active) or Renown (passive); Perizzite – Villager or Dweller in an Open Country; Jebusite – Treading Down (active) or Trodden Underfoot (passive).

This is not the same as the listing of people groups in verse 3. Those were bordering peoples whom Israel would engage in war. These listed here are those dwelling in Canaan. Israel dwelt in the midst of them.

The John Lange Commentary notes that this verse introduces the second major part of the book of Judges, noting, “THE History of Israel under the Judges: a history of sin, ever repeating itself, and of Divine Grace, constantly devising new means of deliverance. Meanwhile, however, the imperfections of the judicial institute display themselves, and prepare the way for the Appointment of a King.”

While dwelling in the midst of these people groups, it next says...

⁶ And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons; and they served their gods.

The failings of Israel in relation to the law are highlighted in these words when contrasted to those of Moses. For example –

“When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, ² and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them *and* utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. ³ Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. ⁴ For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly. ⁵ But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their *sacred* pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire.” Deuteronomy 7:1-5

This generation has grown up apart from the leadership of Joshua. They failed to heed the warnings set forth by the Lord and Joshua, and they have departed from following the Lord. Therefore, they will learn through war what it means to not be obedient. The consequences for their failure will be the result.

With verses 5 & 6 concluded as an introduction to this major section, the Pulpit Commentary says –

“CHAPTER 3:7-11 This section introduces us into the actual narrative of the Book of Judges, the prefatory matter being now concluded. The whole book proceeds on the same model as this section does. The apostasy of Israel; their servitude under the oppressor sent to chastise them; their cry of distress and penitence; their deliverance by the judge raised up to save them; the rest which follows their deliverance. There is infinite variety in the details of the successive narratives, but they are all formed on the same plan.”

*Be obedient to what I say
Even if not doing so will turn out for good
It is not right for you to ever disobey
Be sure that this is perfectly understood*

*If My word is violated, and good comes from that
It is because I ordained that it would be this way
But your disobedience only makes you a brat
Even if good comes from it, you have no right to disobey*

*Turn from disobedience, and always do right
Do not use the excuse that, “Things will turn out ok!”
That is wickedness in My sight
There is never a time when it is right to disobey*

II. Othniel the Son of Kenaz (verses 7-11)

In Judges 2:11-16, the repetitive cycle of falling away and then being drawn back to the Lord is introduced. Reading them now and then comparing them to what is said in the next five verses will show this pattern –

“Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals; ¹² and they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them

out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from *among* the gods of the people who *were* all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger. ¹³ They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. ¹⁴ And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. ¹⁵ Wherever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for calamity, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed. ¹⁶ Nevertheless, the LORD raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them.” Judges 2:11-16

“So the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. They forgot the LORD their God, and served the Baals and Asherahs. ⁸ Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and He sold them into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia; and the children of Israel served Cushan-Rishathaim eight years. ⁹ When the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the children of Israel, who delivered them: Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother. ¹⁰ The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the LORD delivered Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed over Cushan-Rishathaim. ¹¹ So the land had rest for forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died.” Judges 3:7-11

⁷ So the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD.

Rather: *vayaasu bene Yisrael eth ha’ra b’ene Yehovah* – “And did sons Israel the evil in eyes Yehovah.” This is the second of eight times the masculine term “the evil” is seen in Judges. Each time, it is accompanied by the words “in eyes of Yehovah.” Thus, the offense is personal in the relationship between the people and the Lord...

⁷ (con’t) They forgot the LORD their God, and served the Baals and Asherahs.

More precisely: “And forgot Yehovah their God and served the Baals and the Asherahs.” The Baals were described in Judges 2. There is the Baal as the main deity, and then there are the Baals of the individual tribes and clans.

Asherahs are based on a nature goddess companion of Baal found in Phoenicia, Assyria, Canaan, etc. They are represented by large wooden pillars or images set up in honor of Ashteroth. Examples can be seen also in Judges 2.

⁸ Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel,

It is the common phrase indicating the extreme displeasure of the Lord: *vayikhar aph Yehovah b'Yisrael* – “And burned nostril Yehovah in Israel.” It is as if the Lord is standing in the midst of the people with His nostril fuming, smoke pouring out of His nose.

^{8 (con't)} and He sold them into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia;

vayimkerem b'yad kushanrishathyim melekh aram naharayim – “And sold them in hand Cushan-Rishathaim, king Aram Naharayim.” The name and location are a mouthful. This is the only account where this person is mentioned in Scripture.

As for the meanings, Cushan comes from Cush, the area of Ethiopia. Abarim says that the meaning of Cush is “irretrievably obscure.” The only real clue to its meaning is found in Jeremiah 13:23 –

“Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots?
Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil.” Jeremiah 13:23

The skin of the Ethiopian is black, and so most translate Cush as Black. One could argue that is illogical unless the leopard means spots.” But this is just what the word, *namer*, or leopard, means. It comes from an unused root meaning to filtrate and thus to spot or stain as if by dripping.

The second half of the name, Rishathaim, comes from *rishah*, wickedness. Being a plural, it would mean Double Wickedness or Extra Wicked. Taken together, the name would most likely mean Black-Double Wickedness.

Aram means Elevated, High, or Citadel. Naharaim comes from *nahar*, to flow or stream, and speaks of both water and light that flows. But this is used metaphorically for peoples and nations, such as in Isaiah 2, where it says the nations will stream to Jerusalem.

Thus it means Two Steams. The whole name would then mean Elevation (Citadel) of Two Streams, be they of water, light, or something else.

^{8 (con't)} and the children of Israel served Cushan-Rishathaim eight years.

Bullinger states that as a numeral, eight is the superabundant number. As it is seven plus one, “it is the number specially associated with Resurrection and Regeneration, and the beginning of a new era or order.” As for Israel’s time of service to this guy...

⁹When the children of Israel cried out to the LORD,

vayizaqu bene Yisrael el Yehovah – “And cried sons Israel unto Yehovah.” This is what happened when they were in Egypt –

“Now it happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage.” Exodus 2:23

They were in bondage, they cried to the God, He heard and responded. Under Cushan-Rishathaim’s oppression, they again cry out to the Lord. And He again responds...

^{9 (con’t)} the LORD raised up a deliverer for the children of Israel, who delivered them:

More precisely: “And raised up Yehovah savior to sons Israel and saves them.” In turning back to the Lord and crying out to Him, He returned to them and brought about their deliverance. It is what verse 2:16 said would take place. As for their savior, it is...

^{9 (con’t)} Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother.

eth athniel ben qenaz akhi kalev ha’qatan mimenu – “Othniel son Kenaz brother Caleb the younger from him.” Othniel, or Force of God, was seen in Joshua 15 and Judges 1. He is noted as the son of Kenaz, or Hunter. That was explained in Joshua 14 as a name based on a profession, similar to many of our own names. Hence it is someone who seeks a form of wisdom like any such profession would.

He is noted as the younger brother of Caleb, or Dog. Thus, he is a Gentile by genealogy. Of him, it next says...

¹⁰The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel.

vathi alav ruakh Yehovah vayishpoth et Yisrael – “And became upon him Spirit Yehovah, and judged Israel.” It is a phrase that will be used in Judges, Samuel, and Kings. This is a special marking upon the individual as a divinely appointed Judge to relieve the people in their time of need. Of him, it says...

¹⁰ (con't) **He went out to war, and the LORD delivered Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed over Cushan-Rishathaim.**

Rather, it is more precise: “And went out to the war, and gave Yehovah in his hand Cushan-Rishathaim, king of Aram. And prevailed his hand over Cushan-Rishathaim.”

Rather than being delivered, it says the Lord gave him into Othniel’s hand. The king of Aram was a present being handed over to Othniel. With that, the record of this foe is ended. Because of this event, the next words are stated...

¹¹ **So the land had rest for forty years.**

This refers to the time after Othniel’s victory, regardless as to the length of his life. During these years, the land sat quietly and without any further harm from their enemies.

Forty is defined by Bullinger as “a period of probation, trial, and chastisement—(not judgment, like the number 9, which stands in connection with the punishment of enemies, but the chastisement of sons, and of a covenant people).”

And more, because “it relates to enlarged dominion, or to renewed or extended rule, then it does so in virtue of its factors 4 and 10.”

Four, “is the number of things that have a beginning, of things that are made, of material things, and matter itself. It is the number of material completeness. Hence it is the world number, and especially the ‘city’ number.”

Ten signifies “Completeness of order, marking the entire round of anything, is, therefore, the ever-present signification of the number ten. It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete.”

Whether at the end of this time of peace or at some point prior to it, the words next say...

¹¹ (fin) **Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died.**

Rather than “then,” the text says: “And died Othniel son Kenaz.” Placing this statement at the end of the account would suggest that he died after the forty years. However, the

words may simply refer to the ending of his life without any connection to the forty years of peace. Of this and the rest of Judges, Ellicott says –

“Many questions have been raised, such as—Do the forty years *include* or *exclude* the period of servitude? Is forty meant to be an exact or a general number? Are the various periods of rest and servitude continuous and successive, or do they refer to different parts of the Holy Land, and do they synchronise? Perhaps no final answer to these questions is as yet possible, and no less than fifty schemes of the chronology of the period of the judges have been attempted, which fact alone proves how insufficient are the data on which to decide.” Charles Ellicott

I would disagree with the last thought. The data are not insufficient. Rather, it is our inability to rightly interpret the data that is problematic. Ellicott died in 1905. Since then, many more opinions have arisen, and there is no agreement on most of these points. As for what we are being shown in the first judge, that will be explained next...

*A plan is being worked out by God
In the stream of time it unfolds
With each breath we take or step we trod
The watchful eye beholds*

*There is trouble along the way
But the Lord remains faithful and true
And with each passing day
The mercies of the Lord renew*

*Oh Israel, hope in the Lord your God
And know that He has not forgotten you
Someday the Gentiles shall applaud
When to you the message of Jesus finally comes through*

III. Explaining Othniel

Othniel is the first judge of Israel. He is the brother of Caleb and son of Kenaz who has pictured the Gentiles in Joshua and Judges 1. The symbolism remains the same here.

Israel is in a time of apostasy, having done evil in the eyes of Yehovah (verse 7). It says they 1) forgot Him, and 2) served the Baals and Asherahs (verse 8). That is two evils –

“Has a nation changed *its* gods,
Which *are* not gods?
But My people have changed their Glory
For *what* does not profit.

¹² Be astonished, O heavens, at this,
And be horribly afraid;
Be very desolate,’ says the LORD.

¹³ ‘For My people have committed two evils:
They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters,
And hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water.’”

-Jeremiah 2:11-13

In response, the nostril of the Lord burned in Israel (verse 8). It is the continued rejection of the Lord at His coming. In rejecting Jesus, they have rejected the Lord. Thus, (verse 8) He sold (*makar*) them into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia.

As was seen in Judges 2:14, Israel sold, *makar*, themselves to their enemies (Isaiah 52:3). The Lord allowed it to happen because of their actions. Thus, it can be said that the Lord sold them. The names then tell what is happening. They are sold into the hand of Black-Double Wickedness king of Elevated Two Streams. During this period, they serve him.

In Amos 9, the Lord equates Israel to the people of Cush, or Ethiopia –

“Are you not like the people of Ethiopia [*kushi*] to Me,
O children of Israel?” says the LORD.
“Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt,
The Philistines from Caphtor,
And the Syrians from Kir?” Amos 9:7

This provides the needed meaning. Israel, equated to the Ethiopians, is in a state of double wickedness. The elevated two streams refer to the House of Israel and the House of Judah (Jeremiah 31:31). Even if they are out of God’s favor at this time, they remain elevated in His redemptive plans. For now, this is the state that they have sold themselves into.

However, the period is only for eight years. It is not a permanent thing. Eight is the superabundant number and is associated with Resurrection and Regeneration. In other

words, they will come to accept the resurrected Jesus and be regenerated someday when they cry out to Him (verse 9).

The verse continues with, “And raised up Yehovah savior to sons Israel and saves them.” It speaks of the coming and work of Jesus, including the resurrection, that they will accept at that time. But that is not something that will come out of the blue. There has to be a means by which they will learn this.

Thus, Othniel (Force of God), son of Kenaz (Hunter), Caleb’s (Dog’s) younger brother, is introduced. The Gentile has carried the word of God since Israel rejected Jesus. As explained in both Joshua and Judges 1, Othniel is as a hunter of men in the sense that he is seeking wisdom not only for himself but for others as well.

Therefore, he typifies those who expend themselves in the pursuit of the knowledge of God and in conveying that to others. It is through the Gentiles that the revelation of God in Christ is transmitted back to the Jews. Hence, it says of him in verse 10 that, “The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel.”

The same terminology was said about Jesus in Isaiah 61:1 and then cited by Him in Luke 4:18. The Spirit of God came upon Jesus. That then transfers to those who believe in Him. During this dispensation, it is a Gentile-led church.

Verse 10 continues, saying that Othniel went out to war (2 Corinthians 10:4, etc.) and delivered Black-Double Wickedness, king of Elevated, into his hand, and his hand prevailed over Black-Double Wickedness. The message of believing Gentiles is that the Messiah, Jesus, will prevail over Israel and the House of Judah.

Romans 10:19 and 11:11 both note that Israel will be provoked to jealousy by the Gentiles. It is true that the Gentiles carry a message first penned by a Jew, but that message was inspired by God. Therefore, it is not an issue to say that it is the message from the Gentiles whose message is what will prevail over the Jews someday. Othniel is being used in typology to reveal this.

From there, the number forty was given to indicate the rest that Israel received. As it is related to enlarged dominion or renewed or extended rule, the factors 4 and 10 indicate that the world (4) at that time will be in a state where “nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete” (Bullinger). That is seen in the words of Isaiah concerning the millennium –

“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,
For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD
As the waters cover the sea.” Isaiah 11:9

These few verses are literally crammed with theology if thought through point by point to their logical end: the law cannot save, Jesus is God, the church has not replaced Israel, Israel will come to accept Jesus. On and on, point after point, the message of the word is validated in typology so that we can know when our thoughts are right or wrong.

Paul spoke of our sufficiency being from God in the opening thoughts today. Israel had to learn through war that their trust and sufficiency was to be from God. It is a lesson they have not yet learned. But they will learn it during the greatest war of all time, a war that tragically lies ahead for them and, indeed, for the entire world.

This short story from the book of Judges is given to show us this in advance. Other lessons are yet ahead as we travel through its pages. Let us remember as we read the word that it is all about Jesus. Everything is focused on Him or what He is doing in the world for and through His people. Jesus: praise God for Jesus Christ our Lord.

Closing Verse: *“I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. ¹² Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!” Romans 11:11, 12*

Next Week: Judges 3:12-23 *The story is good, yes a good one to tell, because it is so fun...* (Ehud, Judge of Israel, Part I) (9th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Othniel, Israel's First Judge

Now these are the nations which the LORD left
That He might test Israel by them
That is, all who had not known
Any of the wars in Canaan

(This was only so that the generations
Of the children of Israel – a point to not omit
Might be taught to know war
At least those who had not formerly known it)

Namely, five lords of the Philistines
All the Canaanites, the Sidonians (and there were a lot)
And the Hivites who dwelt in Mount Lebanon
From Mount Baal Hermon to the entrance of Hamath

And they were left, that He might test Israel by them
To know whether they would obey (and be smelling like roses)
The commandments of the LORD
Which He had commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses

Thus the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites
-----yes, those “ites”
The Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites
-----and the Jebusites

And they took their daughters to be their wives
-----giving approval nods.
And gave their daughters to their sons; and they served their gods

So the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD
They forgot the LORD their God
And served the Baals and Asherahs
Giving false gods an approval nod

Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel
And He sold them into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim
------(there were many tears)
King of Mesopotamia
And the children of Israel served Cushan-Rishathaim eight years

When the children of Israel cried out to the LORD
The LORD raised up a deliverer for the children of Israel
Who delivered them: Othniel the son of Kenaz
Caleb’s younger brother. They had relief for a spell

The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel
He went out to war, and the LORD delivered Cushan-Rishathaim
-----that bad dude
King of Mesopotamia into his hand
And his hand prevailed over Cushan-Rishathaim
-----Yes, he was subdued

So the land had rest for forty years, a good long ride
Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died
Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 3:12-23 (EHUD, JUDGE OF ISRAEL, PART I)

The day before I typed this sermon, there was a spat between a Republican congressman and a former Trump campaign staff person, Lizzie Marbach. She tweeted, “There’s no hope for any of us outside of having faith in Jesus Christ alone.”

This is what the Bible proclaims. Jesus Himself stated it precisely in today’s text verse. A Jewish congressman, Max Miller responded, “God says that Jewish people are the chosen ones, but yet you say we have no hope. Thanks for your pearl of wisdom today.”

Feeling the need to respond, I tweeted, “Congressman @MaxMillerOH, not being flippant or argumentative, but out of the hope that you will want to know more about Jesus (Yeshua), I would ask you to consider your words and reflect, ‘Chosen for what?’ The point and purpose of Scripture and Israel is to reveal the Messiah.”

Lizzie Marbach is right. The only hope for any is faith in Jesus Christ alone. Scripture makes this 100% clear. Congressman Miller is also right. The Jews are the chosen people, but for a purpose beyond themselves. Scripture is not about the Jewish people, even if they play a prominent role in it.

Jesus. He is the Subject of Scripture and without Him, the hope of returning to the presence of God will not be realized...

Text Verse: *“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’” John 14:6*

As for the contents of the passage today, they read like a super spy thriller. Something I didn’t know about history, but which Charles Ellicott enlightened me to, is that this is not the only such incident in history. Maybe having read this very passage, someone else followed a similar plan of attack –

“The assassination is *exactly* similar to that of Henry III. of France, by the Dominican monk, Jacques Clement, who had provided himself with a commission from a friend of the king: ‘On Tuesday, Aug. 1, at 8 a.m.,’ says L’Estoile, ‘he was told that a monk desired to speak with him. The king ordered him to be admitted. The monk entered, having *in his sleeve a knife, unsheathed*. He made a profound reverence to the king, who had just got up, and had nothing but a dressing-gown on, and presented him despatches from

the Comte de Brienne, saying that he *had further orders to tell the king privately something of importance*. Then the king ordered those who were present to retire, and began reading the letter. The monk, seeing his attention engaged, *drew his knife from his sleeve, and drove it right into the king's small gut, below the navel, so home that he left the knife in the hole.*'—Guizot, 'Hist. of France,' iii. 479." Charles Ellicott

An interesting passage about a king getting whacked in his own cool chamber is to be found in God's superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Corpulent King (verses 12-18)

¹² And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD.

Rather than “again,” it says: *v'yosiphu bene Yisrael la'asoth ha'ra b'ene Yehovah* – “And added sons Israel to do the evil in eyes Yehovah.” It's not just that they again did evil, but they added to the evil that had been done. It is as if a divine counter is weighing out the evil each time it is added.

This is actually the case, though the effect of it won't be realized for hundreds of years. This is what it says in Leviticus –

“I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be desolate and your cities waste.

³⁴ Then the land shall enjoy its sabbaths as long as it lies desolate and you *are* in your enemies' land; then the land shall rest and enjoy its sabbaths.

³⁵ As long as *it* lies desolate it shall rest—for the time it did not rest on your sabbaths when you dwelt in it.” Leviticus 26:33-35

At the time of Jeremiah, the first exile took place, lasting seventy years. The adding of “the evil” is something that requires correction. Eventually, exile from the land is necessary to allow the land to be free from the wickedness of Israel.

Using the article before “evil” shows the severity of the offense against the Lord. They flagrantly do their wicked deeds right before His eyes, making it a personal attack against Him. Therefore...

¹² (con't) So the LORD strengthened Eglon king of Moab against Israel,

Better: *v'khazeq Yehovah eth Eglon melekh moav al Yisrael* – “And strengthened Eglon king Moab upon Israel.” Using the word *al*, upon, gives the sense of downward motion. The action is against Israel, as if Eglon is sitting upon them, squishing them oppressively.

Eglon is spelled the same as the city named Eglon in Joshua 10. It means Heifer-like, coming from *egel*, calf. But that comes from *agol* – round or circular because of how a calf dances around in a circle.

Moab means From Father. It is the name given to the son born to the union of Lot with his firstborn daughter –

“The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab; he *is* the father of the Moabites to this day.” Genesis 19:37

This king of Moab has been strengthened by the Lord to come down upon Israel...

¹² (con't) **because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD.**

al ki asu eth ha'ra b'ene Yehovah – “upon for did the evil in eyes Yehovah.” The clause uses *al*, upon, again. It also uses the same term, the evil, as the first clause. Eglon was brought upon Israel because they had brought upon evil in the Lord's eyes.

The Lord's actions are shown to be exactly in response to Israel's actions. There is nothing arbitrary, vindictive, or unfair in Him strengthening Eglon. It is because Israel is the Lord's people that He has taken this action.

Eglon is not strengthened because he is the leader of the Lord's people, but because he is the enemy of them and, thus, the correcting force to be used against them. In order for this to come about, it next says...

¹³ **Then he gathered to himself the people of Ammon and Amalek,**

vayeesoph elav eth bene amon va'amaleq – “And gathered unto him sons Ammon and Amalek. While Israel was adding “the evil” to their account, Eglon was gathering together his military strength.

Ammon means something like A People. They are close relations to the Moabites. They descend from the union between Lot and his younger daughter –

“And the younger, she also bore a son and called his name Ben-Ammi; he *is* the father of the people of Ammon to this day.” Genesis 19:38

Ben Ammi means Son of My People. This is shortened to Ammon, A People. Ammon lived in the area north of Moab east of the Jordan.

Amalek is derived from the word *am*, or people, and *malaq*, which means to nip or wring off the head of a bird with or without severing it from the body. Thus, they are The People Who Wring Off. They are those who are disconnected from the body and strive to disconnect the body.

Amalek consisted of clans descending from Edom that were spread throughout the area. They were the first to attack Israel after the Exodus. and the Lord swore war against them—

“Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Write this *for* a memorial in the book and recount *it* in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.’ ¹⁵ And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-LORD-Is-My-Banner; ¹⁶ for he said, ‘Because the LORD has sworn: the LORD *will have* war with Amalek from generation to generation.’” Exodus 17:14-16

Because these groups are descended from Lot and Esau (Edom), they are all considered close relatives to Israel, and yet, they are in a state of enmity with them. Together, these tribes...

¹³ (con’t) **went and defeated Israel, and took possession of the City of Palms.**

vayelek vayak eth Yisrael vayirshu eth ir ha’temarim – “and went and struck Israel and possessed City the Palms.” The *tamar*, or palm, is used in Scripture to signify uprightness. Thus, it is the City of Upright Ones.

According to Deuteronomy 34:3, *ir ha’temarim*, or City the Palms, is Jericho. However, Jericho was destroyed in Joshua 6 and will not be rebuilt until 1 Kings 16. Therefore, this is either referring to the extended area of Jericho or to another city with palms. The former seems likely. The area of Jericho is a large plain.

¹⁴ **So the children of Israel served Eglon king of Moab eighteen years.**

Eighteen is either 2x9 or 3x6. 2x9 indicates division matched with finality or judgment. 3x6 indicates divine perfection matched with the number of man destitute of God. Both fit the situation. Israel has the choice of serving the Lord or Eglon. In this case, they serve Eglon until the finality of their judgment.

Likewise, this is the Lord's divinely set period for Israel while they are destitute of the Lord's favor. Israel is being instructed on what it means to serve the Lord or to serve their enemies.

¹⁵ But when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD,

These are the same words as Judges 3:9 when referring to Othniel: *vayizaqu bene Yisrael el Yehovah* – “And cried out sons Israel unto Yehovah.” Eventually, the oppression of Eglon became too much for them. They remembered the Lord in their oppression, and they cried out to Him for relief. Therefore...

¹⁵ (con't) the LORD raised up a deliverer for them:

vayaqem Yehovah la'hem moshia – “and raised Yehovah to them savior.” The words are close to what was said in verse 3:9. In their crying out to Him, the Lord sends a savior. This time, it is...

¹⁵ (con't) Ehud the son of Gera, the Benjamite, a left-handed man.

The words are a paraphrase. More precisely: *eth ehud ben gera benhay'mini ish iter yad yemino* – “Ehud son Gera, son the right, man shut hand right.” There is a lot going on in these few words.

First, Ehud is spelled two ways in Scripture: Ehud and Ekhud. The Ehud in Judges is the former. His name is derived from *yadah*, to throw or cast. However, that then signifies Praise because one throws out the *yad*, the hand, when praising God.

For example, this is its first use in Scripture when referring to the birth of Judah to Leah–

“And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, ‘Now I will praise [*yadah*] the LORD.’ Therefore she called his name Judah [Yehudah – Praise]. Then she stopped bearing.” Genesis 39:35

Therefore, the name Ehud means something like I Shall Praise or One Who Praises. However, Strong's connects it to the name Ohad, which comes from a root meaning Unity or United.

Next, Gera may come from *gerah*, a grain, as in 1/20th of a shekel, like a grain of silver. That comes from *garar*, to drag. Imagine dragging something across a plate of silver and thus forming a grain. It is the same root as the location named Gerar. Hence, the name is variously translated as Grain, Dragging, or Sojourning.

Further, he is then noted as *benhay'mini* or Son the Right, meaning Son of the Right Hand. It is a way of saying Benjamite that will be seen nine times in Scripture, but only four of those times will it include the article – the Right.

Lastly, the words use a phrase found only here and in Judges 20:16, "man shut hand right." Thus, this either means he is 1) defective in his right hand, 2) lefthanded (this being an idiomatic expression), or 3) that he is ambidextrous.

It is probably an idiom, but he may be ambidextrous as seen in Judges 20:16 –

"Among all this people *were* seven hundred select men *who were* left-handed; every one could sling a stone at a hair's *breadth* and not miss."

It is unlikely that seven hundred men of Benjamin had defective right hands. Therefore, it may be an ironic trait common in Benjamin, Son of the Right Hand, to have lefthanded or ambidextrous offspring. Or it may be that they purposefully worked to improve their left hands as a play on their name – "Hey there is Lefty, the Son of the Right Hand."

¹⁵ (con't) **By him the children of Israel sent tribute to Eglon king of Moab.**

vayishlekhu bene Yisrael b'yado minkhah l'eglon melek moav – "and sent sons Israel in his hand offering to Eglon, king Moab." This may be a present in the usual sense or a gift of tribute levied upon them. The latter seems likely.

The word *minkhah* is euphemistically used to indicate tribute elsewhere, such as –

"Judah and Israel *were* as numerous as the sand by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and rejoicing. ²¹ So Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. *They* brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life." 1 Kings 4:20, 21

One can see that Ehud is the one who has been selected to pay the sum to Eglon for Israel.

¹⁶ Now Ehud made himself a dagger

vayaas lo ehud kherev – “And made to him, Ehud, sword.” This is the key to the passage. Ehud has taken it upon himself to make the implement of the enemy’s doom. It is a brilliant strategy because of his ability to use his left hand. Of this *kherev*, or sword, it next says...

¹⁶ (con’t) (it was double-edged and a cubit in length)

v’lah shene peyoth gomed arekah – “and to her two mouths, *gomed* her length.” It is referring to the sword. It is double-edged, using the idiom of a mouth to describe it because the sword is a consuming instrument.

The word *gomed* is found only here in Scripture. Strong’s describes it saying, “From an unused root apparently meaning to grasp; properly, a span -- cubit.” The Greek translation identifies it as a span. Thus, it would be a short knife similar to a stiletto. It would be straight and without any curves.

One can deduce from the passage that not only does it have two edges, but – despite the translation in the verses ahead – it also has no hilt. It is a surgical weapon specifically designed by Ehud for a particular purpose. His actions are premeditated and carefully planned.

As for the length, some Jewish interpreters say it is a short cubit. Instead of being from the elbow to the fingertips, it would be from the elbow to the knuckles. If so, it would be about 13 inches. This might properly explain the root meaning “to grasp.” Ending at the point of the knuckles would mean it ends at the spot where grasping takes place.

The only word associated with it in Scripture is another word found only once, *gamadim*, used in Ezekiel 27:11 –

“Men of Arvad with your army *were* on your walls *all* around,
And the men of Gammad [*gamadim*] were in your towers;
They hung their shields on your walls *all* around;
They made your beauty perfect.”

If the meaning of the root is correct, they are those who grasp short swords and thus are men of valor who fought in very close battle.

¹⁶ (con't) **and fastened it under his clothes on his right thigh.**

vayakhgor otah mitakhat l'madav al yerek y'mino – “and girded her from under to his garment upon thigh his right.” The reason for the intricacy of the description is to reveal how he is able to bring such a sword into the presence of the king.

It is normally assumed that a person is right-handed. If Ehud was ambidextrous, he could conceal this by openly greeting others with his right hand, presenting the tribute with it, etc. Thus, it would be completely unexpected to have a sword hidden on his right thigh.

The word translated as garment, *mad*, signifies a measure or height. By implication, it is used to define a garment that fits the height of a person.

The *yarek*, or thigh, comes from a root meaning to be soft. Thus, it speaks of the thigh, loins, side, etc. It is the same word used to indicate the center shaft of the menorah of the tabernacle. With all of this intricate detail provided, it next says...

¹⁷ **So he brought the tribute to Eglon king of Moab.**

Vayaqrev eth ha'minkhah l'eglon melekh moav – “And brought near the offering to Eglon king Moab.” It doesn't just say he brought it, but that Ehud brought the *minkhah*, his offering, near to Eglon.

There is no way of knowing if this was a regular thing, or if this is his first time doing so. Either way, he was allowed to approach the king personally and present the offering. As such, it seems there is a sense of the king knowing Ehud well enough to allow this, or that the king was trusting enough to allow him to approach.

As for the word *qarav*, or come near, it is used dozens of times in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers to indicate presenting a sacrifice or offering to the Lord. Ehud is coming near in the manner of an offering to the one in a greater position.

In this case, Ehud was aware of exactly what was necessary to accomplish his goal. It is a process that already included knowing the following about Eglon...

17 (con't) **(Now Eglon *was* a very fat man.)**

v'eglon ish bari meod – “And Eglon man fat, very.” Using the word *asteios*, the Greek says that he was polished, urbane, handsome, fair, friendly, courteous, elegant, etc. This does not fit with the Hebrew. Rather, John Lange notes –

“In Egypt, where the translators lived, it was probably still a matter of present experience, that presentations of tribute and gifts to the rulers did not always meet with a gracious reception.” John Lange

That would help explain the unusual rendering of the word in the Greek. The Hebrew word *bari* clearly indicates fat, plump, plentiful, etc. Using this word, accompanied by the word *meod*, muchness, it signifies that he was exceedingly plump.

The Hebrew reading is what is being conveyed, as we will see in his impending doom. As for the offering by Ehud...

18 And when he had finished presenting the tribute, he sent away the people who had carried the tribute.

The words are dependent on the next verse to be fully understood. For now, it says, “And it was, according to which finished to bring near the offering, and sent the people bearing the offering.” The offering has been made, and the entire company has left the presence of Eglon. Of this presentation, Ellicott says –

“The tribute-bearers, headed by Ehud, would carry their offerings in long and pompous array, according to the fashion of the East, which always aims at making a present seem as large as possible (see Genesis 32:16). ‘Fifty persons often bear what one man could easily carry’ (Chardin, iii. 217).”

With the offering made, the company is on its way back, and Ehud resolves to take his predetermined action. It is a brilliant plan.

They have been in the presence of the king, be it three or fifty-three people. There was no hint of any threat to the king, something that would have surely taken place only when a multitude was present. Or so one would think...

*Killed with Ehud's double-edged sword
An ignoble way for life to end*

*But he was an enemy of the people of the Lord
And so, a jabbing thrust Ehud did send
Victory over the oppressing foe!
Down he went never to rise
Off to the pit the enemy did go
And Ehud will receive the victory prize*

*The story is giving us hints of glory ahead
Tidbits of detail leading us to know
That the enemy will someday be dead
Victory for the redeemed. A heavenly show*

II. Down Goes Eglon (verses 19-23)

¹⁹ But he himself turned back

There is an emphasis in the words, translated by “he himself” to get the point across: *v’hu shav* – “And HE... turned back.” It specifically notes his turning back after having sent those who were with him.

This would take suspicion off of his mission. If he were to attack, one would assume it would be when others were with him to help. Thus, the guard of the king, and among his attendants, would be down. It would also keep the others from being included in his act, hopefully sparing them if he failed. And so, he alone turned back...

¹⁹ (con’t) from the stone images that were at Gilgal,

min ha’peselim asher eth ha’gilgal – “from the carved images which by the Gilgal.” Some translations here say, “stone quarries.” That is a later suggestion from the Aramaic translation and Rabbi Jarchi, probably to avoid any idea of there being idolatry in the land. That’s rather inane, considering that Israel got itself into this pickle because of idolatry.

It is unknown if this is the same Gilgal that was the first place of encampment after crossing the Jordan or some other place. Gilgal simply signifies a circle, generally of stones. There are many such circles still in Israel today. As has been seen numerous times in Joshua, the name metaphorically and typologically means Liberty.

As for why there are stone images there, it could be that Moab placed them there as a defiant act against Israel's God. As the Moabites rule Israel, they would be showing their greatness over Him by placing their own images in this location. For this, or for some other reason, they are specifically mentioned.

But it may also be a pretext for why Ehud is returning to Eglon. That would be a possibility based on the next words...

19 (con't) and said, "I have a secret message for you, O king."

vayomer d'var seter li elekha ha'melekh – "and said, "Word secret to me unto you, the king." Having returned from the carved images, he could be indicating that he received his secret message while there among them. That seems even more likely based on what he will say in the next verse.

Being a secret message, the king knows enough to not trust those around him to keep their mouths shut. Thus...

19 (con't) He said, "Keep silence!" And all who attended him went out from him.

vayomer has va'yetsu me'alav kal ha'omedim alav – "And said, 'Hush!' And went out from him upon him the standers upon him." If the message is secret, it would be as smart as conveying it in front of Adam Schiff to allow it to be heard by the king's attendants. As a secret, it was matter that should be kept secret.

Ehud had come in publicly and presumably unarmed. Therefore, Eglon quieted Ehud and sent out the attendants first...

20 So Ehud came to him

v'ehud ba elav – "And Ehud came unto him." The previous words were spoken either at a distance or in a loud voice. Now that the attention of the king is upon the message, and to ensure nobody outside could hear, Ehud is allowed to approach him. With that understood, a parenthetical explanation of the layout is next provided...

20 (con't) (now he was sitting upstairs in his cool private chamber).

To set the king apart from the surroundings, it emphatically states, *v'hu yoshev ba'aliyath hamqerah* – "And HE, sitting in loft, the coolness."

Two new words are used here. The first is *aliyah*. This is the feminine form of *alah*, or “to ascend.” Thus, it is an upper room, a loft, etc. The other word, *meqerah*, is found only here and in verse 24. It is a noun signifying coolness. John Lange, citing Thomas Shaw, says –

“Down to the present day many oriental houses have a smaller one annexed to them, which sometimes rises one story higher than the main building. In Arabic as in Hebrew this is called alijah, and serves for purposes of entire seclusion or rest. ‘There is a door of communication from it into the gallery of the house, besides another which opens immediately, from a privy stairs, down into the porch or street, without giving the least disturbance to the house.’”

Once he had approached Eglon, Ehud needs the king to arise in order to get about the business at hand...

²⁰ (con’t) **Then Ehud said, “I have a message from God for you.”**

vayomer ehud d’var elohim li elekha – “And said Ehud, ‘Word God [or, more likely, gods] to me unto you.’” The reason I inserted “gods” as a possibility is because he has just returned from the carved images. It may be that by using “gods,” it would excite Eglon about a message from the gods of that area. This seems to be the reason for mentioning them in the first place.

The same word, *elohim*, refers to the true God and also to false gods. Therefore, the understanding of the word by Eglon is what drives the interpretation.

Ehud could be thinking of one thing while Eglon another. That isn’t the important aspect of the matter. To Eglon, what is important is that it is a divine message. Therefore, in accord with the plans of Ehud...

²⁰ (con’t) **So he arose from *his* seat.**

vayaqum me’al ha’kise – “And arose from upon his throne.” Eglon, being a portly person, retained his respect for a divinely sent message. He may sit around all day without arising, but at the thought of being entertained with a word from the other side, he respectfully arose from his throne, exactly as Ehud anticipated...

²¹ **Then Ehud reached with his left hand,**

vayishlakh ehud eth yad s'molo – “And sent, Ehud, hand his left.” The word left, *s'mol*, may be derived from the word *simlah*, a wrapper or mantle. Thus, it would give the idea of being wrapped up and thus dark, as if it is enveloped.

The left in the Bible corresponds with the north, which also gives the sense of dark or hidden because in the northern hemisphere, the north receives less light in the winter. Therefore, the hidden hand is reaching for the hidden sword.

Without uttering a word, thus making this action the “word” (meaning the message) from *elohim*, he immediately reached down with his left hand. It would have been so unexpected, that Eglon probably wouldn't have even reacted at this point. The with the skill of a Sicarii, it next says he...

²¹ (con't) **took the dagger from his right thigh,**

vayiqah eth ha'kherev me'al yerek y'mino – “And took the sword from upon thigh his right.” His actions would have taken a second or less with someone practiced at the move. With that, the final part of the maneuver would still add almost no time at all. He reached down, grabbed the sword by the haft, pulled it out of its sheath...

²¹ (con't) **and thrust it into his belly.**

vayithqaeha b'bitno – “And thrust her in his belly.” The word *taqa* signifies a thrust, blow, clap, etc. At times, it signifies to blow a trumpet, as in blasting out the sound. Ehud didn't just stab him, but forcefully thrust the sword into him.

The *beten*, here translated as belly, often signifies the womb. It is from an unused root probably meaning to be hollow. Ehud targeted the midsection of Eglon with his sword and really drove the lady home, so much so that...

²² **Even the hilt went in after the blade,**

vayavo gam ha'nitsav – “And went in also the haft.” It is a word found only here in Scripture, *nitsav*. It signifies “fixed.” It could not have had a hilt unless it was a really dinky one. The purpose of a hilt is to protect the wielder from cuts and to keep a sword from doing just what this one did. He didn't need to be protected from cuts and this thing went all the way in...

²² (con't) **and the fat closed over the blade,**

vayisgor ha'khelev bead ha'lahav – “And close the fat upon the flame.” The blade of the sword is called its flame here because of how it flashes as it strikes. But probably equally so, it is like the mouth (edge) of the sword in that it also consumes, being like fire.

In this case, Eglon's fat covered over the blade...

²² (con't) **for he did not draw the dagger out of his belly;**

ki lo shalaph ha'kherev mi'bitno – “for no drew the sword from his belly.” By this point, it would be very hard to pull it out. It had gone all the way in, including the haft. Trying to grab it through blood and fat would be almost impossible, plus...

²² (con't) **and his entrails came out.**

vayetse ha'parshdonah – “And came out the *parshdonah*.” It is a word also found only here in Scripture, *parshdonah*. It is derived from *parash*, to make distinct or declare, and *parad*, to divide. Various suggestions have been made as to what this is referring to.

Keil notes that the subject to the verb is the blade. If so, then it is not referring to excrement (KJV, etc.) or the entrails (NKJV, etc.) Rather, it is the blade coming out, probably as translated by Darby, “between the legs,” or Keil, “the anus, podex.”

If the former, it was a downward thrust and the *parshdonah* is the open space (distinct) between the legs (divide). If the latter, the same is true, but ignominiously referring to his backside.

The latter actually seems more likely because it is unlikely Ehud would have seen the blade sticking out down below. However, if Eglon collapsed forward and fell on his face, the sword protruding out of the ol' backside would be perfectly evident (ouch!).

A blade thirteen or so inches long could certainly have this effect. If the haft was not included in the earlier description giving the length of the sword, it could have come out several more inches. No matter what, it was a rather embarrassing and crummy way to check out of this life. With that happily effected by Ehud, it says...

²³ **Then Ehud went out through the porch**

vayetse ehud ha'misdronah – “And went out Ehud the *misdronah*.” It is another unique and difficult word, *misdron*. Because it is found only here, the meaning is as debated as

that of the previous verse. It is generally accepted to come from *seder*, arrangement, or order. Thus, some say a porch or colonnade.

It is noted that because of the similarity of the words to the previous verse, the subject of both may actually be Eglon. If so, then the word *parshdonah* is also referring to a part of the house, not Eglon's entrails or his backside. If so, the translation of the verb is "went" not "came" –

vayetse ha'parshdonah – "And went out [Ehud] the *parshdonah* [Eglon's]."
vayetse ehud ha'misdronah – "And went out Ehud the *misdronah* [Eglon's]."

Why it would say Ehud in the second instance and not the first throws a wrench in that, but it is still not impossible as Hebrew writing often includes a needed noun only in a second clause or sentence. If this is so, then it would mean there was probably a dividing room where the king sat and where the attendants would gather, the open space (distinct) between rooms (divide).

However, it does appear that the sword, not Eglon, is the subject of the previous clause. If so, then the rhyming nature of the words may simply be an alliterative tool to highlight the difference in what happened –

"The sword came out of Eglon's *parshdonah*. Meanwhile, Ehud went out of Eglon's *misdronah*."

The words are highly complicated, and from the very earliest times, there has been little agreement on what they are saying. Thus, I have tried to present you with various options for maximum biblical happiness, something Eglon didn't experience.

As for this clause, Ehud either exited through the same doors as the attendees earlier, or he went out through another side door. Upon his exiting, it says...

²³ (con't) **and shut the doors of the upper room behind him and locked them.**

vayisgor dalthoth ha'aliyah baado v'naal – "and shut doors the loft upon him and locked them." This was to delay anyone from chasing Ehud. If he got away unnoticed, or even if they saw him and allowed him to leave, figuring his business was done and the king would call when they were needed, they would be delayed while patiently waiting at the door.

As for the word *na'al*, or lock, it is new to Scripture. It signifies both to lock and to furnish with shoes. As a door is shut and bolted, when a foot is shod, it is likewise shut off from the outside. Ehud shut the doors and secured them for his getaway.

While the corpse of the corpulent king is wallowing in its own blood behind closed doors, Ehud is making his way back to Israel. The exciting adventure into the life of Ehud will continue next week, the Lord willing.

For now, we must close with the thought that Jesus is the reason for this and every such story. There are already hints and clues as to why we are being told these events. If you go over the individual words this week, comparing them to earlier sermons, you will be able to get a portion of what is being conveyed.

When we get through the verses next week, we will be able to see the full typological picture of what the Lord is telling us. As a simple life lesson concerning what we have seen thus far, Israel failed to heed the word of the Lord, they departed from Him, and He sent a foe of Israel to afflict and oppress them to bring them back to Himself.

That has started to be realized with the selection and actions of Ehud. Also, Eglon was a human, just like the billions of humans who have existed on the earth since the beginning. He really lived, and he really died. His death was apart from the covenant people, and there is no indication that he was a believer or participant in God's redemptive plans.

This means he died apart from salvation. God is working through human history to bring man back to Himself, but not all people will be saved. Only those whose trust is properly directed to the Lord will inherit what He has planned.

Since the coming of Jesus, this means faith in Him. Thus, all people have a choice, including Representative Max Miller mentioned earlier. And this includes you, too. We must submit ourselves to what God has offered, and His offering is the giving of Jesus Christ for our sins.

If we accept that premise, we will be saved. He is the incarnate Word, God united with human flesh, who came to fulfill the law and give His life in exchange for our sins based on that fulfillment. Let us be wise and accept this wonderful offer of grace.

Don't wait. Eglon wasn't expecting his sudden end, and we don't know when ours will come. Be ready! Call on Jesus today.

Closing Verse: *"I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart,
And I will glorify Your name forevermore." Psalm 86:12*

Next Week: Judges 3:24-31 *The story is good, yes a good one to tell, and this we will do...* (Ehud, Judge of Israel, Part II) (10th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Ehud, Judge of Israel, Part I

And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD
So the LORD strengthened, according to His word
Eglon king of Moab against Israel
Because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD

Then he gathered to himself the people
Of Ammon and Amalek – this is not a digression
Went and defeated Israel
And the City of Palms he took as a possession

So the children of Israel served Eglon
King of Moab eighteen years
But when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD
The LORD raised up a deliverer for them: Ehud the son of Gera
-----a man with no fears

The Benjamite, a left-handed man, good for hiding the coming stab
By him the children of Israel sent tribute to Eglon king of Moab

Now Ehud made himself a dagger
(It was double-edged and a cubit in length), pretty nifty, Stan
And fastened it under his clothes on his right thigh
So he brought the tribute to Eglon king of Moab. (Now Eglon was
-----a very fat man)

And when he had finished presenting the tribute
He sent away the people who had carried the tribute, he did

-----that thing
But he himself turned back from the stone images that
-----were at Gilgal
And said, "I have a secret message for you, O king"

He said, "Keep silence!" And all who attended him went
-----out from him
So Ehud came to him (he was sitting in his cool private
-----chamber upstairs)
Then Ehud said, "I have a message from God for you"
So he arose from his seat, to learn of these affairs

Then Ehud reached with his left hand
(He had started the plan and was determined not to quit)
Took the dagger from his right thigh
And into his belly thrust it

Even the hilt went in after the blade
And the fat closed over the blade: gross, no doubt
For he did not draw the dagger out of his belly
And his entrails came out

Then Ehud went out through the porch, maybe thinking about
-----a vacation in Bethlehem
And shut the doors of the upper room behind him and locked them

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 3:24-31 (EHUD, JUDGE OF ISRAEL, PART II)

Many years ago, I heard that there are so many laws in the federal government of the United States that all one has to do is exist here to be guilty of breaking one law or another. The system is set up for its citizens to fail. For those who consider not playing along with whoever is in power, that may actually be used against you.

If that was forty years ago, considering how many laws have been passed since then, just imagine how many laws we are breaking at any given moment without even realizing it in the present time.

And that is only federal laws. We have state and local laws bearing down on us as well. But this is not supposed to be the case with the giving of law. Those who naturally do what is right should not be subject to laws that make them guilty when they are not doing anything wrong.

Paul takes the time to explain this to Timothy, and his words reveal to us reasons for which law should be given...

Text Verse: *“But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, ⁹ knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, ¹⁰ for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, ¹¹ according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.”*
-1 Timothy 1:8-11

Establishing laws against such things as Paul presents here is sound and reasonable. In the Bible, the giving of the law has several purposes, some of which we will see as we analyze things today.

The problem with God giving us law, however, is not in the law itself or with Him. Rather, the problem rests within us. Adam was given a law, but he had no experiential knowledge of what the consequences of violating that law would be. He was told what they would be, but without that experiential knowledge, he could not understand what he was told.

This was not because of a defect in Adam. Rather, Adam's lack of knowledge was simply a limitation that he was expected to deal with after being told what not to do. He didn't obey, and sin entered the world.

The law stands as an enemy against us when we do not comply with it. That is just how it is. Unfortunately, being in a land where you wake up guilty before the law means that you are an enemy of the lawgiver at all times. This is how it is in the United States, and it is how the world is before God.

Because of sin, which resulted from failing to observe the law, the whole world stands guilty already. That is our default position, and without someone to remove that guilt, along with the burden of the law, we will remain forever condemned. Enter Jesus.

It's all to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. And Ehud Escaped (verses 24-31)

²⁴ When he had gone out,

Rather, it simply and emphatically says: *v'hu yatsa* – “And HE went out.” Ehud had gone through the porch (the *misdronah*) in the previous verse, shutting the doors of the loft behind him and locking them. With his safe exit from the main building, it next says...

²⁴ (con't) *Eglon's servants came to look, and to their surprise,*

The words are sequentially stated: *va'avadav bau vayiru v'hineh* – “and his servants come in, and look, and behold...” Taken together with the previous clause, the sequential nature is more prominent, And HE went out, and his servants come in, and look, and behold...” Each “and” is given to elicit excitement at the unfolding events, the next of which is what the servants saw...

²⁴ (con't) the doors of the upper room were locked.

dalthoth ha'aliyah neuloth – “doors the loft locked.” It appears from this that the servants must have known that Ehud had left. Otherwise, they wouldn't be surprised. But knowing he was gone, they come up to attend to the king, and the door is locked.

Therefore, being locked from the inside, they think it must have been Eglon who locked it. This would not be uncommon based on the next words...

²⁴ (con't) **So they said, “He is probably attending to his needs in the cool chamber.”**

The words again bear emphasis: *vayomeru akh mesik hu eth raglav ba'khadar hamqerah* – “And they said, “Only, covering HE feet in chamber the coolness.” It is a euphemism used for the first of two times in Scripture. There are two suggested meanings.

The first is a later interpretation, meaning to take a nap. One lays down and covers his feet when sleeping. Hence, when Ruth went to Boaz at the threshing floor, she uncovered his feet.

The second, and more likely meaning, is clothes covering the feet while relieving oneself. Usually, the bare or sandaled feet are uncovered, and the rest of the body is covered, but at this time, the opposite is true.

An example of this is found in the story of King Saul. It is unlikely, although possible, that Saul went into a cave in 1 Samuel 24 to take a nap. Rather, he surely went in for privacy while relieving himself –

“So he came to the sheepfolds by the road, where there *was* a cave; and Saul went in to attend to his needs. (David and his men were staying in the recesses of the cave.)” 1 Samuel 24:3

As for the word *kheder*, or chamber, it signifies an inner chamber. In this case, as there is a main room for conducting Eglon’s normal affairs, and there is an inner chamber for conducting his discreet affairs. Today, we would simply say, “He is in the john.”

²⁵ **So they waited till they were embarrassed, and still he had not opened the doors of the upper room.**

vayakhilu ad bovosh v'hineh enenu poteakh dalthoth ha'aliyah – “And whirled until ashamed, and behold, not he opened doors the loft.” The word *khul* signifies to whirl, dance, or writhe. The sense is that the servants are waiting there and, as people do, shaking their heads, shuffling their feet, and flailing their arms in a “What the heck?” manner.

At one point, they can no longer be considered blameless for tarrying. And yet, at some point, they cannot be considered blameless for barging in while the king is tending to business. And so they annoyingly stood around whirling, unable to decide when the right moment to act would be...

²⁵ (con't) **Therefore they took the key and opened *them*.**

vayiq'khu eth ha'maphteakh – “And took the opener.” It is a word found only here and in Isaiah 22:22, *maphteakh*. It comes from *pathakh*, to open. Thus it is the opener, the key. Ellicott notes, “The ancient key was simply a bar of wood, hooked at the end, which passed through a hole in the door and caught the bolt inside.” Finally deciding that action was necessary, they got the spare key and opened the door...

²⁵ (con't) **And there was their master, fallen dead on the floor.**

The words are short and abrupt: *v'hineh adonehem nophel artsah meth* – “And behold, their lord fallen earthward, died.” Eglon had seen better days...

²⁶ **But Ehud had escaped while they delayed, and passed beyond the stone images and escaped to Seirah.**

v'ehud nimlath ad hithmahmhem v'hu avar eth ha'pesilim vayimalet hasiratha – “And Ehud escaped until their tarrying, and passed through the carved images, and escaped the Seirah-ward.” The servants tarried, allowing Ehud to escape. He took the route through the carved images, making his escape in the direction of the Seirah.

Seirah (Heb: Seirath) is found only here. It is derived from a general root שער (*s'r*) and “appears to primarily express intense negative emotion or the experience of violence. Curiously, it also yields words that have to do with hair” (Abarim).

Though associated with various words, the connotation of hair fits the context. Thus, it means Rough, Hairy, Bristly, or Goat (because of the goat's bristly hair). As has been explained many times in previous sermons, hair in the Bible signifies an awareness, especially an awareness of sin.

²⁷ **And it happened, when he arrived, that he blew the trumpet in the mountains of Ephraim,**

v'hi b'vovoto vayitqa ba'shophar b'har ephrayim – “And it was in his coming, and blew in the shophar in Mount Ephraim.” What may be the case is that the Seirath of the previous verse could be a wooded or brambly area, giving the appearance of hair. Whether a general location or a city, upon his coming to the area, he gave a blast on the shophar in Mount Ephraim to call the people to gather.

This was a signal that was probably preplanned, just as was the making of the special sword to nix Eglon. At the blowing of the shophar, the people came.

As always, a mount (*har*) is a lot of something gathered. It is synonymous with a large but centralized group of people. Ephraim means Twice Fruitful with a secondary meaning of Ashes.

²⁷ (con't) **and the children of Israel went down with him from the mountains; and he led them.**

vayerdu imo bene Yisrael min ha'har v'hu liphnehem – “And descended with him sons Israel from the mount, and he to their faces [meaning before them].” The Israelites followed Ehud as they descended the mount...

²⁸ **Then he said to them, “Follow me, for the LORD has delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand.”**

The plural is mixed with the singular concerning the foe: *vayomer alehem ridpu akharay ki nathan Yehovah eth oyvekhem eth moav b'yedkhem* – “And said to them, ‘Pursue after me, for gave Yehovah your enemies, Moab, in your hand.’”

One can see the excitement Ehud must have felt, “Pursue after me!” He is challenging them to keep up as they rushed toward the battle ahead. He had tasted the blood of Eglon, and he was ready to meet every lesser foe that he encountered. But he gives the credit for the already-won battle to the Lord – “Yehovah gave ... into your hand...”

²⁸ (con't) **So they went down after him, seized the fords of the Jordan leading to Moab, and did not allow anyone to cross over.**

v'yerdu akharav vayilkdu eth mabroth ha'yarden l'moav v'lo natnu ish la'avor – “And descended after him, and seized fords the Jordan to Moab and no gave man to pass over.” The meaning is that, despite Moab being east of the Jordan, there were Moabite warriors stationed west of the Jordan.

In their advancing, Israel took advantage of the situation and seized the fords of the river so that none of the Moabites could retreat into their land. John Lange thinks that Eglon was the king over only the western area of Moab. Or it could be that he was king over all of it but chose to reside in the fair area west of the Jordan. Either way...

²⁹ And at that time they killed about ten thousand men of Moab,

vayaku eth moav ba'eth ha'hi ka'asereth alapim ish – “And struck Moab in the time, the it, according to ten thousand men.” There is no reason to assume the number is off by much, as in “about.” As these were warriors of Moab, they would be stationed according to units across the Jordan, probably rotating on a regular basis.

Therefore, there were probably just ten thousand, according to a standard calculation, like any military force. Ten thousand is simply a derivative of ten. Therefore, if the number has typological significance, it would be based on that.

Bullinger says of it, “Completeness of order, marking the entire round of anything, is, therefore, the ever-present signification of the number *ten*. It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete.”

These men were...

²⁹ (con't) all stout men of valor; not a man escaped.

kal shamen v'kal ish khayil v'lo nimlath ish – “All fat, and all man valor, and no escaped man.” Of this, Ellicott astonishingly says, “...the word being the same as that used in Judges 3:17 to describe the fatness of Eglon.” It's only a few verses earlier, and yet he didn't check to confirm this.

It's a good lesson that I have had to learn myself. Never trust anything you read, even from the greatest of scholars, until you have checked it out for yourself.

As for the word in verse 3:17, *bari*, or fat, it ultimately comes from a word meaning “to feed.” In this verse, it is the adjective *shamen*, coming from the verb *shamen*, to grow fat, and certainly signifying robust. They were well-fed and brave fighters, and yet they all perished at the hand of Israel. Despite it being a different word, Stanley is close to the intent of the verbiage, saying –

“The narrative ends, as it had begun, with its half-humorous allusion to the well-fed carcasses of those who, corpulent like their chief, lay dead along the shore of the river.”
Arthur Stanley

Other than calling them corpulent, the idea is correct. Eglon was overfed, and his men were well fed, all from the labors of Israel. And yet, Israel defeated them while probably in a state of lacking their own bread...

³⁰ So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel.

vatikana moav ba'yom ha'hu takhat yad Yisrael – “And humbled Moab in the day, the it, under hand Israel.” This does not mean that Moab became subject to Israel. Otherwise, it would be indicated, such as in 2 Samuel –

“Then he defeated Moab. Forcing them down to the ground, he measured them off with a line. With two lines he measured off those to be put to death, and with one full line those to be kept alive. So the Moabites became David’s servants, *and* brought tribute.” 2 Samuel 8:2

It simply means that they were humbled and licked their wounds in their own land. Understanding this, it next says...

³⁰ (con’t) And the land had rest for eighty years.

va'tishqot ha'arets shmonim shanah – “And reposed the land eighty years.” The word *shaqat* comes from an unused root meaning to repose. Late Hebrew gives the idea of sinking down. One can think of lying in a hammock and looking around without fear, maybe slumbering a bit in the process.

This does not necessarily mean that all of Israel was in this state but the area where the judge ruled. As was noted in the introductory comments to Judges, there must be overlap in the times of various judges based on the number of years stated by Paul in Acts 13:20.

As for the duration, eighty is the product of eight and ten. Eight, or *shmoneh*, comes from *shamen*, the verb just described – “to grow fat.” Thus, it is the superabundant number and the number of new beginnings. The meaning of ten has already been described.

With this state of ease noted, it next says...

³¹ **After him was Shamgar the son of Anath,**

v'akharav hayah Shamgar ben Anath – “And after him, was Shamgar, son Anath.” The derivation of the name Shamgar is uncertain. However, some see it as a reversal of the name of Moses’ son Gershom. If so, then it would be from the words *sham* (there) or *shem* (name) and (stranger). Hence, There a Stranger or Named/Called a Stranger.

Shamgar is also mentioned in Judges 5:6 –

“In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath,
In the days of Jael,
The highways were deserted,
And the travelers walked along the byways.”

He is noted as the son of Anath. That name comes from *anah*, a word having four distinct meanings: to answer or respond; be occupied with; to afflict, oppress, or humble; or to sing. Thus, it can mean Answer, Business, Affliction, or Singing. The typology here points to Affliction. Of him, it says...

³¹ (con’t) **who killed six hundred men of the Philistines with an ox goad;**

vayak eth plishtim shesh meoth ish b'malmaid ha'baqar – “And struck Philistines – six hundred man – in goad the ox.” The word *malmaid* is found only here. It comes from *lamad*, to teach or learn. The idea is that when one goads an ox, he will learn from it.

The ox, or *baqar* comes from the verb *baqar*, to inquire or seek. The connection is that as the ox is used for plowing, the ground is opened up, revealing what is beneath.

Barnes describes the ox goad saying, “An instrument of wood about eight feet long, armed with an iron spike or point at one end, with which to spur the ox at plow, and with an iron scraper at the other end with which to detach the earth from the plowshare when it became encumbered with it.”

The idea of teaching a bull or heifer is seen elsewhere, such as –

“Ephraim is a trained [*lamad*] heifer
That loves to thresh *grain*;

But I harnessed her fair neck,
I will make Ephraim pull *a plow*.
Judah shall plow;
Jacob shall break his clods.” Hosea 10:11

There are varying degrees of skepticism in regard to the claim concerning Shamgar’s success, such as that he didn’t do it alone, but with others in a battle. However, being the leader, it was all credited to him. Such an explanation is hard to justify when we just got done with an account that explicitly included the efforts of others.

There is nothing to say that he did this in one battle. Note what it says in 2 Samuel 23:8 –

“These *are* the names of the mighty men whom David had: Josheb-Basshebeth the Tachmonite, chief among the captains. He was called Adino the Eznite, because he had killed eight hundred men at one time.”

First, this guy was a captain, implying that he had men under him. Also, it says that he killed eight hundred at one time.

This may be the case with Shamgar, or it may be that he singlehandedly killed six hundred in a series of encounters with the Philistines. Of the number, it is derived from six and ten.

Bullinger defines six, saying, “...it has to do with man; it is the number of imperfection; the human number; the number of MAN as destitute of God, without God, without Christ.” Simply stated, it speaks of fallen man. Again, the meaning of ten was noted earlier.

The name Philistine comes from *palash*, signifying to roll in the dust as an act of mourning. It can take on several meanings, including Grievors, Burrowers, or Weakeners.

^{31 (fin)} **and he also delivered Israel.**

There is an emphasis in the words: *vayosha gam hu eth Yisrael* – “And saved – also he – Israel.” This emphasis seems to indicate that it was around the same time as Ehud. While Ehud was delivering those on the eastern side of the land, it appears Shamgar was delivering on the western side.

What is this intriguing passage telling us? Why do you suppose the Lord has given such minute detail about things that are almost embarrassing for us to read and consider? Let's find out.

*A place where atonement is made
Where sins are covered and taken away
What a glorious, marvelous trade
When through grace we were cleansed. Oh, what a day!*

*The law is satisfied, and we have atonement
The guilt of our deeds is taken away
What Christ has done, such a marvelous event
We are free from our guilt. Oh, what a day!*

*Thank You, O God, for Jesus Christ our Lord
He accomplished it all; our guilt is taken away
Through Him, the victory is scored
Truly, what a marvelous, glorious day!*

II. Pictures of Christ

The focus of the passage is Israel doing the evil in the eyes of Yehovah. Because of that, the Lord placed them under subjection to Eglon, king of Moab. Evil comes about from violating God's law. Eglon, Heifer-like, stands as a type of violation of the law.

The first noted transgression of the law is found in Exodus 32 when Aaron made the golden calf, the *egel*. Thus, it stands as representative of all future violations of the law, as typified by Eglon (transgression of the law) king of From Father (the power of the devil) –

“You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it.” John 8:44

That power is strengthened against Israel “because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord” (verse 12). To bolster his strength, Eglon (transgression of the law) gathered A People and The People Who Wring Off. It signifies those without and those within who

are attempting to overthrow God's purposes, meaning those without the law of Moses and those who abuse the law of Moses.

Together, they went and struck Israel and took possession of City the Palms, meaning City the Upright Ones. The purpose of the law, to bring about righteousness, is taken over by transgressions of the law. In other words, it is showing us that by law is the knowledge of sin, but that law cannot justify anyone (Romans 3:20).

Instead, Israel served Eglon (transgression of the law) eighteen years. No matter which way eighteen is divided, there is the sense that man is not under the Lord but under transgression (2) and thus under judgment (9), and that it is for a divinely perfect period of time (3) where he remains fallen and destitute of God (6).

That is seen in the words of Paul –

“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.” Galatians 4:4, 5

However, in their state of subjection, represented by the words “when the children of Israel cried out to the Lord,” He raised up a Deliverer for them. Ehud anticipates Christ. He is described as “Ehud son Gera, son the right, man bound hand right.”

Depending on the root, Ehud means either One Who Praises or United. Either can point to the Lord. He praises God, for example, in Psalm 22:25. He is united to God in the incarnation. Because of this, there is no need to be dogmatic about which root the name came from.

Son of Gera, among other things, means Son of Sojourning. A son in Scripture often simply indicates one who has a particular attribute. A son of a fool is a fool. Jesus came and sojourned among us. Thus, He is a Son of Sojourning.

Benjamite, or *benhay'mini*, Son of the Right, is an exact description of Jesus in Luke 22:69. As it says –

“Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God.”

Saying he is bound in his right hand would signify His state in the incarnation where He set aside His power and authority, signified by the right hand –

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men.”

-Philippians 2:5-7

It is Ehud by whom Israel sent an offering (*minkhah*) in his hand to Eglon, king of Moab. It points to Jesus. He is the true offering –

“Sacrifice and offering [*minkhah*] You did not desire;
My ears You have opened.
Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require.
⁷ Then I said, ‘Behold, I come;
In the scroll of the book *it is* written of me.
⁸ I delight to do Your will, O my God,
And Your law *is* within my heart.’” Psalm 40:6-8

Think of it! He is “bound in His right hand,” meaning Christ in His incarnation. And it is in his hand (meaning Ehud’s left and weaker hand) that the *minkhah* is presented. It points to Christ in His lowly state. And so, what does he do? “And made to him, Ehud, sword.”

As has been seen many times, the word sword, *kharev*, is a picture of the law given at Horeb. They are spelled the same in the Hebrew – חרב. And, to confirm the symbolism, this is said to be a two-edged sword, another description of the word of God –

“For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Hebrews 4:12

Why the unique word *gomed*, the length of the sword, was provided is hard to say. My best guess would be that it shows the closeness and intimacy of Christ with the law. Next, it was noted that it was girded on his thigh. That is anticipated in the Psalms when referring to the coming Messiah –

“Gird Your sword upon *Your* thigh, O Mighty One,
With Your glory and Your majesty.” Psalm 45:3

Next, it noted that Ehud brought the tribute (*minkhah*) to Eglon, king of Moab. That symbolism has already been explained. It then noted his extremely corpulent nature.

As Eglon represents transgression of the law, the symbolism becomes perfectly obvious. Transgression abounds in a superlative way because of law. It literally feeds (*bari*) off of the law. That is stated by Paul in Romans 7 and Galatians 3.

Noting that Ehud sent those who brought the tribute away, accompanied by the emphatic “And HE – turned back” is a way of saying that Christ alone would accomplish what was necessary to end transgressions of the law. This turning was “from the carved images which by the Gilgal.”

It is hard to be dogmatic about what this is saying, but the Gilgal has repeatedly signified “the Liberty.” Therefore, it seems that it is indicating the closeness of idolatry to finding the Liberty. It is almost an impossible task that only Christ could accomplish. He turned back from the entourage with his secret message for the king.

In bringing it, the attendants were excused. It is a faceoff between the two alone, Christ, and the power of transgression of the law. Ehud approached; Jesus approached. The message is from God: Eglon arose from his throne; transgression of the law arose from its position of power.

No sooner did Eglon arise than Ehud reached with his left (covered) hand. The left hand pictures Christ in His humanity covering His deity. He took the sword, the law, from the right thigh, the side of strength and power, and the base upon which He stands (the thigh), and thrust it into Eglon’s belly.

The belly is what feeds the body as food is processed. The entire sword, the full and complete law, went into Eglon (transgression of the law). In other words, it is a picture of the complete atonement of transgressions of the law. It represents the full, final, finished, and forever satisfaction of the law through Christ’s work. The sword went in, the fat covered it over, and he did not draw the sword out of the belly. It is finished.

Next, the highly complicated words of verses 22 and 23 were stated. The actual meaning of those words is obscure, and several possibilities were given. They can be summed up with the thought, “The sword came out of Eglon’s *parshdonah*. Meanwhile, Ehud went out of Eglon’s *misdrumah*.”

The law came out of “transgression of the law” in a way that it was distinct and in the place where it divides, destroying its ability to do so. Meanwhile, Jesus came out of the arrangement of “transgression of the law,” meaning living under the law with the

possibility of violating it as Adam did. Even if we don't know what the Hebrew literally says, we can know what it typologically represents.

From there, the doors of the loft were closed and locked, and it emphatically said, "and HE went out." It speaks of the total victory of Christ over the power of the law. Despite that, and as evidenced by the servants going to the room, waiting for Eglon to come out, and finally going in to discover him dead on the floor, this doesn't mean that the law cannot still hold sway over others who have not come to Christ.

Hence, it said that Ehud escaped and passed through the carved images, signifying Christ's total victory over them, and escaped to the Seirath, the Hairy. It signifies Christ making the awareness of sin (hair signifies an awareness, especially an awareness of sin) available to all.

In his arrival, Ehud blew the trumpet in Mount Ephraim to gather the people. Saying this was in the mount (*har*) points to the effect of His work, the mountain being synonymous with a large but centralized group of people. It refers to the uniting of all believers as one in Christ.

Noting the name Ephraim adds further meaning. Ephraim means Twice Fruitful. It signifies that Christ's work has produced fruit in the conversion of both Jews and Gentiles. The secondary meaning of Ashes speaks of the price He paid to make this possible which was the afflictions He endured.

Being gathered, Ehud (Jesus) implored those with him to pursue after him because Yehovah gave their enemies, Moab, into their hand. God in Christ has given power over the law, the enemies From Father, into our hand through the work of Jesus.

It next said that Israel went down and seized the fords of the Jordan (Christ, the Descender), leading to Moab (From Father). None could cross over. There is the law, and there is grace, and there is no crossing between the two –

"And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law." Galatians 5:3

Finally, verse 29 noted that ten thousand men of Moab were struck, and not one escaped. "It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete" (Bullinger). For those who come to God through the grace found in Christ, every single foe (the entire law, without exception) is defeated.

The use of the word *bari* in relation to Eglon and *shamen* in relation to the soldiers, both translated as fat, is purposeful. A point is being made: transgression of the law feeds on the law as its source of sustenance, as in Romans 3:20. However, transgressions of the law increase guilt before God, as in Romans 3:19.

From there, it then said that Moab, From Father was humbled under the hand of Israel. The law which allows the devil to have power was humbled, and Christ the Lord is exalted.

The final note of there being eighty years is a nice touch. As eight is derived from the same word as fat (*shamen*), it speaks of the superabundant nature (8) of the victory and that the entire cycle is complete in what Christ has done (10).

With the exploits of Ehud complete, the narrative turned to Shamgar the son of Anath. He is a quick picture of Christ – There a Stranger, Son of Affliction. Both look to Christ, a Stranger come to dwell among us, and One who identifies with Affliction.

Killing the Philistines, the Weakeners, with an ox goad, looks to the victory that comes from pursuing the knowledge of Christ, which is, obtained through the word that tells us of Him. The ox, as noted, comes from a root signifying to inquire or seek. The goad comes from a root signifying to teach.

Thus, the Philistines, those who weaken others spiritually, are destroyed through diligent search and proper instruction. Noting that six hundred were struck reveals fallen man (6) with the whole cycle being complete and nothing is wanting (10).

We have been given the word of instruction. It is available to those who inquire of it, and it is fully capable of eliminating the power of those who would attempt to weaken them.

The last words of the chapter said, “And saved – also he – Israel.” As noted then, it seems to mean that he was a judge at the same time as Ehud. Christ destroyed transgression of the law by using the law, He continues to separate those who rely on the law for their justification, and He has saved Israel through the instruction that He has provided in His word.

Chapter 3 of Judges has continued the typological pictures of Christ and the magnificent things He has done for us. Eglon, transgression of law, isn’t something ethereal that we

can only hypothesize about. It is exactly what Paul describes in Romans, Galatians, and elsewhere.

By law is the knowledge of sin, and by law, man becomes guilty before God. In giving more law, more transgression occurs. But all of what He has done has been a lesson for us, if we are willing to pay heed. He has used a real group of people with serious issues of rebellion to show us exactly what is wrong with us.

The story of Israel is simply a microcosm of the greater story of humanity. God is using them to tell us what is wrong, how He will fix it, and how desperately we need Him to do so. Pay heed to the lesson of the law. It keeps being reintroduced, story after story, to get us to wake up.

Jesus. We need Jesus. Without Him, there is no hope. With Him, there is absolute hope with no uncertainty at all. This is what we are again shown in this wonderful passage from God's Superior Word.

Closing Verse: *"Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." Romans 3:19*

Next Week: Judges 4:1-16 *Hoorah! A great story to tell – until it is done...* (Deborah, Judge of Israel, Part I) (11th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Ehud, Judge of Israel, Part II

When he had gone out
Eglon's servants came to look, and to their surprise, as
-----the account reads
The doors of the upper room were locked. So they said
"He is probably in the cool chamber attending to his needs"

So they waited till they were embarrassed
And still he had not opened the doors of the upper room
Therefore they took the key and opened them

And there was their master, fallen dead on the floor
-----a scene of doom

But Ehud had escaped while they delayed, oorah!
And passed beyond the stone images and escaped to Seirah

And it happened, when he arrived
That he blew the trumpet in the mountains of Ephraim
And the children of Israel went down with him from the mountains
And he led them, a great day it would seem

Then he said to them, "Follow me
For the LORD has delivered your enemies the Moabites into
-----your hand
So they went down after him, seized the fords of the Jordan
-----leading to Moab
And did not allow anyone to cross over, so it was planned

And at that time they killed about ten thousand men of Moab
All stout men of valor; not a man escaped (hooray and cheers!)
So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel
And the land had rest for eighty years

After him was Shamgar the son of Anath
Who had a great story to tell
He killed six hundred men of the Philistines with an ox goad
And he also delivered Israel

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 4:1-16 (DEBORAH, JUDGE OF ISRAEL, PART I)

The Bible is comprised of many types of literature. Each has its own special place and purpose. Some types have overlapping purposes, as we have seen many times. One type of literature is that of prophecy. Quite often, prophetic literature is based upon spoken utterances that were then written down.

It is rare, but not unheard of, for women to prophesy in Scripture. But just like their male counterparts, their words have been recorded, and they are a valuable part of this sacred word. Peter makes a general statement concerning prophecy and the prophetic word, rendering it in the masculine. But women such as Deborah are implicitly included in his words...

Text Verse: *“And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; ²⁰ knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, ²¹ for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” 2 Peter 1:19-21*

In our verses today, we will see that Deborah means Bee. But there is more to the meaning of the name than what is literal, as will be seen when we get there. The bee, for example, has a host of information behind it that can be drawn out of the natural world and from Scripture. Because it is so interesting, I will include the comments of Abarim concerning the name of Deborah. Please enjoy their thoughts –

“Tradition and most Bible commentators and translators (including Jones' Dictionary of Old Testament Proper Names) assume that the bee was known after a derivation of the verb דבר, meaning to speak, because of the sound a bee makes when it flies. This is highly unlikely for two reasons.

First, the bee is not the only creature that makes a sound, or even buzzes. Calling a bee but no other insect a talker would show an imprecision that is ultimately foreign to the Hebrew language.

Secondly, even in Bible times, the bee was culturally defined as a producer of honey. Honey was the only available sweetener in those days, and honey was recognized as a great source of strength (1 Samuel 14:27). Where milk is compared to the initial nutrition of a new believer (1 PETER 2:2), honey serves the die-hards. Hence Canaan was known as the land flowing with milk *and* honey (Exodus 3:8), and the judgments of the

Lord, as well as his words, were deemed sweeter than honey (Psalm 19:10, 119:103). King David reckoned unity in the House of the Lord sweet (Psalm 55:14); Ezekiel tastes a scroll that was given to him by The Word Of God, and it tastes sweet as honey (3:3), and the same happens to John the Revelator (REVELATION 10:10).

Another prominent insect in the Bible is the fly, which also buzzes. The Hebrew word for fly is זבב (*zebub*), which serves a segment of the name Beelzebub, meaning Lord Of The Flies. The difference between the kingdom of God and the whatever-dom of satan shows clearly in the difference between the bee and the fly: bees have a house, and operate within a complex colony. Bees like flowers and help them reproduce, make honey, speak a language, care for offspring, and are armed. Flies are homeless, aren't social, don't cooperate, like dung and decaying flesh, make nothing, speak no language, don't care for their offspring, and are not armed.

Also note that bees can only function as a society. There is no such thing as a solitary bee, which makes honey on its own out of the sheer perfection of its private brilliance. Instead, *the* bee is a creature that consists of countless many individuals, who venture about their world and do their little ordinary thing without having much sense of any difference between them and the whole hive. Said otherwise: bees neither have Nobel Prizes nor Superbee comic strips, nor do they imagine to stand on the shoulders of giants."

When you encounter some part of the created order in the Bible, think about why it is mentioned. The intricacy of it in the natural world will be used in Scripture to teach us greater spiritual truths. Such wonderful things as the bee are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. To Go or Not to Go (verses 1-8)

¹ When Ehud was dead, the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD.

The NKJV turns the clauses around, thus making it hard to evaluate what is written. Rather, the words read in the following order: *vayosiphu bene Yisrael laasoth ha'ra* – "And added, sons Israel, to do the evil."

It is as if there is a divine scale or counter being added to with every evil act of Israel. As has already been seen, it isn't just evil they are doing, but the evil. It is a personal offense against God, collectively committed by the people as a whole as indicated by the words "sons Israel."

As there is no king responsible for the people, it is attributed to the people in an all-encompassing way. Further, this is committed *b'ene Yehovah* – “in eyes Yehovah.” The evil is an offense done openly, almost mocking or challenging the authority of the Lord. It is as if the people are willingly testing Him to see what He would do about it.

It is not at all unlike the attitude of those on the left in the world today. They mock God through their open defiance of Him as if they are purposefully trying to elicit a response. When none comes, they simply do more evil to test Him further. With this condition raging among the people, the verse ends with...

v'ehud meth – “And Ehud died.” Of these words, Adam Clarke says, “Why not when Shamgar was dead? Does this not intimate that Shamgar was not reckoned in the number of the judges?” Shamgar was noted in the last verse of Chapter 3 –

“After him was Shamgar the son of Anath, who killed six hundred men of the Philistines with an ox goad; and he also delivered Israel.” Judges 3:30

As was explained, the words imply that Shamgar was a contemporary of Ehud. He may have arisen after Ehud, but still during the time of Ehud. As noted in the first Judges sermon, the chronology of the Judges, according to Paul’s words of Acts 13:20, demands that there are times when the various judges overlap. This is probably one of those instances.

Ehud was the main judge at the time, but Shamgar was probably appointed as a judge to deal with the Philistines during that same period. Further, unlike so many translations, which are only further marred by the NKJV by reversing the clauses of this verse, it does not say “when,” “now,” “after,” etc., in relation to Ehud’s death.

Again, read the entire verse: “And added, sons Israel, to do the evil in eyes Yehovah. And Ehud died.” There is no reason to assume that the evil began after the death of Ehud: They were doing the evil in the eyes of the Lord (3:12), the Lord strengthened Eglon king of Moab against them (3:12), they cried out to the Lord for deliverance (3:15), the Lord raised up Ehud to deliver them (3:15), they saw the deliverance of the Lord through Ehud, and Ehud declared that it was the Lord who delivered them (3:28).

And yet, Israel added to the evil in His eyes, most likely during the time of Ehud. It said in Chapter 3 that Moab was subdued under the hand of Israel, and it had rest for eighty years. That does not mean that the people were obedient during those years, but that there was no war during them.

Only after saying that Israel added to the evil does it then say, “And Ehud died.” It is as if Israel said, “How do we really know the Lord did this? Let’s test it and see.” And so, they added to the evil...

² So the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan,

vayimkerem Yehovah b’yad yavin melekh k’naan – “And sold them Yehovah in hand Jabin, king Canaan.” As noted in Chapter 2, the idea of selling someone is not for profit. Rather, it is that the Lord handed them over to their enemies as if they were property to be disposed of. “Here, I don’t want this anymore. Do what you will with it.”

The actual sequence is that Israel sold itself to do evil and, therefore, the Lord sold them off for what they were worth, meaning nothing. The name Jabin was noted in Joshua 11–

“And it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor heard *these things*, that he sent to Jobab king of Madon, to the king of Shimron, to the king of Achshaph, ²and to the kings who *were* from the north, in the mountains, in the plain south of Chinneroth, in the lowland, and in the heights of Dor on the west, ³to the Canaanites in the east and in the west, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Jebusite in the mountains, and the Hivite below Hermon in the land of Mizpah.”

-Joshua 11:1-3

This may be a royal or hereditary name that accompanies the position. Thus, it is probably not the same Jabin as before. As for the name, Jabin or *yavin*, it has to do with discernment, coming from the word *bin*, meaning to discern. The name means He Perceives, He Discerns, He Understands, The Wise, The Intelligent.

Canaan means Humiliated, Humbled, or even Subdued. Of the location of his reign, like in Joshua 11, it says...

² (con’t) **who reigned in Hazor.**

The name Hazor, or *khatsor*, actually has various meanings based on its root, which signifies “to begin to cluster or gather.” It may mean Village, Trumpet, Leek, Enclosure, and so on. The city falls within the borders of Naphtali (Joshua 19:36).

² (con’t) **The commander of his army was Sisera,**

v'sar tsvao sisra – “And commander his host Sisera.” Of the name Sisera, Abarim says, “Fuerst’s Hebrew & Chaldee lexicon to the Old Testament draws toward a foreign word meaning meditator (someone who meditates) and NOBSE Study Bible Name List reads Meditation as well.”

They then say, “To a Hebrew audience, however, the first part of the name Sisera may have reminded of the word סוס (*sus*), meaning swallow or horse (note that some later versions of Jeremiah 8:7 indeed use the form סיס, *sis* for סוס, *sus*) ... The -ra part of the name may have sounded as if it came from the verb ראה (*ra'a*), meaning to see or look.”

Therefore, they say, “to a Hebrew audience the name Sisera may have sounded as something like Keen And Swift or See The Horse.” Of him, it next says...

² (con’t) **who dwelt in Harosheth Hagoyim.**

There is an emphasis in the words to ensure it is understood that this is referring to Sisera and not Jabin: *v'hu yoshev b'kharosheth ha'goyim* – “and HE dwelt in Harosheth Ha’Goyim.” There is nothing complicated about the words, but there are various ways to translate them. The word Hagoyim is the definite article adjoined to the word *goyim*, which means both Gentiles and nations. Thus:

And he dwelt in Harosheth the Nations.

And he dwelt in Harosheth the Gentiles.

And he dwelt in Harosheth the Goyim.

And he dwelt in Harosheth HaGoyim.

Etc.

The first half of the location comes from *kharosheth*, a carving or a skillful work. The meaning of the location is then Carving of the Nations or Manufactory of the Gentiles. However, Abarim also provides Silence of the Gentiles based on a different but associated verb.

Concerning these possibilities, they then say, “Since the Bible is not at all interested in political goings on and solely in the evolution of wisdom (that is science and technology of all sorts), this place called Harosheth-hagoyim obviously embodied the strength and validity of systems of learning that were not part of Israel.”

As for what happened to Israel once they came under the yoke of their afflictors, it says...

³ And the children of Israel cried out to the LORD;

vayitsaqu bene Yisrael el Yehovah – “And cried sons Israel unto Yehovah.” It is ironic that Israel had destroyed Jabin King of Hazor and burned the city with fire, but now Jabin, King of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor, is afflicting Israel.

Whether this was the same location that was rebuilt or another location given the same name, while Israel was frittering away its inheritance, the defeated line of Jabin was rebuilding and preparing for revenge upon the afflicters of his people. When he was in control, Israel finally woke up and cried out to the Lord...

^{3 (con't)} for Jabin had nine hundred chariots of iron,

ki t'sha meoth rekev barzel lo – “for nine hundred chariot iron to him.” The name Jabin is inserted here, probably incorrectly, based on the emphasis provided in the coming clause. This seems to be referring to the army under Sisera.

It is a vast-sized chariot force. It is likely that these carried scythes on their sides that were fastened to the axles. When they ran through the ranks of men they faced, the horses would trample some, the wheels would crush others, and the scythes would hack up others. They were a fearsome thing to fight against on smooth, open plains.

As for the number, it is a multiple of nine and ten. Nine “is akin to the number six, six being the sum of its factors (3x3=9, and 3+3=6), and is thus significant of the end of man, and the summation of all man's works. Nine is, therefore, THE NUMBER OF FINALITY OR JUDGMENT” (Bullinger).

Ten signifies “Completeness of order, marking the entire round of anything, is, therefore, the ever-present signification of the number ten. It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete” (Bullinger).

^{3 (con't)} and for twenty years he had harshly oppressed the children of Israel.

There is an emphasis on the individual, and the word translated as “harshly” is a noun, not an adverb: *v'hu lakhats eth bene Yisrael b'khazeqah esrim shanah* – “And HE oppressed sons Israel in vehemence twenty years.” Here is a new word, *khazqah*. It is a noun signifying vehemence.

In Exodus 3:9, using the same word translated as oppressed, it noted that the Egyptians oppressed Israel. However, Sisera is said to oppress Israel in vehemence. They failed to learn the lesson of Egypt, and so the Lord sold them to someone even more determined to oppress them in their own land. This went on for twenty years. Of the number twenty, Bullinger notes –

It “...is the double of ten, and may in some cases signify its concentrated meaning. But its significance seems rather to be connected with the fact that it is one short of twenty-one, $21 - 1 = 20$; that is to say, if 21 is the three-fold 7, and signifies Divine (3) completion as regards spiritual perfection (7), then twenty, being one short of 21, it would signify what Dr. Milo Mahan calls expectancy.”

⁴ Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth,

It should be noted that apart from the wicked Athaliah, who stole the throne of Judah for a season, until Prime Minister Golda Meir, Deborah was the only woman to ever lead Israel. But a judge exercised more authority than even the modern Prime Minister. Further, she is the only judge until the last judge, Samuel, noted as being a prophet.

As for the verse, the words are abrupt and are poorly rendered by most translations: *u-d'vorah ishah n'viah esheth Lapidoth* – “And Deborah, woman, prophetess, wife (or woman) Lapidoth.” The words are placed together without any connectors to call attention to the unusual occurrence of there being a female in this position.

The fact that she is a woman is highlighted, even though it is obvious from the context without saying it. It must be observed that Israel was just delivered by a left-handed man, a seemingly inferior trait. And now, Israel has a female judge – considered even more inferior. Of this, John Lange says –

“That she, a woman, became the centre of the people, proves the relaxation of spiritual and manly energy.” John Lange

This is true, but there is more to it than that. Notably, after her, the next judge will be Gideon –

“So he said to Him, ‘O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan *is* the weakest in Manasseh, and I *am* the least in my father’s house.’” Judges 6:15

But this pattern already started with the first judge, Othniel. He was specifically noted as Caleb's brother, *ha'qaton*, or "the younger." The word is derived from *qut* – to feel a loathing. The implication is that the elder is greater, and anything less is to be despised. And yet the younger, the lesser, was the first judge.

Then there was Ehud, the left-handed, and then Shamgar, son of Anath, or There a Stranger, Son of Affliction. The name itself implies that he was an unlikely candidate to do anything great. The clear point is that the Lord is using what is considered lesser to magnify His glory through the victories that are obtained.

As for the name Deborah, it is identical to the word *d'vorah*, a bee. That comes from *davar*, to speak. Thus, the name means Bee. However, beyond that, it implies Speaker or Formalizer, as in pronouncing a word.

She is next identified as a prophetess. So far in Scripture, only Miriam in Exodus 15:20 has been noted as such. The word prophetess comes from the verb *nava*, to prophesy. That is ultimately derived from a primitive root signifying to speak or sing by inspiration. She formalizes the word of the Lord for the people as she speaks forth what He has inspired.

She is next identified as the wife (or a woman) of Lapidoth. The word Lapidoth comes from *lapid*, a torch, lamp, lightning, etc. That was first used in Genesis 15:17 to describe the burning lamp of the Lord that passed through the divided animals. It also described the lightnings that flashed at the giving of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai.

That word then comes from an unused root, probably meaning to shine. What the words are saying is not readily discernible. Is Lapidoth a person, a location, or a descriptor?

Wife of Lapidoth, whose name means Torches (Lamp).

Woman of a location named Torches.

Woman of Torches, meaning a fiery spirit.

Woman of Flashes, as in a woman of splendors.

Etc.

If Lapidoth were her husband, it would be normal to identify what tribe he belonged to. None is given. Figuratively, the word *eshet* is applied to women at times, such as woman of foolishness (Proverbs 9:13), woman of contention (Proverbs 21:19), and woman of

valor (Proverbs 31:10). Therefore, it is no stretch to use a figurative meaning here as well. Of her, it next says she...

⁴ (con't) **was judging Israel at that time.**

hi shophtha eth Yisrael ba'eth ha'hi – “she was judging Israel in the time, the it.” She was the one who rendered decisions on behalf of the Lord, settled controversies, etc. However, she will also be the one to bring the afflicter of Israel to destruction, probably because Sisera would not expect a woman to go beyond ministerial duties to those of warfare. Of her duties, it next says...

⁵ **And she would sit under the palm tree of Deborah**

The verb is a participle: *v'hi yosheveth takhat tomer d'vorah* – “And she would sit under palm Deborah.” To sit means in judgment, as in Exodus 18:13, where it said Moses sat to judge the people. The palm is a symbol of uprightness and righteousness. With these words, one can get the sense of her sitting in the place of righteousness, conveying to the people the formalized word (*davar*) of the Lord. This was located...

⁵ (con't) **between Ramah and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim.**

ben ha'ramah u-ben beith el b'har ephrayim – “between the Ramah and between Bethel, in Mount Ephraim.” The Ramah means The Height or Lofty Place. Bethel means House of God. A mount (*har*) is a lot of something gathered. It is synonymous with a large but centralized group of people. Ephraim means Twice Fruitful and also Ashes.

⁵ (con't) **And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.**

vayaalu eleha bene Yisrael la'mishpat – “And ascended unto her sons Israel to the judgment.” To ascend does not necessarily mean in elevation, but in position, such as a subordinate going up to a person of higher rank or respect. This is the meaning here. She is the judge of Israel, and thus, the people ascend to her in that capacity.

⁶ **Then she sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali,**

va'tishlakh va'tiqra l'baraq ben avinoam miqedesh Naphtali – “And sends and calls to Barak son Abinoam from Kedesh Naphtali.” Without saying it, the implication is that she received a divine word to pass on as instruction. But more, what transpires implies that she has full authority to rule.

She will appoint the commander of the army and direct him accordingly. But more still, he is considerably north of where she is, and yet, he acknowledges her call and comes to her.

Barak means Lightning.

Abinoam comes from *av*, meaning father. The *i* is either possessive or locative, and *noam* means delightfulness or pleasantness. Thus, the name means something like My Father is Pleasantness (Delightfulness) or Father of Pleasantness (Delightfulness).

Kedesh means Holy or Sacred.

Naphtali means My Wrestlings or My Twistings, but it has a secondary meaning of Crafty.

6 (con't) **and said to him, “Has not the LORD God of Israel commanded,**

Her words are a Hebrew form of an emphatic proclamation: *vatomer elav halo tsivah Yehovah elohe Israel* – “And said unto him, ‘Has not commanded Yehovah God Israel.’” In other words, Yehovah, the God of Israel, has definitely commanded according to her words, which are...

6 (con't) **‘Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor;**

It is a difficult clause: *lek u-mashakhta b’har tavor* – “Go and draw in Mount Tabor.” The word *mashakh* signifies to draw, such as drawing Joseph out of the pit, drawing lambs out for the Passover, making a long draw on a horn, drawing a bow, etc.

The next verse will use the same word concerning the army of Sisera. Hence, it seems deploy, as in arraying the troops, is probable. Thus, the next clause is instructive concerning this one – “You will array your troops, and in your deploying, you will take ten thousand men.”

Mount Tabor is just a bit east of Nazareth. The name Tabor may come from *barar*, to purify or clarify and would mean Purified, Purifying, or Clarifying. However, Strong’s connects it to *tvar*, to break, and calls it Broken Region. As early as the third century AD, Mount Tabor was considered the Mount of Transfiguration.

⁶ (con't) **take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun;**

Matthew Poole gives several reasons for naming these tribes –

“... partly, because they were nearest and best known to Barak, and therefore soonest brought together; partly, because they were nearest to the enemy, and therefore must speedily be assembled, ... and partly, because these had most smarted under their oppressor...”

Being a multiple of ten it “implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete” (Bullinger).

As for Zebulun, it means Glorious Dwelling Place.

⁷ **and against you I will deploy Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his multitude at the River Kishon;**

The NKJV rearranges the words. They begin with *u-mashakhti elekha el nakhal qishon eth sisra sar tseva yavin* – “and I will draw unto you (sg.) unto River Kishon Sisera, commander host Jabin.” The word *mashakh*, or draw, is again used. Hence, the idea of deploying forces in battle array seems to be what is intended.

The River Kishon is a bit south and west of Nazareth and a bit north and east of Megiddo, very close to modern-day Afula. The word translated as river, *nakhal*, comes from the verb *nakhal* signifying to take possession. Kishon comes from the verb *qush*, to lay bait or lure. Thus, it means Snarer or Place of Snaring (or Ensnarement). It is an appropriate name for the moment.

It next says in the singular (which here stands for the plural): *v’eth rikvo v’eth hamono* – “and his chariot and his multitude.” If all nine hundred chariots were deployed, the entire army with them would be rather sizeable. Despite this, a promise from the Lord is given...

⁷ (con't) **and I will deliver him into your hand’?”**

The verb is in the perfect aspect: *unthatihu b’yadekha* – “And have given him in your hand.” It is a done deal. All Barak needs to do is engage the enemy. The Lord has

assured the outcome. Despite this, Barak's failing to trust in this actually being a divine word shines forth in the next words...

⁸ And Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go!"

Rather, the first responding verb is perfect aspect: *vayomer eleha baraq im telkhi imi v'halakhti v'im lo telkhi imi lo elekh* – "And said unto her Barak, 'If you will go with me, and I have gone. And if no will go with me, no I will go.'"

Of this, Keil – in line with numerous others – ridiculously says, "certainly not for the reason suggested by Bertheau, viz., that he distrusted the divine promise given to him by Deborah, but because his mistrust of his own strength was such that he felt too weak to carry out the command of God."

The guarantee is victory, regardless of his own strength. Keil is saying exactly the same thing as Bertheau, but denying he is saying it. The reason isn't that he doesn't trust the divine promise of the Lord. The reason is that he doesn't trust her words are a divine promise of the Lord. If she goes with him, then it will confirm that she believes the words she has said.

In other words, a person may claim the rapture is going to be on 25 September ☺, but if he keeps asking for people to give to his ministry so that he can pay the bills and send his kids to college, his claims are obviously suspect – I mean, obviously! Likewise, this isn't a distrust of the Lord, or he wouldn't go even with Deborah. The aspect of the verbs shows this –

- "If you will go with me, and I have gone." There is trust in the word if the communicator of the word is reliable.
- "And if no will go with me, no I will go." There is no trust in the word because the communicator of the word is not reliable.

Despite this, there is a penalty for not trusting the commission that rested upon her...

Has not the Lord spoken His word?

And is it not reliable enough to pay heed?

It is a tested and mighty sword

Open it up and give it a read

*Has not the Lord confirmed His word?
Again and again, He has done so
Therefore let us strive to live in accord
With this precious gift we have come to know*

*The Lord has spoken it out as a guide
We can confidently place our full trust in it
And so, let us determine and decide
To glean from it every precious tidbit*

II. And the Lord Routed Sisera (verses 9-16)

⁹ So she said, “I will surely go with you;

vatomer halokh elekh imakh – “And said, ‘Going I will go with you.’” Her words show absolute confidence in the matter. She had received a divine word, and she had passed it on accordingly...

^{9 (con’t)} nevertheless there will be no glory for you in the journey you are taking,

ephes ki lo tihyeh tiphartekha al ha’derek asher atah holekh – “A cessation, for no will be your glory upon the way which you are going.” The noun *ephes* means exactly that, a cessation. In this case, it is a way of saying that this is a final word on a particular matter. Thus, it is usually paraphrased as something like “nevertheless.”

She will certainly go with him, but because of his peevishness, Barak has guaranteed that he will not be the one who is most remembered for the victory the Lord will provide. Rather, and embarrassingly...

^{9 (con’t)} for the LORD will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.”

Barak has been commissioned to lead the host into battle. The battle will be engaged and won. But instead of him being given the ultimate honor for having won it, a woman will receive the greater glory. The thought is expressed in 2 Samuel 12 concerning such a victory –

“Now Joab fought against Rabbah of the people of Ammon, and took the royal city. ²⁷ And Joab sent messengers to David, and said, ‘I have fought against Rabbah, and I have taken the city’s water supply. ²⁸ Now therefore, gather the rest

of the people together and encamp against the city and take it, lest I take the city and it be called after my name.’” 2 Samuel 12:26-28

Instead of honor, a later account in Judges will help explain the humiliating nature of Deborah’s words –

“But a certain woman dropped an upper millstone on Abimelech’s head and crushed his skull. ⁵⁴Then he called quickly to the young man, his armorbearer, and said to him, ‘Draw your sword and kill me, lest men say of me, “A woman killed him.”’ So his young man thrust him through, and he died.” Judges 9:53, 54

⁹ (con’t) **Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh.**

vataqam d’vorah vatelekh im baraq qedshah – “And arose, Deborah, and went with Barak Kedesh-ward.” Deborah is perfectly confident that the word she has received is reliable. Barak is now convinced as well. He has come to trust not just the word of the Lord but the messenger of the Lord who gave it.

¹⁰ **And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh;**

vayazeq baraq eth zevulun v’eth Naphtali qedshah – “And cried out, Barak, Zebulun and Naphtali Kedesh-ward.” The word here is not the same as in verse 6, translated as “called.” Rather, it is *zaaq*. It means to cry out. In this case, it implies for the people to hear and respond for battle, heading for Kedesh. Once gathered...

¹⁰ (con’t) **he went up with ten thousand men under his command, and Deborah went up with him.**

Here is an idiom signifying authority: *vayaal b’raglav asereth alphe ish vataal imo d’vorah* – “And ascended in his feet ten thousand man, and ascended with him Deborah.” It is as if he is leading, and the men are following along in his steps, being in submission to him. The idiom will be explained in verse 14, where it says, “after him.”

There are no horses or chariots among them. Each followed in his steps while Sisera’s vast and well-equipped army awaited them. But they had Deborah with them, and that means they had the certain word of the Lord assuring their victory.

With that, a new figure is introduced. When such a seemingly arbitrary introduction is made, it usually signifies an important figure is actually being introduced. For example, in Genesis 22, a seemingly unimportant addendum is added at the end of the chapter –

“Now it came to pass after these things that it was told Abraham, saying,
“Indeed Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor: ²¹ Huz his firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel the father of Aram, ²² Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel.” ²³ And Bethuel begot Rebekah. These eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham’s brother. ²⁴ His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah, Gaham, Thahash, and Maachah.” Genesis 22:20-24

And yet, this seemingly irrelevant passage becomes fully understandable in Genesis 24, which deals with the continuation of the line of promise through the marriage of Isaac to Rebekah. Likewise, what is next said will lead to the fulfillment of Deborah’s prophecy from the Lord.

¹¹ Now Heber the Kenite, of the children of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, had separated himself from the Kenites

Rather: *v’khever ha’qeni niprad miqayin, mibene khovav khothen mosheh* – “And Heber the Kenite has separated from Kain, from sons Hobab, in-law Moses.” The Kenites were a nomadic people who came out of the wilderness with Israel at the time of Moses. They were related to Moses by marriage. The term *khathan*, or in-law, is used. This can be a father-in-law, brother-in-law, etc. The word carries the idea of affinity through marriage in various ways.

This person, Heber, separated himself from the other Kenites as nomadic people will do. The reason for stating this is because the Kenites were mentioned as being in the Wilderness of Judah in Judges 1:16.

Heber means Associate, Companion, Fellowship, etc., coming from the verb *khavar*, to unite or join.

Kenite is a patronym derived from Qayin, or Kain. That name is derived from *qanah*, to acquire. However, it is also etymologically connected to *qayin*, spear. To further complicate things, Jones’ Dictionary takes the meaning from Numbers 24:21, tying it to the word *qen*, or nest. Thus, various names can be considered: Acquire, People of the Spear, Nestling, etc.

Kain (Cain) bears the same possible meanings as Kenite.

Hobab comes from *khavav*, to love. Thus, it means Cherished, Loved, Beloved, etc.

Moses means He Who Draws Out.

Of Heber, it says...

11 (con't) and pitched his tent near the terebinth tree at Zaanaim, which is beside Kedesh.

vayet aholo ad elon batsanim asher eth qedesh – “And stretched his tent until terebinth in Zaanaim (or until Elon-Zaanaim) which with Kadesh.” The meaning is that the area of his nomadic lifestyle took him as far as the terebinth tree, which is in the area of Zaanaim in the same area as Kedesh.

Elon is an oak or a terebinth. But that is also derived from *ayil*, a ram. That is then derived from *ul*, a word that gives the sense of strength.

Zaanaim comes from *tsaan*, to wander or travel about. Hence it means Migrations, Wanderings, or Removals.

12 And they reported to Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor.

vayagidu l'sisra ki alah baraq ben avinoam har tavor – “And told (pl.) to Sisera, for has ascended Barak son Abinoam Mount Tabor.” The plural means that it was probably not Heber that told them. Sisera was referred to in the singular in the previous verse. It is rather a general statement that his men or someone aligned with him told of Barak's position. With this information at hand, it next says...

13 So Sisera gathered together all his chariots, nine hundred chariots of iron,

vayazeq sisra eth kal rikvo tesha meoth rekhev barzel – “And cried out, Sisera all his chariot, nine hundred chariot iron.” In discovering that Barak is on the mountain, Sisera would be able to surround it and compel him to surrender. There could not be a long siege without a city filled with supplies to sustain them. And along with the chariots...

13 (con't) and all the people who were with him, from Harosheth Hagoyim to the River Kishon.

The words refer to the vast plain on the bank of the Kishon that could sustain Sisera's chariots in battle. This is where he had planned on conducting the battle, and it would have been a highly effective place to do so. But he is drawn away from this choice area to go to Mount Tabor. This was exactly the plan set forth to trap him. And it worked...

¹⁴ Then Deborah said to Barak, “Up! For this *is* the day in which the LORD has delivered Sisera into your hand.

vatomer d'vorah el baraq qum ki zeh ha'yom asher natan Yehovah eth sisra b'yadekha – “And said, Deborah, ‘Arise! For this the day which has given Yehovah Sisera in your hand.’ Sisera is as a gift from the Lord to be defeated.

All they need to do is engage the battle because the gift has already been bestowed. To assure him that this is so, she gives another emphatic proclamation...

¹⁴ (con't) Has not the LORD gone out before you?”

halo Yehovah yatsa l'phanekha – “Has not Yehovah gone out to your face?” In verse 6, she asked, “Has not commanded Yehovah God of Israel?” At that time, Barak doubted her words as being inspired. Now, he has no reason to do so. She had accompanied him, and the battle was strategically ready. With the assurance of the Lord going before him, it could not but succeed...

¹⁴ (con't) So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him.

More precisely, “And descended from Mount Tabor, and ten thousand man following him.” The sudden rushing of Barak's men would render many chariots all but useless. They needed to be properly aligned and carefully prepared for an impending battle.

Despite this, there would still be many chariots that might be able to carry out an attack. And yet, Barak and his men left the higher ground and engaged on the plain. Chaos was sure to ensue, and it did...

¹⁵ And the LORD routed Sisera and all *his* chariots and all *his* army with the edge of the sword before Barak;

The wording is very peculiar and seems to not fit: *vayaham Yehovah eth sisra v'eth kal ha'rekhev v'eth kal ha'makhaneh l'pi kharev liphne barak* – “And confused Sisera and all the chariot and all the camp to mouth sword to face Barak.”

The phrase “to mouth sword” is usually associated with the act of directly killing the enemy, not as an overall phrase of battle as it is used here. John Lange paraphrases it by saying, “in the conflict.” However, the use of *kherev* is intentional and is certainly telling us something typologically.

As for the word translated as “confused,” it is the same word, *hamam*, that the Lord used when He promised this in Exodus 23 –

“I will send My fear before you, I will **cause confusion** [*hamam*] among all the people to whom you come, and will make all your enemies turn *their* backs to you. ²⁸ And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before you.” Exodus 23:27, 28

The word signifies to make a noise or move noisily, and thus to cause confusion. This is ascribed to the Lord, and so whatever threw them into confusion, it is exactly what the Lord promised in Exodus 23. There was absolute chaos among the foes. Also...

¹⁵ (con’t) **and Sisera alighted from *his* chariot and fled away on foot.**

vayered sisra meal ha’merkvaḥ vayanah b’raglav – “and descended Sisera from upon the chariot and fled in his feet.” This was probably an attempt to fit in with the rest of the people and not be identified as the commander. John Lange gives his impression of the battle –

“It must have been his intention, in case Barak did not attack, to surround him on the mountain, and thus compel him to descend into the valley. But before the terrible chariot-force has well arranged itself, the Israelitish army, fired with divine enthusiasm by Deborah, and led by Barak, charges down on the flanks of the enemy, and breaks up their battle ranks. Everything is thrown into confusion—panic terrors ensue,— everything turns to flight. The great captain has lost his head; of all his strategic plans nothing remains; only presence of mind enough is left him to seek salvation from destruction by not fleeing in his chariot, nor with the others.” John Lange

While Sisera was fleeing, it next says...

¹⁶ **But Barak pursued the chariots and the army as far as Harosheth Hagoyim,**

v’baraq radaph akhare ha’rekhev v’akhare ha’makhaneh ad harosheth ha’goyim – “And Barak pursued after the chariot and after the camp until Harosheth Hagoyim.” The

enemy was pursued as far as the home of Sisera from where they came, and they were destroyed in the same area where they were supposedly to destroy Barak and his men...

^{16 (fin)} **and all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; not a man was left.**

The words speak of absolute victory for Barak: *vayipol kal makhaneh sisra l'pi kherev lo nishar ad ekhad* – “and fell all camp Sisera to mouth sword. No remained even to one.” So much for going out with your troops. The only survivor at this time is Sisera. The enemy had been destroyed to the last man.

Meanwhile, Sisera is heading in a northerly direction to find a safe haven in Hazor. If he makes it there, he will be the only one to convey to Jabin the details of what occurred.

For now, we must close in anticipation of completing the chapter next week. The one lesson that I give you here is to tell you that I do not disagree with Barak's decision to question the integrity of Deborah, unless he had previously dealt with her or was aware of her status as a prophetess.

There are innumerable people who claim divine revelation and a word from the Lord to this day. And yet, there is no reason to believe any of them. The Bible is complete. It finishes with a note about the grace of our Lord Jesus and the word Amen. We don't need any further revelation from the Lord.

What we need has been provided. Not a single prophecy or supposed divine utterance since the completion of the Bible has any bearing on what the church or those in it need to know. Hold fast to this word and be confident in it. Our lives will unfold exactly as they should without trying to pry into things that God has not already given us in His word. Hold fast to Scripture alone, and you will do well.

Closing Verse: *“Deal with them as with Midian,
As with Sisera,
As with Jabin at the Brook Kishon.” Psalm 83:9*

Next Week: Judges 4:17-24 Ooh ah! What will it tell... when we are through? (Deborah, Judge of Israel, Part II) (12th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Deborah, Judge of Israel, Part I

When Ehud was dead, stiff as a board
The children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD

So the LORD sold them into the hand
Of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor
The commander of his army was Sisera
Who dwelt in Harosheth Hagoyim, he was a man of war

And the children of Israel cried out to the LORD
For Jabin had nine hundred chariots of iron, pretty swell
And for twenty years
He had harshly oppressed the children of Israel

Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth
Was judging Israel at that time, keeping things afloat

And she would sit under the palm tree of Deborah
Between Ramah and Bethel, there her time was spent
In the mountains of Ephraim
And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment

Then she sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam
From Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him this and maybe more
“Has not the LORD God of Israel commanded
‘Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor

Take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali
-----and of the sons of Zebulun, please understand
And against you I will deploy Sisera, the commander of
-----Jabin’s army
With his chariots and his multitude at the River Kishon
And I will deliver him into your hand’?”

And Barak said to her, “If you will go with me, then I will go
But if you will not go with me, I will not go! Oh no, no!

So she said, “I will surely go with you

Nevertheless there will be no glory for you in the journey
-----you are taking
For the LORD will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman
Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh, her palm
-----she was temporarily forsaking

And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh
He went up with ten thousand men under his command
And Deborah went up with him
Just as they had planned

Now Heber the Kenite, of the children of Hobab the father-in-law
-----of Moses
Had separated himself from the Kenites
And pitched his tent near the terebinth tree at Zaanaim
Which is beside Kedesh so he could see the sights

And they reported to Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam
Had gone up to Mount Tabor, to Tabor he did roam

So Sisera gathered together all his chariots
Nine hundred chariots of iron, the line went on and on
And all the people who were with him
From Harosheth Hagoyim to the River Kishon

Then Deborah said to Barak, "Up!
For this is the day in which the LORD has delivered
-----Sisera into your hand
Has not the LORD gone out before you?"
So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men
-----following him, just as they had planned

And the LORD routed Sisera
And all his chariots and all his army, such was the output
With the edge of the sword before Barak
And Sisera alighted from his chariot and fled away on foot

But Barak pursued the chariots and the army
As far as Harosheth Hagoyim

And all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword
Not a man was left from that team

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 4:17-24 (DEBORAH, JUDGE OF ISRAEL, PART II)

Numbers are important in Scripture. Whether they are being used to describe how many days or years something occurred or the number of times things are listed, there is always a reason for the way things are structured. Nothing is superfluous. The following numbers are explained by E.W. Bullinger and are abbreviated from his longer analyses.

In this chapter, Deborah is mentioned five times. Five is the number of Grace. Barak is mentioned ten times. Ten marks the entire round of anything. The Lord (Yehovah) is mentioned eight times. Eight is the superabundant number.

God is mentioned twice, once as the Lord God of Israel. Two affirms there is a difference. There is a contrast between the two, but there is also a confirmation of something.

Jabin is mentioned seven times, the number of spiritual perfection. Sisera is mentioned thirteen times. That is the number of rebellion, apostasy, defection, corruption, disintegration, revolution, or some kindred idea.

Jael is mentioned four times. It is the number of things that have a beginning, things that are made, material things, and matter itself. It is the number of material completeness. Hence, it is the world number, and especially the city number.

Text Verse: *“Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.” Jude 1:3*

I was surprised to see how closely the meaning of the number of instances given above fits with the typology of what is presented. I won't go through that in any detail but set it forth for you as a challenge to do your own checking. It's kind of like a fun assignment by your favorite teacher 😊.

As you go through the Bible, check such things as how many times something is mentioned. Think on what is presented and consider why the Lord has included details like these. The word is a never-ending source of amazing facts, figures, patterns, metaphors, and so forth.

If you find your time reading the Bible to be boring, it's because you aren't being inventive. There is no end to the excitement you will find in this precious word. Enjoy this number challenge when you have time.

Wonderful things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. There Lay Sisera, Dead (verses 17-24)

¹⁷ However, Sisera had fled away on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite;

v'sisra nas b'raglav el ohel yael esheth khever ha'qeni – “And Sisera fled in his feet unto tent Jael, wife Heber the Kenite.” Women had their own tents, as was noted in Genesis 18:6 where Sarah had her own tent apart from Abraham.

Clarke notes that “according to the etiquette of the eastern countries, no person ever intrudes into the apartments of the women.” Thus, it would be far less suspect for him to go to a woman's tent. Because of the distance between the battle and where her tent was, Ellicott says –

“Three days must have elapsed since the battle before it would be possible for Sisera to fly on foot from the Kishon to ‘the nomad's terebinth.’ It may well be conceived that the unfortunate general arrived there in miserable plight—a starving and ruined fugitive.”

The name Jael comes from *yael*, a mountain goat or ibex. That, in turn, comes from *ya'al*, to avail, or to confer or gain profit or benefit. For example, it is used in 1 Samuel 12:21, saying, “And do not turn aside; for *then you would go* after empty things which cannot profit [*yaal*] or deliver, for they *are* nothing.”

Abarim notes that because the mountain goat is so sure of its footing, it is literally an animal that benefits from its practical skill. Yael literally means Mountain Goat, but the deeper meaning must be considered – One Who Gets Somewhere Because of a Practical Skill.

¹⁷ (con't) for *there was* peace between Jabin king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite.

Here, the term *beith*, or house, is used in its patronymic sense. The people were tent dwellers. The “house” of Heber means the family of Heber. Because there was peace between them, Heber’s house did not suffer oppression, as did the children of Israel (4:3).

As nomads, they made no claims upon the land. They tended to their flocks, moved as the seasons dictated, and lived without entering conflict or taking sides in conflicts. Therefore, they were left to roam, untouched by the normal tides of life. As such, this was a logical place to seek asylum...

¹⁸ And Jael went out to meet Sisera,

Here the nature of the woman’s privacy noted earlier is highlighted. Sisera did not enter the tent and demand protection. Rather, she came out to him and – seeing his plight – made the offer of refuge...

¹⁸ (con’t) and said to him, “Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me; do not fear.”

vatomer elav surah adoni surah elay al tira – “And said unto him, turn aside, my lord, turn aside unto me; not fear.” She makes the offer of refuge, calling him *adoni*, or my lord. It is a formal way of acknowledging him as honorably higher than herself.

Also, the repetition of “turn aside” is a way of calmly encouraging him that his flight is ended. There is no imposition laid upon her and no reason for him to venture further at this time. As for the words *al tira*, fear not, it signifies that he has no reason to fear being exposed to the pursuing enemy by her.

¹⁸ (con’t) And when he had turned aside with her into the tent, she covered him with a blanket.

vayasar eleha ha’ohelah vatkasehu ba’s’mikhah – “And turned aside unto her, the tent of her, and covered him in the *s’mikhah*. The covering, *s’mikhah*, is a word found only here in Scripture. It is derived from the verb *samakh*, to lean, lay, rest, or support.

There are numerous suggestions as to what it is, but it would be something commonly known among the Bedouins. Thus, it is probably a large goat’s hair tent-rug used for resting on that is commonly seen in such tents.

¹⁹ Then he said to her, “Please give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty.”

Of this, Lange says, “Sisera is not incautious. He proceeds to ask for drink, pleading thirst. She gives him of her milk. It is an ancient, oriental practice, common to all Bedouins, Arabs, and the inhabitants of deserts in general, that whoever has eaten or drunk anything in the tent, is received into the peace of the house. The Arab’s mortal enemy slumbers securely in the tent of his adversary, if he have drunk with him.”

Whether he knew of this custom is unknown. The fact that she invited him in and covered him was sufficient for him to then ask for water. It is the obvious need of a man who has fled a great distance. Rather than water, however, it says...

19 (con’t) So she opened a jug of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him.

The *nod*, or jug, would be a goatskin. It was also commonly used as a wineskin. In it was *khalav*, or milk, coming from the same root as *khelev*, or fat. Fat in Scripture signifies the richest or choicest part. She grants him not only something to drink to simply sustain him but something nourishing as well. She then covered him up...

20 And he said to her, “Stand at the door of the tent,

The verb is masculine imperative: *vayomer eleha amod petakh ha’ohel* – “And said unto her, ‘Stand (ms.imp.) door the tent.’” Without understanding the typology, it is unclear why the masculine form was used. Some think it was simply the more general form, “and might therefore be used for the more definite feminine” (Keil).

The *ohel*, or tent, comes from *ahal*, to be clear or shine. The sense is that a tent in a field is clearly conspicuous from a distance. Sisera doesn’t want someone to see the tent without her first being aware of it.

20 (con’t) and if any man comes and inquires of you, and says, ‘Is there any man here?’ you shall say, ‘No.’”

v’hayah im ish yavo u-shelekh v’amar hayesh poh ish v’amart ayin – “and it is if man comes and asks and says, ‘Is here man?’ and you have said, ‘None.’” To this point, nothing has been said concerning him being chased, even if it is obvious. A commander doesn’t run alone in his battle dress unless things haven’t gone well for him. He is thirsty and tired.

Thus, he has been in a hurry to get away from past events. Being the commander of the army, it is logical that people will be following after him to find him. He confirms this by

asking her to lie for him. However, he underestimates the bonds that have existed between Israel and Yael's people for many years now. She will not need to lie to anyone...

²¹ Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a tent peg and took a hammer in her hand,

vatiqakh yael eshet khever eth y'tad ha'ohel vatasem eth ha'maqeveth b'yadah – “And took Yael, wife Heber, peg the tent, and set the perforator in her hand.” The inclusion of the words “wife Heber” provides its own emphasis.

It was just noted that there was peace between Jabin and the house of Heber, and yet this tells us that the peace did not go as deeply as family allegiances. Jael was noted in verse 11 as being of the children of Hobab, the in-law of Moses. Despite having separated from the Kenites, the affections of the past relationships remained grounded between Israel and the Kenites.

As for this clause, it contains a new and rare word, *maqeveth*. It is a noun signifying a hole or an excavation, coming from *naqav*, to pierce. Translations say hammer. The tool is used to make a perforation into something. Thus, it is a perforator.

As it says, she set it in her hand, it could be a stone, a hammer, a shaped piece of metal, etc. It is something the tent dwellers would have handy for sinking pegs. With these commonly used objects, it next says...

²¹ (con't) and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple, and it went down into the ground;

Rather: *vatavo elav balat vathitqa eth ha'yathed b'raqato vatitsnakh ba'arets* – “And went to him in secrecy and blasted the peg in his temple, and descended in the earth.” The word *lat*, a secret or a mystery, is used. Like Eva Marie Saint, she stealthily took action. Once near enough, and with the precision of John Wick, she gave a fatal headshot to Sisera.

The word *taqa*, a thrust, clap, or blast is used. At times, it signifies blasting on a trumpet. In this case, it is the blasting sound of pounding on a tent peg. As for the word translated as temple, *raqah*, this is the first of five times it will be seen. It comes from the word *raq*, thinness. Thus, it is the thin part of the head that we call the temple.

Whether one blow or multiple whacks, she drilled it through one temple, out the other side, and right into the earth itself...

²¹ (con't) **for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died.**

Of the next words, John Lange's commentary says, "The passage is a curiosity in interpretation. Regardless, it is emphatic: *v'hu nirdam vayaaph vayamoth* – "And HE, dead asleep and flying. And dies."

Here is another new word, *radam*. It comes from a primitive root signifying to stun. Thus, it means to stupefy with sleep or death. As he was in a deep sleep and went straight to death, translating it as dead asleep seems to be a nice touch.

The next word, *uph*, signifies to fly. It comes from *oph*, bird. Thus, it is idiomatically meant to be faint or weary, just as when a very weary person's head will swirl as if flying. Some translations say swooned, but this is surely speaking of his state, not what happened to him.

²² **And then, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him,**

v'hinneḥ baraḡ rodeph eth sisra vatetse yael likrato – "And behold, Barak pursues Sisera. And came out Jael to meet him." As noted earlier, this would have been obvious to her. Sisera was alone, weary, and would have had his battle attire on. She knew he was routed, and it had to be Israel who did so. All she had to do was wait, and someone would be along to collect his corpse.

There is no reason to assume that Barak suddenly showed up just as she was finishing the job. It simply notes that Barak was pursuing Sisera. He pursued, and she came out to meet him...

²² (con't) **and said to him, "Come, I will show you the man whom you seek."**

There is no hint of Barak first questioning her. She knew exactly why he was there and who he was looking for. One can imagine her smiling and speaking with a tone of pure satisfaction, or even jubilation, in her voice; "Come on in and check this out..."

²² (con't) **And when he went into her tent, there lay Sisera, dead with the peg in his temple.**

vayavo eleha v'hinne sisra nophel met v'ha'yathed b'raqato – “And went unto her, and behold, Sisera fallen – dead – and the peg in his temple.” She had purposefully left the peg in his temple, certainly for the shock value that it would bring. Sisera wasn't just dead, but he was left on display with his head fixed to the ground.

The number of commentaries that absolutely excoriate her for what she did reveals an attitude not seen in Scripture. Through several paragraphs, Keil distances himself from her, as if she is some type of pariah. At one point, he says, “her heroic deed cannot be acquitted of the sins of lying, treachery, and assassination, which were associated with it.”

Clarke, likewise, seems a bit unhappy with her conduct, saying, “Now do we not find, in all this, bad faith, deceit, deep hypocrisy, lying, breach of treaty, contempt of religious rites, breach of the laws of hospitality, deliberate and unprovoked murder?”

That is not how she is viewed in Scripture, nor do such words align with the very next words in the passage...

²³ So on that day God subdued Jabin king of Canaan in the presence of the children of Israel.

There is a subtle pun in the words: *v'yakhna elohim ba'yom ha'hu eth yavin melek k'naan liphe bene Yisrael* – “And humbles, God, in the day, the it, Jabin king of Canaan to faces sons Israel.” The word *kana* is the root of Canaan. It signifies to humble or subdue. Likewise, Canaan means Humbled, Humiliated, or Subdued.

The name Yehovah, translated as Lord, is used eight times in this chapter. Once, it is in connection with the word *elohim*, “Has not the Lord God of Israel commanded” (verse 6). Now, only *elohim*, or God, is used. This signifies Powers or Forces that exist within Him. What seems to be the reason for the change is what it said in verse 9, “...nevertheless there will be no glory for you in the journey you are taking, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.”

Jael became the instrument by which the Powers humiliated Jabin. His armies were already defeated, but more than just a rout, a woman completed the task by destroying the leader of the army. This was by design of the Lord, and it is hard to imagine how anyone could impute wrongdoing to her for having sided with Israel.

²⁴ And the hand of the children of Israel grew stronger and stronger against Jabin king of Canaan,

There is a sense of motion and increase in the words: *vatelekh yad bene Yisrael halokh v'qashah al yavin melek k'naan* – “And goes hand sons Israel, going, and harsh upon Jabin, king Canaan.” For twenty years, Jabin “harshly oppressed the children of Israel” (verse 3). And rightfully so. He was the instrument of the Lord’s affliction against Israel.

They had done evil in the sight of the Lord, and they got what He said they would get for their deeds. Eventually, they had suffered enough, and He sent word through Deborah that their time of servitude was to end. With the defeat of Sisera, the hand of Israel grew...

^{24 (fin)} until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

Josephus says that it was at this time, as Barak went toward Hazor, that he met and killed Jabin. But that does not align with the words here: *ad asher hikhretho eth yavin melek k'naan* – “until which had destroyed Jabin king Canaan.”

The words show a process. It wasn’t as if Jabin was destroyed immediately after this defeat, but Israel progressed until the point in which he was finally eliminated. With that, the chapter ends. It is a note of victory for Israel, but it was according to the purpose and plan of God. Hence, we can anticipate that the events form typology concerning future events...

*The word of God, holy and pure
Is given to us from His wise and loving hand
Through it, our faith is strong and sure
On the word of God, we can make our stand*

*With it, we know what is right for salvation unto life
And we know when to reject that which is wrong
Through sound doctrine, we can weed out theological strife
And our faith will be sure, sound, and strong*

*Praise be to God, who has given us this precious word
He who has shown us what is true and right
The pages of the Bible are a precious cutting sword
Weeding out all that is false and revealing God’s glorious light*

II. Pictures of Christ

The passage began by noting Ehud's death in verse 1. He anticipated Christ in the last passage. Noting his death is intended to show that Christ's work is complete. As has been seen, the resurrection of Christ is implied in such typological statements.

Also, it was noted that the text implies that Israel did evil even before the death of Ehud and that it simply carried on after his death. This is not unlike Israel. Because of this, in verse 2, the Lord sold them into the hands of Jabin, meaning The Wise (Intelligent). What we see is a picture of those who come against sound doctrine, such as the intellectual elite. They stand against the wisdom of God –

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written:

‘I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,

And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.’

²⁰ Where *is* the wise? Where *is* the scribe? Where *is* the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. ²² For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Jabin is noted as the king of Canaan or Humbled. In this case, it signifies those who are humbled by rejecting the work of Christ. The text also noted he reigned in Hazor.

The name has various meanings, but the root word is what is instructing us. It comes from a word signifying “to begin to cluster or gather.” This is exactly what Paul writes of as expressed to Timothy –

“For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.” 2 Timothy 4:3 (NIV)

Such people are what the epistles focus on. They are the Gnostics with their secret wisdom. They are the intelligencia who are too smart for the gospel. They are those who want to divide and destroy for their own gain.

Continuing in verse 2, it noted the commander of his army was Sisera. Abarim explains that as See the Horse. The horse carries various connotations in Scripture, but it is a source of misplaced trust and pride, such as in Psalm 20:7 –

“Some *trust* in chariots, and some in horses;
But we will remember the name of the LORD our God.” Psalm 20:7

He is noted as dwelling in Harosheth Hagoyim, or Manufactory of the Gentiles. Abarim noted that this name “obviously embodied the strength and validity of systems of learning that were not part of Israel.” A good place to see where these words point is found in Colossians 2 –

“Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as *though* living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations— ²¹ “Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,” ²² which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of men? ²³ These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, *false* humility, and neglect of the body, *but are* of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.” Colossians 2:20-23

Paul’s words of Colossians 2 deal especially with the false teachings of the Judaizers. It is obvious that those Jews who rejected Christ are not of Israel. They are thus accounted as Gentiles in this regard, as Paul explains in Romans 9, where he says that “they *are* not all Israel who *are* of Israel.” This is their state during the church age.

The state of the church since its inception, and during all of the dispensation of grace, is one where it is harassed by those who manufacture systems of learning that are “not of Israel.” The church is not Israel, but it is grafted into the commonwealth of Israel (Ephesians 2:12).

The number of chariots noted in verse 3 was nine hundred. Thus, it speaks of both finality or judgment and completeness of order where nothing is wanting, meaning the whole cycle is complete. There is a time when the foes of the church will be judged, and it will be at the time when God deems the cycle is complete. That is mentioned by Paul in Romans 11:25 –

“For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.”

Understanding this, it then noted that this vehement oppression lasted for twenty years. As seen, twenty is the number of expectancy. That is just how the church age is defined based on the proper notion of a pre-tribulation rapture. The church age is a time set by God, but one that is left indeterminate in length for us.

Verse 4 introduced Deborah, Bee, but indicating Formalizer. She is the one who Formalizes the word of the Lord. She anticipates the New Testament. She is noted as 1) woman, 2) a prophetess, and 3) Wife (or Woman) of Torches (Lamps).

The word *diathéké*, a covenant or testament, is a feminine noun. The New Testament is a book of prophecy. The word is considered a lamp in Scripture. As the New Testament is 27 books, the plural Lamps is given. Consider this in light of Peter’s words –

“And we have the more certain prophetic word, to which you do well taking heed, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until this day shall have dawned and *the* morning star shall have arisen in your hearts, ²⁰knowing this first, that any prophecy of Scripture is not of its own interpretation. ²¹For no prophecy at any time was brought by *the* will of man, but men spoke from God, being carried by *the* Holy Spirit.” 2 Peter 1:19-21 (BLB)

In all of the ways Deborah is presented, she matches how we would describe the New Testament. Of her, it says that she “was judging Israel at that time.” It is another perfect description of the New Testament in relation to the church. She renders decisions on behalf of the Lord, settles controversies, etc.

Verse 5 says that she would sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in Mount Ephraim. Again, it describes the New Testament. She is “sitting in the place of righteousness conveying to the people the formalized word (*davar*) of the Lord.”

She does this between Height (Lofty Place) and the House of God. The Height, as in previous sermons, is the position the Lord places believers because of their faith in the Lord. Bethel anticipates heaven. The word is between these two locations.

The mount refers to the gathering of the believers, meaning all in the church. Ephraim means Twice Fruitful and Ashes. The first signifies that Christ's work has produced fruit in the conversion of both Jews and Gentiles. The second signifies the price He paid to make this possible, which was the afflictions He endured.

Verse 5 continued with, "And ascended unto her sons Israel to the judgment." This is where we go during this dispensation for judgment. We do not go to books of discipline or any other such nonsense, but especially to the New Testament epistles.

Verse 6 introduced Barak (Lightning), the son of Abinoam (Father of Pleasantness) from Kedesh (Holy) in Naphtali (My Wrestlings). Barak comes from a word found only once in Scripture –

"Flash forth lightning [*baraq*] and scatter them;
Shoot out Your arrows and destroy them.
⁷ Stretch out Your hand from above;
Rescue me and deliver me out of great waters,
From the hand of foreigners,
⁸ Whose mouth speaks lying words,
And whose right hand *is* a right hand of falsehood." Psalm 144:6-8

He represents the power of the Lord to scatter His enemies. Being the son of Father of Pleasantness means that His power is reserved, as will be seen in a moment. Kedesh, Holy, speaks of the state of those made holy by Christ, which is a result of His wrestlings, in order to secure our salvation.

Barak is directed to deploy with ten thousand of Naphtali and Zebulun at Mount Tabor, Purified. The number anticipates the fullness of the church where the whole cycle is complete. Zebulun, or Glorious Dwelling Place, signifies the position of believers in Christ, meaning the heavenly places, as noted in Ephesians 2:6.

Tabor speaks of the state of believers, such as is noted in Titus 2:14, saying, "who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His* own special people, zealous for good works."

Verse 7 described the deployment of the enemy at the, *nakhal qishon*, River Kishon. The verb *nakhal* signifies to take possession. Kishon means Place of Ensnarement. The meanings speak for themselves. Deborah, quoting the Lord, says that is where "I have given them in your hand."

However, Barak balks and says he will not go fight unless Deborah goes. It reveals the necessity for a complete reliance on the word of God. The Lord will not go around His word to defeat the enemies. Instead, the presence of the word is necessary to do so. That was clearly seen in the two propositions set forth –

- If you will go with me, and I have gone. There is trust in the word if the communicator of the word is reliable.
- And if no will go with me, no I will go. There is no trust in the word because the communicator of the word is not reliable.

Next, in verse 9, Deborah agreed but noted there would be no glory for Barak in the journey he was taking. The glory of the victory rests in adherence to the word, not by trusting in demonstrations of the Lord's power to scatter. It sets forth a striking rebuke concerning modern Charismatic and Pentecostal doctrines.

With that, a note that Sisera would be sold into the hands of a woman was provided. It then said that "Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh." The New Testament is given, and it accompanies the power of God to scatter.

Verse 10 noted that the men went as preplanned in verse 7 and that Deborah went with them.

Verse 11 brought in Heber (Associate) the Kenite (Acquire) of the children of Hobab (Loved), the in-law of Moses (He Who Draws Out). It speaks of those Gentiles (Associates) who have Acquired (Kenite) salvation through Christ's fulfillment of the law (Moses). They are united to Him by affinity through His imputed righteousness.

Still, in verse 11, it said Heber pitched his tent near the terebinth at Zaanaim (or Elon-Zaanaim) which is beside Kedesh (Holy). The terebinth (Elon) carries the idea of being mighty. It signifies Christ's state, which was then removed (Zaanaim / Removals or Migrations) in His migration to Earth. He exchanged His heavenly aspect for an earthly one but remained holy as He did.

After that, the battle was described. It was summed up in verse 15, saying that the Lord routed Sisera, his chariots, and his army with the edge of the sword. As always, the sword is a picture of the law. Sword and Horeb, where the law was given, are spelled identically in Hebrew.

The meaning is that if one is not under grace, he is – by default – under law. Those who have not come to God through Christ's fulfillment of the law will be judged by it. Sisera (See the Horse), however, escaped and fled on foot while Barak pursued the army as far as Harosheth Hagoyim.

There it noted that not a man of the army was left, but all fell by the edge of the sword. The power of God, through the fulfillment of the law, destroyed the enemy. The verse speaks of absolute victory.

Verse 17 referred to Sisera fleeing to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite. Her name means Mountain Goat, but the deeper meaning is One Who Gets Somewhere because of a Practical Skill.

She anticipates the body of believers, the church, or *ekklésia*, a feminine noun. There are individual believers that make up the church, and there is the church. The two are a united entity. But more specifically, it is the church that gets somewhere because of a practical skill.

It is the doctrines of the church that cause the church to function properly and to destroy the falsities of those who come against her. She went out to meet Sisera and invited him in, telling him not to fear. After that, she covers him with a *s'mikhah*, something that should be used for resting on, laying on, leaning on, etc.

Instead of supporting him, it is a covering over him. After that, he asks for water, but she gives him milk. 1 Corinthians 1 and Hebrews 5 show that milk signifies a state of spiritual immaturity. Peter equates the word to pure milk. The picture here is that of lulling the enemy with basic doctrine.

With that, she again covers him while he gives her a masculine imperative to stand at the door of the tent. As noted, the *ohel*, or tent, comes from *ahal*, to be clear or to shine. A tent in a field is clearly conspicuous from a distance. Sisera doesn't want to appear unprepared in the tent of the church.

As for the masculine imperative command, this is certainly used because even though the church is a feminine entity, it is comprised of believers who are considered a masculine entity.

With that, verse 21 noted that Jael, Heber's wife, took a tent peg and a hammer, a perforator, in her hand. The emphasis on her being his wife indicates that the church is

joined to believers only. Those who are not believers may “come to church,” but they are not of “the church.”

The tent peg is a clear reference to Christ –

“From him comes the cornerstone,
From him the tent peg,
From him the battle bow,
From him every ruler together.” Zechariah 10:4

The *yathed* or peg in this verse has always been considered a metaphor for the Messiah, upon whom all of the messianic promises are fixed and fulfilled. It is with the peg, Christ, that Jael went secretly.

The word is *lat*, a secret or a mystery. Paul refers to several mysteries in the church, but the main one that he speaks of is the union of Christ and the church, specifically as Gentiles are brought into it, and thus, the Gentile bride, as was foreshadowed in several Old Testament stories.

Jael, the feminine body (the church), took and blasted the peg (Christ) right through the head of Sisera (See the Horse), meaning misplaced trust and pride. Once that was accomplished, Barak, the power of God to scatter, showed up and was invited into her tent.

It then said, “And went unto her, and behold, Sisera fallen – dead – and the peg in his temple.” Notice that it didn’t say “into her tent,” but “unto her.” The power of God to scatter enters the church.

The victory was complete, and the final portion of it was granted to the church. This does not indicate, as many claim, that the church, as an independent body, will destroy wickedness and usher in perfection on earth.

Rather, Christ is said to be the Head of the church in both Ephesians and Colossians. The power of God to scatter (Barak) beheld the dead body of Sisera (misplaced trust and pride), killed by the church of whom Christ is the Head, and which was done in accord with the formalized word of God, not apart from it.

Verse 23 then noted that God subdued Jabin, king of Canaan, in the presence of the children of Israel. Jabin, the supposedly wise or intelligent one, is already defeated, as

indicated by being the king of Canaan (Subdued) but he is further subdued as the church continues in sound doctrine.

That will come to its completion someday at the rapture, another noted mystery of Christ when it will be too late for the wise of the world. Destruction will come on a global scale and a new dispensation will be ushered in after that time.

The point of the verses today is that God is working through the church to accomplish the redemptive plans set forth during this dispensation. He is revealing His nature, His goodness, His sole path to reconciliation, His wisdom, and so much more through the church.

However, He is not doing this through active working of power (miracles, signs, wonders, etc.) as when He first established the church. That ended with the completion of Scripture, meaning the New Testament. The typology here shows this, clearly and unambiguously.

God is not working apart from His word but in accord with it. And that is accomplished through those who adhere to it. The passage is one that reveals the need for sound biblical doctrine to overcome the enemies we face. And we cannot get that apart from the word He has given.

The lesson then is to read the word, study the word, know the word, and be a part of the church that works in accord with the word. If we do this, we will be in the sweet spot. And how sweet it is.

Closing Verse: *"How sweet are Your words to my taste,
Sweeter than honey to my mouth!*

*¹⁰⁴ Through Your precepts I get understanding;
Therefore I hate every false way."* Psalm 119:103, 104

Next Week: Judges 5:1-5 *It's not blah, blah, blah, but so amazing and fun...* (The Song of Deborah, Part I) (13th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Deborah, Judge of Israel, Part II

However, Sisera had fled away on foot to the tent of Jael
The wife of Heber the Kenite, yes that's right
For there was peace between Jabin king of Hazor
And the house of Heber the Kenite

And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said to him
"Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me; do not fear
And when he had turned aside with her into the tent
She covered him with a blanket, such a sweet old dear

Then he said to her
"Please give me a little water to drink, for thirsty I am
So she opened a jug of milk
Gave him a drink, and covered him, according to her plan

And he said to her
"Stand at the door of the tent and if any man comes and
-----inquires of you
And says, 'Is there any man here?'
You shall say, 'No.' Thus, you shall do

Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a tent peg and took a hammer
-----in her hand
And went softly to him and drove into his temple the peg
And it went down into the ground
For he was fast asleep and weary. So he died, not having
-----a chance to beg

And then, as Barak pursued Sisera
Jael came out to meet him, and said to him, yes she said
"Come, I will show you the man whom you seek
And when he went into her tent, there lay Sisera
-----with the peg in his temple... dead

So on that day God subdued Jabin king of Canaan
In the presence of the children of Israel. Yes, they did sing
And the hand of the children of Israel grew stronger and stronger

Against Jabin king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin
-----Canaan's king

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 5:1-5 (THE SONG OF DEBORAH, PART I)

The Song of Deborah holds a special place in Scripture. Though Miriam picked up her short refrain at the time of the giving of the Song of Moses in Exodus 15, her words were merely a repeat of what Moses had already said –

“Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and spoke, saying:

‘I will sing to the LORD,
For He has triumphed gloriously!
The horse and its rider
He has thrown into the sea!’ Exodus 15:1

“Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took the timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. ²¹ And Miriam answered them:

‘Sing to the LORD,
For He has triumphed gloriously!
The horse and its rider
He has thrown into the sea!’” Exodus 15:20, 21

As such, this is really the first song given through a woman in the Bible. Two other similar enunciations are made by women, Hannah in 1 Samuel 2 and Mary in Luke 1. However, what Hannah says is specifically noted as a prayer, not a song. The words of Mary follow the same style as Hannah’s.

Therefore, though often called the Song of Hannah or the Song of Mary, they are not really comparable to what is recorded here in Judges 5. This makes the Song of Deborah unique in Scripture. It is the only true song coming from a woman.

Many of the Psalms are specifically called songs, but they are penned by men. As for the contents of this song, it really is a masterpiece of literature. Noted scholars give detailed thoughts on its structure, wording, etc. But the words are, at times, extremely complicated. They take care and thought to be properly rendered.

For example, Adam Clarke says the following concerning them –

“There are many difficulties in this very sublime song; and learned men have toiled much to remove them. That there are several gross mistakes in our version [meaning the KJV] will be instantly acknowledged by all who can critically examine the original.” Adam Clarke

I have examined the original and compared it word for word with the KJV. The word “several” is a gracious note from Clarke. They did a rather sloppy job in their rendering of what is so beautifully recorded in the original.

Text Verse: *“The LORD is my strength and my shield;
My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped;
Therefore my heart greatly rejoices,
And with my song I will praise Him.” Psalm 28:7*

The words of this verse from Psalm 28 almost mirror what has taken place in Judges 4. Deborah was confident in the Lord. She spoke her words to Barak who was a tad reticent to accept what she said. He challenged her to accompany him as a condition of his acceptance. She agreed because she was confident in the Lord. And in the Lord, she was helped.

Because of this, the words of the Song of Deborah came forth from her with rejoicing, as she praised the Lord. Of course, this has all been done under inspiration from the Lord. Therefore, the Lord has provided us not merely with a past story to commemorate, but hints of future events to anticipate. This will be seen as we wind through the song.

Concerning the structural contents of the song, though long, the John Lange Commentary gives a fair and well-presented sense of what we will be looking at in the coming verses –

“The form of the Song, as of the old Hebrew poetry generally, is that of free rhythm. The Song is a poetical stream: everywhere poetical, and yet untrammelled by any artistic division into strophes. Such a division, it is true, is not altogether wanting; but it is never made a rule. Consequently, efforts to force it systematically on the poem, while only traces of it show themselves, are all in vain. There is no want of finish; introduction and conclusion are well defined; but the pauses subordinate themselves to the thoughts, and these unfold themselves free as the waves. The peculiar character of the Song consists in the boldness of its imagery and the force of its unusual language. It appropriates, in a natural manner, all those forms which genuine poetry does not seek but produce; but it appropriates them all with a freedom which endures none as a rule,

yet without, like the natural stream, violating harmony. The Song, then, has strophes, but they are not of equal measure; it moves along in parallelisms, but with variations corresponding to the movement of the thought. The most interesting feature to be noticed, is the alliteration, which appears in the highest development and delicacy, as elsewhere only in the old Norse poems, but also with considerable freedom from restraint. It is important to notice this, because it testifies, more than any division into strophes that may exist, to the nature of the popular song and its lyrical use. The divisions which the poem certainly shows, are determined only by its own course of thought. They are: the praise of God, as introduction (Judges 5:2-5); the delineation of the emergency (Judges 5:6-8); the call to praise that the evil no longer exists (Judges 5:9-11); delineation of the victory and the victors (Judges 5:12-23); the fate of the enemy (Judges 5:24-31)." John Lange Commentary

It is hoped that the next few sermons will be a blessing to you. The content, in its own way, excited me unlike anything since the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32. Searching out the mind of God as it is displayed in poetry is a particular and unparalleled delight.

The Song of Deborah is an amazing and beautiful part of God's superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. I Will Sing to the Lord (verses 1-3)

¹ Then Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam sang on that day, saying:

vatahar Devorah u-baraq ben avinoam bayom hahu lemor – "And sang Deborah – and Barak, son Abinoam – in the day, the it, saying." These words introduce the Song of Deborah. It is the fourth recorded song in Scripture. The first was the song of Moses in Exodus 15:1. That was accompanied by the refrain of Miriam in Exodus 15:21.

After that came the Song of the Well introduced in Numbers 21:17. That was followed by the Song of Moses introduced in Deuteronomy 31 but which is recorded in Deuteronomy 32. Now comes this song, which is sung by Deborah and Barak, son of Abinoam. Of it, Albert Barnes says that "for poetic spirit and lyric fire, is not surpassed by any of the sacred songs in the Bible."

As Deborah was a prophetess (Judges 4:4), and as the words of several verses are in the first-person singular, such as 5:3, it is likely that the song was written solely by Deborah as she was inspired. The verb here, translated as "sang" is also feminine.

Thus, it can be assumed that the words were received and penned by her, but the singing would be as a duet. It could even be that at later times it was sung by groups of females and males as they remembered the time when it was originally sung by these two.

As for the words “on that day,” this does not have to mean a particular day, or the day of the event, it is a time marker that can signify “at that time.” The victory is complete, and at that time, or maybe even on that same day while the events of the battle were still fresh on their minds, the song was penned and it was sung by Deborah and Barak.

With these things considered, we now enter into the substance of the poem, beginning with...

**² “When leaders lead in Israel,
When the people willingly offer themselves,
Bless the LORD!**

biphroa p’raoth b’yisrael b’hitnadev am barakhu Yehovah

Each clause will be explained independently:

– **In freeing freemen in Israel.**

One can see the alliteration in the words, which I have replicated in the translation – *biphroa p’raoth* – “In freeing freedmen.”

The words are difficult. The first is *para’*. It signifies to let go, coming from a primitive root signifying to loosen. The sense is seen here –

“Where *there* is no revelation, the people cast off restraint [*para’*];
But happy *is* he who keeps the law.” Proverbs 29:18

Next, there is a rare word, *pera*, which is the same as *pera* – hair or locks. It is found only here and in Deuteronomy 32:42. It is uncertain what it means. However, Robert Young seems to have accurately defined it as “freemen.” Just as hair is free and becomes unkempt, so are these freed men. Remember what has occurred –

“When Ehud was dead, the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD. ² So the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army *was* Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth Hagoyim. ³ And the children of Israel cried out to the LORD; for Jabin had nine hundred chariots of iron, and for twenty years he had harshly oppressed the children of Israel.” Judges 4:1-3

Instead of being bound and oppressed by the enemy, they are now unkept and free. Literally, then, it reads “In loosening freedmen.” However, to maintain the alliteration, and because of the explanation that accompanies the translation, “In freeing freedmen” sweetly matches the style of the Hebrew.

Finally, these things were done, “in Israel.” The people were bound because the Lord had sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan. But now, the time of punishment is over, and the people of Israel have been freed, moving from being bondsmen to freedmen. Next...

– **In volunteering – people.**

The word is *nadav*. It means to incite or impel. Exodus 35 says –

Then everyone came whose heart was stirred [*nadav*], and everyone whose spirit was willing, *and* they brought the LORD’s offering for the work of the tabernacle of meeting, for all its service, and for the holy garments. /// The children of Israel brought a freewill offering to the LORD, all the men and women whose hearts were willing [*nadav*] to bring *material* for all kinds of work which the LORD, by the hand of Moses, had commanded to be done.

-Exodus 35:21 & 29

Also, the verb *nadav* is reflexive, meaning the direct object is the same as the subject. The people were impelled from within and so they acted. Therefore, “willingly offering themselves” correctly identifies their condition, but in one word, volunteering is the closest match.

This is also accompanied by a description of who is acting: people, meaning the freed people of Israel of the previous clause. This was reflected in the words of verse 4:10 that said, “And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; he went up with ten thousand men under his command.”

From Deborah's words, it shows that the people voluntarily came together and willingly followed Barak. In this occurrence, Deborah goes ballistic...

– **Bless Yehovah!**

I say she goes ballistic because you can almost see her throw out her arms like two missiles to the sky in elation concerning what has occurred. All she can do is rejoice with exhilaration.

The Lord was the Source of the inspiration to call for Barak. He had responded according to the word of the Lord, the people were summoned to battle, and they voluntarily went when called. With that, the victory was realized.

The people had trusted Barak who had, in turn, trusted the words of Deborah that had come from the Lord. Therefore, the credit is to the Lord who initiated, led, and brought about the victory: Bless Yehovah! Consider the thought now that the explanation has been provided.

biphroa p'raoth b'yisrael b'hitnadev am barakhu Yehovah –

It is a complementary a/b pattern followed by a note of praise.

(a) In freeing freemen in Israel.

(b) In volunteering – people.

Bless Yehovah!

The Lord, through the Spirit of prophecy freed the now free men. The people responded accordingly. The Lord is to be blessed. With that, Deborah continues her words...

³ **“Hear, O kings! Give ear, O princes!
I, even I, will sing to the LORD;
I will sing praise to the LORD God of Israel.**

*shimu melakhim haazinu roznim anokhi l'Yehovah anokhi ashirah azamer l'Yehovah
elohe Yisrael*

– **Hear, kings! Give ear, rulers!**

There is nothing difficult or unusual about the first two words. Deborah calls for the kings to hear what she will proclaim. It is a proclamation that calls for the utmost attention on their part.

The next word *haazinu* is a verb that comes from a primitive root probably meaning to expand. Thus, it signifies to broaden the ear. One can think of turning the head and stretching the muscles around the ear to open the canal, or maybe to even put one's hand by the ear to enable it to collect more sound. Thus, "Give ear."

She is magnifying the exhortation just given. "Hear and give ear!"

That is followed by a new word to Scripture, *razan*. That comes from a primitive root probably meaning to be weighty. Thus, one can think of that which is judicious or commanding. As such, it refers to a ruler. Being plural, "Give ear, rulers."

Deborah is calling for such important people as kings and rulers to pay careful and attentive heed to what she has to say. With that, she continues with emphatic and carefully chosen words that direct those rulers to the Source of what she will then explain...

– **I, to Yehovah, I sing – make melody – to Yehovah, God Israel.**

In Hebrew, one can make a statement to be first person through how the verb is spoken. For example, in Psalm 9:2, it says *azamrah shimkha Elyon* – "I sing to Your name, Most High." The verb *zamar* itself carries the first-person construct: *azamrah*.

In such a structure, the "I" is implied in the verb. For clarity, translators will often explicitly state I, just as in the example above. However, if it is already understood, it is more often than not ignored lest the translation get bogged down with too many I's.

We can do the same thing in English even though the verbs do not carry such a construct. If the listener gets the context, we can lazily accomplish this, like this marvelous example from my old friend Cornpone –

“Maaaa! Goin’ to the store. Gonna get some chitlins. Seein’ if’n you wants sumpin’ too?”

To add emphasis in Hebrew, one can openly proclaim “I.” This is what Deborah does. “I, to Yehovah, I sing (1st person) – I make melody (1st person) – to Yehovah.” Thus, the words are exceedingly emphatic.

Some translations even add in an emphatic marker, such as the NKJV, “I, even I, will sing.” This highlights the thought, but it is unnecessary if the context is understood.

Further, in this clause, the verbs are imperfect. Thus, many translations say, “I will sing.” But what is probably even more the meaning, because it is a song that is being sung at the time, one should think “I am singing.” Young’s says, “I do sing,” something that can be inferred in the simple words, “I sing.”

As for the verbs, the first is the same word stated in verse 1, *shir*, to sing. The second word, *zamar*, is introduced here. It is most frequently seen in the Psalms, and it is more complicated. It comes from a primitive root and is identified with the noun *zamar* which means to trim or prune, as in a vine. These two words probably meet in the thought of how it is translated by the NKJV in Psalm 33 –

“Praise the Lord with the harp;
Make melody [*zamar*] to Him with an instrument of ten strings.” Psalm 33:2

The idea is that as one strikes at the vine with a sort of clipping motion, so the hand also plays, striking the cords of the instrument as the fingers move. It can be assumed then, that when the psalms speak elsewhere of singing praises to the Lord while using this word, it would normally be inclusive of playing instruments.

Lastly, Deborah is doing these things *l’Yehovah elohe Yisrael* – to Yehovah, God Israel. In other words, her instruction to the kings and rulers is found in what she has sung to God. Therefore, if wise, they should acknowledge Him as well. With the explanation for the words provided, let us now return to the entire verse.

*shimu melakhim haazinu roznim anokhi l’Yehovah anokhi ashirah azamer
l’Yehovah elohe Yisrael –*

It is an a/a/b pattern.

- (a) Hear, kings!
- (a) Give ear, rulers!
- (b) I, to Yehovah, I sing – make melody – to Yehovah, God Israel.

Deborah has received the prophetic words from the Lord. She has seen them realized in the victory of Israel over the foe. As such, she wants the kings and rulers to pay heed. She cannot contain herself, but must vocalize what has transpired, returning her thoughts to Yehovah, the God of Israel. The words carry a similar calling forth as the words in Psalm 2 –

“Now therefore, be wise, O kings;
Be instructed, you judges of the earth.
¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear,
And rejoice with trembling.
¹² Kiss the Son, lest He be angry,
And you perish *in* the way,
When His wrath is kindled but a little.
Blessed *are* all those who put their trust in Him.” Psalm 2:10-12

With that, her singing and making melody to Yehovah next begins...

*The Lord reigns! Let the earth rejoice!
Let the multitude of the isles be glad
Let the nations raise a resounding voice
The Lord reigns! Let none be sad*

*He has triumphed victoriously!
The battle is won by His glorious right hand
Let us sing His praises continuously
The Lord alone! His achievements are grand*

*How great You are O God, our King
You lead the procession for Your redeemed
To You alone our hearts do sing
Victory in battle! Your sword has gleamed*

II. Before the Lord God of Israel (verses 4 & 5)

⁴ **“LORD, when You went out from Seir,
When You marched from the field of Edom,
The earth trembled and the heavens poured,
The clouds also poured water;**

*Yehovah b'tsetkha mi'seir b'tsad'kha misdeh edom eretz raasha gam shamayim nataphu
gam avim natphu mayim*

– **Yehovah, in your going out from Seir.**

The words hearken back to Moses' words in the Song of Moses from Deuteronomy 33 –

“The LORD came from Sinai,
And dawned on them from Seir;
He shone forth from Mount Paran,
And He came with ten thousands of saints;
From His right hand
Came a fiery law for them.” Deuteronomy 33:2

Deborah is metaphorically considering the spiritual birth of Israel as a people, just as Moses did. Seir is the land where Esau, Jacob's older brother settled. The location is that which surrounds Mount Seir, a mountain with low bushes on it which gives it a hairy appearance. Hence, it is called Seir, or Hairy.

Hair in the Bible signifies an awareness of things, especially in relation to sin. One can think of Christ, Yehovah incarnate. He came in the likeness of sinful man, even though He bore no sin. This is seen, for example, in Romans 8 –

“For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh.” Romans 8:3

Remember that Deborah was an Israelite who lived under the law, but typologically, she anticipates the New Testament. Thus, her words speak metaphorically of the Lord, but they also anticipate the Lord incarnate.

– **In Your march from field Edom.**

The word translated as march is from a primitive root signifying to pace. Thus, it is to step regularly. In a field, it would be a march. The *sadeh*, or field, is typical of the world, as Jesus says in His parable in Matthew 13:38, “The field is the world.”

Edom is synonymous with Seir. That is seen in Genesis 32 –

“And Jacob sendeth messengers before him unto Esau his brother, towards the land of Seir, the field of Edom.” Genesis 32:3 (YLT)

However, Edom is also the name of Esau –

“So Esau dwelt in Mount Seir. Esau *is* Edom.” Genesis 36:8

Esau is the made man, his name coming from *asah*, to make. He was born covered in hair, and thus he was called Esau because of this particular trait. It was as if he was born a fully developed man.

Edom comes from *adom*, red, which then comes from *adam*, to be red. It is the same root as the name of Adam, the man who was formed by the Lord –

“And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”

-Genesis 2:7

Thus, this parallel clause again points back to Israel’s inception, but also forward to the coming of Christ Jesus, the last Adam –

“And so it is written, ‘The first man Adam became a living being.’ The last Adam *became* a life-giving spirit.” 1 Corinthians 15:45

That is further explained in Hebrews 10 –

“Therefore, when He came into the world, He said:
‘Sacrifice and offering You did not desire,
But a body You have prepared for Me.’” Hebrews 10:5

In the giving of the law, and in the coming of Christ to fulfill the law and usher in a New Covenant, the...

– **Earth quaked.**

It is a new word, *raash*, coming from a primitive root meaning to undulate. Thus, it means to tremble, quake, shake, etc. In this case, I translate it as quake. It is as if the Lord is marching. With each step, the earth quakes: khu khu khu!

It is reminiscent of what occurred at Christ's death when the New Covenant was ushered in –

“Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, ⁵² and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; ⁵³ and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.” Matthew 27:51-53

The words of Deborah look back in time and also prophetically forward.

– **Also heavens dropped.**

Another new word is uttered, *nataph*. It is from a primitive root meaning to ooze. Thus it signifies to gradually distill, and then by implication, to fall in drops. Figuratively, it is used to indicate prophesying, such as words distilling and dropping forth.

The object of what is dropped is withheld until the next clause, even if it is implied in the thought now. This literary tool, quite common in spoken Hebrew, elicits excitement in the mind, causing it to focus on the next words more closely...

– **Also scuds dropped water.**

The word is *av*. It has only been seen once so far, in Exodus 19:9 –

“And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Behold, I come to you in the thick cloud [*av*], that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever.’”

It comes from *uv*, to becloud. Thus, it properly means an envelope, i.e. darkness. It isn't merely a cloud, but one which is thick. Here, however, it is plural. For a single word to define the thought, I have provided scuds.

Scud bomb clouds, or scuds, are formed as the warmer, and often moister, updraft of a thunderstorm lifts the relatively warm air near the surface. The moisture condenses as the air ascends. It is then pushed outward from the storm.

Scuds are commonly found on the leading edge of a storm front. They can extend even to the ground, having the appearance of a tornado, but they do not have the rotation associated with a tornado. Thus, they can be considered a beclouding cloud.

It is this thick mass that is then said to “drop water.” Thus these words can be equated to the effects of Christ’s work upon His people.

Though it was tongues of fire that alighted upon the people in Acts 2, those who received the Spirit were specifically said to have prophesied in Acts 2:17, 18 and Acts 19:6. Water is elsewhere equated to words, such as Proverbs 18:4, Amos 8:11, and Ephesians 5:26.

In the last example, Paul says, “that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word.” The words of Deborah reflect on the past and typologically anticipate events yet future. Understanding this, the verse can be reexamined...

*Yehovah b’tsetkha mi’seir b’tsad’kha misdeh edom eretz raasha gam shamayim
nataphu gam avim natphu mayim –*

It is an a/a b c/c pattern.

Yehovah –

- (a) In your going out from Seir,
- (a) In Your march from field Edom,
- (b) Earth quaked,
- (c) Also heavens dropped,
- (c) Also scuds dropped water.

Deborah is looking back to the giving of the law and the establishment of the Mosaic Covenant which gave birth to Israel in bondage to the law (Galatians 4:24). However, her words anticipate the coming of Christ and the freedom of God’s grace (Galatians 4:31) at the introduction of the New Covenant.

Continuing, Deborah next says...

⁵ **The mountains gushed before the LORD,
This Sinai, before the LORD God of Israel.**

harim nazlu mipne Yehovah zeh sinay mipne Yehovah elohe Yisrael

– **Mountains streamed from faces [meaning before] Yehovah.**

The word *nazal*, to stream, was introduced in the Song of Moses in Exodus 15. It is seen in poetic passages when referring to flowing water. It is also used to describe the wafting of incense as it streams through the air in Solomon's Song of Songs. The unstated implication is that what the mountains streamed forth was water.

As always, a mountain (*har*) is a lot of something gathered. It is synonymous with a large but centralized group of people. Here, it is plural, mountains.

The picture being given is described by Jesus in John 7 –

“Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said: ‘Streams of living water will flow from within him.’” John 7:38 (BSB)

Jesus is speaking of individuals there, but people are associated with people groups, none of whom are excluded from what God is doing in Christ. Thus, the mountains streaming can be seen in the idea of the inclusion of every nation.

Saying that this is “from faces Yehovah,” is a clear and unambiguous foreshadowing of the incarnation, and thus, the deity of Jesus. He is Yehovah incarnate. With that, Deborah again uses parallelism to re-express her words...

– **This Sinai from faces [meaning before] Yehovah God Israel.**

Sinai, Bush of the Lord, is where the Lord first called Moses. It is where the Mosaic Law was later given. In Exodus 3:2, it noted that the bush was burning with fire and yet the bush was not consumed. The symbolism of the fire is then seen in the coming of the Holy Spirit.

John the Baptist first spoke of it in Matthew 3:11 concerning the baptism of those who would come to Christ through the New Covenant. That was realized in a

visible manifestation when the tongues of fire came upon the believers at Pentecost in Acts 2:3.

The symbolism to be understood is that believers are endowed with the baptism of fire and yet they are not consumed. Instead, waters pour forth from them. The words form a parallel to the previous clause, but they help tie together what is going on between the giving of the Old Covenant and the New.

This can be more clearly seen in revisiting the entire verse...

harim nazlu mipne Yehovah zeh sinay mipne Yehovah elohe Yisrael –

It is an a/a pattern.

(a) Mountains streamed from faces Yehovah,
(a) This Sinai from faces Yehovah God Israel.

The “mountains” here probably speak of the clearly discernible peaks of Mount Sinai. Thus, both clauses refer to the same mountain but in a different style.

With the initiation of the covenant which gave birth to the people group, Deborah will next bring the narrative to the events that have just transpired as recorded in Chapter 4, and led to the song that she is now singing in praise to the Lord.

It is such a marvelous set of verses to consider. Each of the four poetic verses have shown unmistakable hints of the Person and work of Jesus Christ. As Deborah typologically anticipates the New Testament, we should not be surprised by this.

God is telling a story in Scripture. He is using historical events to tell it and then have it retold through more historical events that transpire later. He also uses a plethora of literary tools to do so.

Thus, we can search out what is being said, contemplate it from a literal historical perspective that can be verified through archaeology and other historical writings, and then revel in how what has been said once again unfolds in a way that leaves us with no doubt that the past events were pointing to the future.

As it says in Ecclesiastes 3 –

“That which is hath been already; and that which is to be hath already been: and God seeketh again that which is passed away.” Ecclesiastes 3:15 (ERV)

He does these things so that we will seek Him out: seek out His mind, seek out His heart, seek out His love, seek out what He is conveying within the stream of time as history unfolds, and so much more. And what we will find is that He is telling us the story of Jesus’ coming, His work, and how that pertains to us.

It is the message of salvation that the world so desperately needs to hear. God has done it. Let us hear and give ear to His words.

Closing Verse: *“Hear this, all peoples;
Give ear, all inhabitants of the world,
² Both low and high,
Rich and poor together.
³ My mouth shall speak wisdom,
And the meditation of my heart shall give understanding.” Psalm 49:1-3*

Next Week: Judges 5:6-12 *Oorah! Can’t wait to preach it to you...* (The Song of Deborah, Part II) (14th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

The Song of Deborah, Part I

“And sang Deborah – and Barak, son Abinoam – in the day, the it, saying.”

2 “In freeing freemen in Israel.
In volunteering – people.
Bless Yehovah!”

3 “Hear, kings! Give ear, rulers!
I, to Yehovah, I sing – I make melody – to Yehovah, God Israel.”

4 “Yehovah, in your going out from Seir,
In Your march from field Edom:

Earth quaked,
Also heavens dropped,
Also scuds dropped water.”

5 “Mountains streamed from faces Yehovah;
This Sinai from faces Yehovah God Israel.”

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 5:6-12 (THE SONG OF DEBORAH, PART II)

The verses today reveal various truths about interacting with God. We can submit a proposition to help understand one of them. Suppose there are two people, both of whom are trying to please God. One is a Muslim, and the other is a Christian.

The Muslim has an internal understanding that he should not have sex outside of marriage. He feels this is correct, and he doesn't want to displease God. He just feels it in his bones that doing so isn't right, and it is his intent to make God proud of him by not doing this.

The Christian knows from the word that he shouldn't have sex outside of marriage. Before he came to Christ, he never really thought about it and did what he wanted to in this regard. After coming to Jesus, he heard that what he was doing was wrong and gave up on those ways.

Both are refraining from sex outside of marriage. However, the Muslim is wasting his time, at least from the aspect of meriting favor with God. The deeds of the Christian, on the other hand, are acceptable and pleasing to God. What is the difference between the two?

Text Verse: *"Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on some points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God, ¹⁶ that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit." Romans 12:15, 16*

The answer to the question is given by Paul in these verses from Romans. The Muslim has not called on the true God through Jesus Christ. Therefore, he is not sanctified, and his deeds, even if well-intentioned, are unholy. He is tainted with sin and remains separated from God, even if he does right things.

Jesus Christ is the offering that makes man acceptable to God. This is true for Jews and Gentiles. Jews remain unholy and separate from God if they have not come to Him through Jesus. All people, regardless of religion, need what Paul describes as "repentance toward God."

This means “changing the mind toward God.” It isn’t something one does outwardly but inwardly. People who have not called on Jesus believe something about God, even if it means being atheists and denying His existence.

To have repentance toward God means to think properly about God, accepting that He united with humanity in the Person of Jesus Christ to bring us back to Himself through His cross. Once that happens, the Holy Spirit makes the person acceptable to God, and the deeds that he does can then, likewise, be acceptable.

Jesus is the answer to our greatest need. This truth is to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Until I, Deborah, Arose (verses 6-9)

**⁶ “In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath,
In the days of Jael,
The highways were deserted,
And the travelers walked along the byways.**

bime Shamgar ben Anath bime yael khadlu orakhoth v’holkhe nethivoth yelkhu orakhoth aqalqaloth

As in the last sermon, each clause will be explained independently:

– **In days Shamgar, son Anath.**

Here, Deborah gives a time reference for the people to remember by noting a hero within the land. Shamgar, son of Anath, was noted as a judge of Israel in Judges 3:31. There it said –

“After him was Shamgar the son of Anath, who killed six hundred men of the Philistines with an ox goad; and he also delivered Israel.”

As noted then, the derivation of his name is uncertain. However, it is likely this is a reversal of the name of Moses’ son Gershom. If so, then it would be from the words *sham* (there) or *shem* (name) and (stranger). Hence, There a Stranger or Called a Stranger.

His father's name, Anath, comes from *anah*, a word having four distinct meanings: to answer or respond; be occupied with; to afflict, oppress, or humble; or to sing. Thus, it can mean Answer, Business, Affliction, or Singing. Because of the typology, Affliction is the meaning here. Next, it says...

– **In days Yael.**

This again provides a time reference, noting a heroine in the land. This is the same person noted in Judges 4, Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, who struck Sisera, commander of the army of Jabin. It is at the time of these two heroic people that...

– **Ceased ways.**

The *orakh* is a way. It can be literal, as in a path, highway, etc., or it can be figurative, as in the manner (way) of a woman (Genesis 18:11) or in the path of life (Psalm 16:11). It is derived from *arakh*, to wander or journey. Thus, the meaning in this context is that the main means of travel, such as roads and well-traveled paths, have stopped being used.

Without directly saying it, it is to be understood that it would be too dangerous to take them because of robbers and bushwhackers. Hence, it is a time of lawlessness and fear. Rather than the main roads, it says...

– **And walked paths, walking ways winding.**

There are two new words here. The first is *nathiyv*. It is a noun signifying a path. For example, it is used in Psalm 119, saying –

“Your word *is* a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path [*nathiyv*].” Psalm 119:105

The next is rare, *aqalqal*. It signifies crooked or bent, coming from the verb *aqal*, to bend or twist. The only other use is in Psalm 125, where it is given in a figurative sense, where one's way are crooked –

“As for such as turn aside to their crooked ways [*aqalqal*],
The LORD shall lead them away

With the workers of iniquity.
Peace *be* upon Israel!" Psalm 125:5

In this case, it is referring to taking backroads rather than the main highways. Therefore, "winding" gets the point while giving an alliterative effect. Out of fear, the people forgo the main roads and stick to the winding ways that are more difficult but safer.

bime Shamgar ben Anath bime yael khadlu orakhoth v'holkhe nethivoth yelkhu orakhoth aqalqaloth –

It is an a/a b/b pattern where an emphatic contrast exists in the "b" section due to the repetition in the final clause.

(a) In days Shamgar, son Anath,
(a) In days Yael,
(b) Ceased ways,
(b/b) And walked paths, walking ways winding.

The words tell of the state of life during the time of Shamgar and Jael. Adam Clarke pithily sums up the situation –

"The land was full of anarchy and confusion, being everywhere infested with banditti. No public road was safe; and in going from place to place, the people were obliged to use unfrequented paths." Adam Clarke

This tells us that there is overlap in the judging of Shamgar and Deborah, at least in the state of the land in their times of judging. That continued until the battle was engaged by Barak and ended in the heroic deed of Jael.

Some find the words here impossible to reconcile with the statements that come at the end of Ehud's time of judging –

"So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest for eighty years. ³¹ After him was Shamgar the son of Anath, who killed six hundred men of the Philistines with an ox goad; and he also delivered Israel." Judges 3:30, 31

It is assumed that Ehud judged, there followed eighty years of peace, then Shamgar judged (or he is ignored as not really being a judge) in a time of strife that lasted until the time of Deborah. This fails to account for the fact that the rule of judges necessarily overlapped at times.

It further fails to consider what it means for the land to have rest. It does not mean that there was complete peace and harmony, but that there was no war. Shamgar fought the Philistines, probably at the time of Ehud. After that, war ceased, but the people remained in a state of vexation due to lawlessness.

War again took place at the time of Deborah. The sad description of the state of things between these times of war continues with...

**⁷ Village life ceased, it ceased in Israel,
Until I, Deborah, arose,
Arose a mother in Israel.**

khadlu p'razon b'yisrael khadlu ad shaqamti d'vorah shaqamti em b'yisrael

– **Ceased peasantry [or magistracy] in Israel – ceased.**

Here, a word is introduced, the meaning of which is rather uncertain, *p'razon*. It is found only here and in verse 11. It is a masculine singular noun from the same root as *p'razah*, an open region or a hamlet, often translated as unwalled villages. That ultimately is derived from a root meaning to separate, as in deciding the chieftain of a village.

Therefore, two possible translations are generally decided upon. The first is something like mighty men or rulers. The second is something to do with those in villages. The reason for the variation is based on what it said in the previous verse.

There were first mentioned the brave people, Shamgar and Yael. Next, the state of the paths and ways was noted. Therefore, it is either referring to brave people like Shamgar and Yael or to the state of those living in those villages who became so frightened that they no longer conducted such simple pastoral life.

The next words are simple to translate, but they don't help with the correct meaning of the word *p'razon*...

– **Until I arose – Deborah.**

The distressing issue addressed in the first clause is alleviated through the coming of Deborah. However, that issue could still be either of the two possibilities:

1. There was no proper local leadership in the land to handle the dire situation until Deborah arose; or
2. There was no peaceful pastoral life in the land until Deborah arose.

Either way...

– **I arose mother in Israel.**

The meaning of this is to be derived from the first words of Chapter 4 –

“When Ehud was dead, the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD. ²So the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army *was* Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth Hagoyim. ³And the children of Israel cried out to the LORD; for Jabin had nine hundred chariots of iron, and for twenty years he had harshly oppressed the children of Israel.” Judges 4:1-3

The sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. The Lord sold them because of this, as if they were no longer sons. But needing to be led by a parent, they cried out to the Lord for relief from their oppressors, and He sent them Deborah to be as mother to them, bringing them back to a state of sonship through her, His appointed judge.

This still does not resolve the actual meaning of *p’razon*. But either way, the effect is the same. Either proper local leadership of the unwalled villages was restored, or the peaceful state of those within the unwalled villages was restored. The result is what matters. That is seen in reviewing the entire verse...

khadlu p’razon b’yisrael khadlu ad shaqamti d’vorah shaqamti em b’yisrael –

It is an emphatic a/a b/b pattern where the words “ceased” and “until” provide a contrast.

(a/a) Ceased peasantry [or magistracy] in Israel – ceased.

- (b) Until I arose – Deborah.
- (b) I arose mother in Israel.

The reason for the ceasing is next stated...

**⁸They chose new gods;
Then *there was* war in the gates;
Not a shield or spear was seen among forty thousand in Israel.**

It is singular, speaking of Israel as an individual: *yivkhar elohim khadashim az lakhem sh'arim magen im yeraeh va'romakh b'arbaim eleph b'yisrael*

- **He chooses gods, newbies.**

Speaking of Israel, the meaning is clear. But it is remarkable how many variations in translation or interpretation there are. A few are –

God shall choose a new thing. (Peshitta)
God chose new leaders. (NET)
The LORD will choose new things. (Lamasa)
The Lord chose new wars. (Douay-Rheims)
They chose new gods. (WEB)
They hath chosen a new thinge. (Coverdale)
When the people chose new gods. (GWT)

Cambridge claims that the words yield no certain meaning. The varied translations and seeming confusion are remedied by a return to Deuteronomy 32 where the same words were used –

“They are sacrificing to the demons, not God.
'Gods' [*elohim*] no they knew.
Newbies [*khadashim*], from near they came.
No have they dreaded, your fathers.” Deuteronomy 32:17 (CG)

Right in the Song of Moses, it explains exactly what the people would do. From there, it told what the Lord would do in return by spurning them, hiding His face from them, and seeing how things would go for them. As for this time in Israel's history, the result was...

– **Then war, gates.**

It is a noun found only here in Scripture, *lakhem*. It is derived from the verb *lakham*, to fight or do battle. Hence, it means conflict or war. The meaning is that because of their turning from the Lord, war hems them in at their gates. They had already abandoned their villages, but things only progressively got worse.

The gates are where rulers gather to judge the community. With war at the gates, a properly functioning community would break down, and chaos would ensue.

As an interesting side translation, without the vowel pointing, the word translated as war (*lakhem* – לַחֶם) is identical to bread (*lekhem* – לֶחֶם). Further, the word translated as gates (*sh'arim* – שַׁעֲרִים), without the pointing, is spelled like barley (*s'orim* – שְׂעִרִים). Hence, some translations say something like, “Then the barley bread.”

That may sound odd at first, but if combined with the translation of the other clauses, it makes sense – “God shall choose a new thing and then bread of barley, and a sword and spear will not be seen among forty thousand of Israel” (Peshitta).

In other words, God turns away from Israel so that there is no bread to eat during the siege and no weapon with which to fight against the attacking enemy. That would then match what it later says in Isaiah concerning the siege of Jerusalem, where there was a lack of battle-ready men and a lack of food –

“But if you say to me, ‘We trust in the LORD our God,’ *is it* not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away, and said to Judah and Jerusalem, ‘You shall worship before this altar’?”⁸ Now therefore, I urge you, give a pledge to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses—if you are able on your part to put riders on them!⁹ How then will you repel one captain of the least of my master’s servants, and put your trust in Egypt for chariots and horsemen?¹⁰ Have I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it? The LORD said to me, ‘Go up against this land, and destroy it.’

¹¹ Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to *the* Rabshakeh, ‘Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand *it*; and do not speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people who *are* on the wall.’

¹² But *the* Rabshakeh said, ‘Has my master sent me to your master and to

you to speak these words, and not to the men who sit on the wall, who will eat and drink their own waste with you?’” Isaiah 36:7-12

Although the words do match what could be expected of a siege, the rendering of war at the gates rather than that of barley bread is the more likely rendering. This is because the subject of the first clause is Israel, not God, as was determined from the words of Deuteronomy 32. With that, the final clause says...

– **Shield, if seen, and spear in forty thousand in Israel.**

The meaning, though debated, is that there were no truly offensive weapons available within any given city. When warfare is waged against a walled city, the natural implements to use would be shields to protect from arrows and spears directed at the foes.

It doesn't say there were no swords, and that is just what was used, as is described in Chapter 4 in the battle fought by Barak. Swords are used for close-in fighting. But for a siege, unless the walls are breached, they are of no offensive value.

The number forty thousand, not mentioned in Chapter 4, is derived from the numbers four and ten, or forty and ten. The meaning of each, as defined by E.W. Bullinger, is –

Four is the number of creation. It “is the number of things that have a beginning, of things that are made, of material things, and matter itself. It is the number of *material completeness*. Hence it is the *world number*, and especially the ‘city’ number.”

Ten signifies the perfection of Divine order: “Completeness of order, marking the entire round of anything, is, therefore, the ever-present signification of the number *ten*. It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete.”

Forty “is the product of 5 and 8, and points to the action of grace (5), leading to and ending in revival and renewal (8). This is certainly the case where forty relates to a period of evident probation. But where it relates to enlarged dominion, or to renewed or extended rule, then it does so in virtue of its factors 4 and 10, and in harmony with their signification.”

*yivkhar elohim khadashim az lakhem sh'arim magen im yeraeh va'romakh
b'arbaim eleph b'yisrael –*

It is an a/b/c pattern where b explains a and c describes the state under b.

- (a) He chooses gods, newbies.
- (b) Then war, gates.
- (c) Shield, if seen, and spear in forty thousand in Israel.

Israel did just what the Song of Moses said they would do. The Lord, in turn, responded just as the Song said would happen. But, at the people crying out and Deborah prophesying, things began to change...

*Awake! Awake to righteousness
Come alive through the power of God in Christ
Without Him, your life will remain a mess
This is how the soul is priced*

*We can be of no value at all because of sin
Or we can become a jewel of infinite worth
Without Jesus, we will be eternally done in
But through calling on Him, we receive the new birth*

*Come to God through the giving of His Son
Such a glorious, marvelous thing He has done for us
Through Christ, the battle over sin is won
Thank God for our Lord, our Savior – Jesus!*

II. Awake! Awake! (verses 9-12)

**⁹ My heart is with the rulers of Israel
Who offered themselves willingly with the people.
Bless the LORD!**

The words are hard to literally translate because verbs are being used as nouns: *libi
l'khoqe Yisrael ha'mitnadvim ba'am barakhu Yehovah*

– **My heart to inscribers Israel.**

Pretty much every translation renders the verb as a noun, such as princes, lawgivers, governors, etc. But the word is a verb, *khaqaq*. It means to cut in, inscribe, etc. As such, it indicates to make a decree. Figuratively, one could say something like “prescribers.”

The point is that her heart went out to those who decreed the words of her prophecy to the people to incite them to action. That is exactly the result obtained in the next clause...

– **The volunteering in the people.**

Almost all translations render this as a continuation of the previous clause, making the subject the same in both clauses. The NKJV says –

“My heart is with the rulers of Israel
Who offered themselves willingly with the people.”

This is possible, but the word “who” has to be inserted. The word “to” in the first clause seems to be addressing those described by the verb in each clause. Hence, they are addressing two different categories –

My heart to:
Inscribers Israel.
The volunteering in the people.

As in verse 2, the word *nadav*, to incite or impel, is used. Upon hearing the decree of the inscribers, these now being described were internally impelled to act. Thus, they are the volunteering among those who heard. Therefore, Deborah goes ballistic once again, as she did in verse 2 –

– **Bless Yehovah!**

At the thought of what has occurred, one can again see her throwing her arms toward heaven and shouting a proclamation of blessing toward the Lord. The reason I would make the first two clauses different categories is because this verse is given as a mirror to the words of verse 2 –

“In freeing freemen in Israel.
In volunteering – people.

Bless Yehovah!”

“My heart to inscribers Israel.
The volunteering in the people.
Bless Yehovah!”

The people were freed, those who were impelled then volunteered, and Deborah sent forth her blessing of Yehovah. The inscribers made their decree, those who were so impelled volunteered, and Deborah again sent forth her blessing of Yehovah. As such, the same structure as verse 2 is again seen, a complementary a/b pattern followed by a note of praise.

libi l'khoqe Yisrael ha'mitnadvim ba'am barakhu Yehovah

My heart to:
(a) Inscribers Israel.
(b) The volunteering in the people.
Bless Yehovah!”

After verse 5:2, her words followed with praise from self – “I will sing praise...”
Now, she implores the people to speak out, saying...

¹⁰ **“Speak, you who ride on white donkeys,
Who sit in judges’ attire,
And who walk along the road.**

The NKJV, following the KJV, ruins the emphatic nature and highly anticipatory mood of the words: *rokhve atonoth ts'khoroth yoshve al midin v'holkhe al derekh sikhu*

– **Riders, donkeys tawny.**

The word translated as donkey is *athon*, a female donkey. That comes from the same as *ethan*, perennial, ever-flowing, or permanent. The sense is that of the ever-patient nature of the animal, being very docile.

The adjective translated as tawny is found only here in Scripture, *tsakhor*. It comes from *tsakhar*, a noun found only in Ezekiel 27:18, also meaning tawny. It comes from a root signifying to dazzle. Thus, they are donkeys that possess a

bright coat instead of the typically bland colors of a donkey a commoner would ride on.

The only reason why the word white is used is because the Greek was translated that way for the benefit of the Roman and Greek audiences that understood white animals as representing nobility, wealth, power, etc. The words speak of the leaders of the people, whether wealthy, noble, etc. That thought certainly continues with the next clause...

– **Sitters upon measures.**

Of this clause, the Geneva Bible says, “yee that dwel by Middin.” Middin is a city named in Joshua 15:61, but this is not the meaning. First, it says “upon,” not “by.” Secondly, there is no other mention of the name in Scripture.

That, on my part, is a bit of an argument from silence, but Deborah is referring to something the people would understand pertains to wealth or nobility. If Middin was filled with such people, Scripture would certainly have indicated this.

Rather, the word *midin* is the plural of *mad* (or *med*). It signifies a measure or extent, normally of cloth or garment. A garment is made to the measure of a man. In this case, it is a measured cloth. Of this cloth, there are two reasonable possibilities. One is the cloth laid upon a donkey like a saddle. The other would be a measured cloth used by people for sitting on as we use cushions today.

The quality of the measure would indicate the status of the person, from poor to wealthy or maybe even to indicate a profession. Thus, it could go so far as to be a symbol of authority or judgment.

Translating this with the known root, measures, leaves open both possibilities. Either way, the thought runs parallel to that of the previous clause, signifying something that sets these people apart as classy. I would take it to signify someone who sits on a garment in a set location as a sign of wealth. The reason for this is because of the next words...

– **And walkers upon road.**

This is what people commonly do if they don't have a donkey or if their donkey is used for carrying a large load. Thus, this verse is referring to three classes of

people: riders, sitters, and walkers. Regardless of which person is being referred to, the final word of the verse, a word of strong emphasis, is...

– **Soliloquize!**

It is a new verb to Scripture, *siakh*. It comes from the noun *siakh* which means to complain or babble to oneself, meditate, etc. To understand more completely, Strong's notes that it is from a primitive root, meaning to ponder.

Thus, by implication, it means to converse aloud with oneself. As such, and to provide a word that means exactly that, I have translated it as soliloquize. The exclamation point is provided to indicate the emphatic nature of Deborah's words.

In other words, and to paraphrase the verse, "You who ride on dazzling donkeys, you sitters upon measures, and you walkers along the road, think about what I am telling you and repeat it as a memory tool." It thus forms an a/a/a pattern accompanied by an emphatic directive: *rokhve atonoth ts'khoroth yoshve al midin v'holkhe al derekh sikhu* –

(a) Riders, donkeys tawny,
(a) Sitters upon measures,
(a) And walkers upon road –
Soliloquize!

With that, Deborah next states...

**¹¹ Far from the noise of the archers, among the watering places,
There they shall recount the righteous acts of the LORD,
The righteous acts *for* His villagers in Israel;
Then the people of the LORD shall go down to the gates.**

Of this verse, the Pulpit Commentary states (and I can attest to their words), "A very difficult verse, and very variously rendered."

*miqol m'khatstsim ben mashabim sham y'tanu tsidqoth Yehovah tsidqoth pirzono
b'yisrael az yardu lasharim am Yehovah*

– **From voice dividers between troughs.**

The word “from” can, and often does, signify “more than.” To paraphrase it, we would say, “Above the sound.” These people were told to soliloquize. They will do so loudly enough to overcome the distraction around them.

The word *khatsats* signifies to divide. Some translations say “arrows” because of the similar word *khets*, meaning an arrow. There is no need to accept this. The next word is found only here in Scripture, *mashav*. It comes from *shaav*, to draw water. Thus, being plural, it would signify troughs.

What is going on at the place of troughs where people draw water? Lots of talk and fun chatter. The dividers are those who are cutting into the thoughts and words of the person’s soliloquy. Therefore, the person who was instructed to soliloquize is told to do so above the noisy chatter of the people there to draw water. At this place...

– **There they celebrate righteousnesses Yehovah.**

Here is another new and rare verb, *tanah*. It is identical to another verb of the same spelling, meaning “to hire.” Both come from a primitive root signifying to attribute honor. One hires that which is good in his eyes.

In the case of this word, it would mean to commemorate, but in a positive sense. To get the proper idea of what is being said, one must go to the only other use –

“And it was a custom in Israel, ⁴⁰ that the daughters of Israel went yearly to celebrate [*tanah*] the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.” Judges 11:39, 40

This soliloquized celebrating is concerning the righteous acts of the Lord. This then must be considered both in His judging and selling off Israel as well as His returning to them upon their crying out to Him. With that, Deborah next says...

– **Righteousnesses His peasantry [or magistracy] in Israel.**

Some translations make this out to be an emphatic repeat of the previous verse. Thus, it would be referring to the righteousnesses of the Lord, such as “Even righteousnesses toward His people...” However, that doesn’t appear to be the case.

Instead, it is referring back to verse 7, where the only other use of *p'razon* is seen in Scripture, "Ceased peasantry [or magistracy] in Israel – ceased." Until Deborah arose, these people ceased their doings. However, after she arose, verse 9 explained their conduct –

My heart to:

(a) Inscribers Israel.

(b) The volunteering in the people.

Bless Yehovah!"

With the righteousnesses of the Lord brought forth on behalf of the people, the people then performed their own righteousnesses. It is the same thought expressed in Revelation 19, where a similar plural noun construct is used –

"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." ⁸ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts [*dikaiōmata*, lit: righteousnesses] of the saints."

-Revelation 19:7, 8

Apart from the Lord, there can be no acts of righteousness. Only when living in accord with His will, can the deeds of the people be considered as righteous.

– **Then they shall descend to the gates, people Yehovah.**

This returns to the words of verse 8, "Then war, gates." The gates are where people go in and out of the city. It is the place of making legal decisions. However, most notably, the gates are the place where judgment is rendered.

This doesn't merely mean legal decisions like transferring deeds and obtaining marriage licenses, but where judgment of the moral nature takes place. It is why this is recorded in Revelation –

"Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). ²⁶ And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. ²⁷ But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life." Revelation 21:25-27

The gates are always open because those who can enter have had a not-guilty verdict rendered. As for the people of the Lord in Judges, they can safely come to the city without fear. They have been forgiven of their past through humbling themselves and calling out to Yehovah. The words form a clause concerning the unlimited mercy of the Lord upon those who call out to Him in faith. The verse forms an a/a b/b pattern.

*miqol m'khatstsim ben mashabim sham y'tanu tsidqoth Yehovah tsidqoth pirzono
b'yisrael az yardu lasharim am Yehovah*

- (a) From voice dividers between troughs,
- (a) There they celebrate righteousnesses Yehovah,
- (b) Righteousnesses His peasantry [or magistracy] in Israel,
- (b) Then they shall descend to the gates, people Yehovah.

With that, the verse rushes into a beautiful exclamatory note that forms a bridge between this section and the next...

¹² **“Awake, awake, Deborah!**

Awake, awake, sing a song!

Arise, Barak, and lead your captives away,

O son of Abinoam!

uri uri d'vorah uri uri dabri shir qum baraq u-shaveh shevykha ben avinoam

– **Awake, awake, Deborah!**

This takes the reader back to the second paragraph of the narrative in Chapter 4 –

“Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time. ⁵ And she would sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim. And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. ⁶ Then she sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him...” Judges 4:4-6

She is poetically detailing what it was like to receive the revelation from the Lord concerning Israel’s coming deliverance. It is as if the Lord is rousing her, “Awake, awake, Deborah!” With that, He gives her the instruction to prophesy, here called a song...

– **Awake, awake, speak a song:**

Rather than sing a song, she is told to speak. Though spoken, the words are as a song, nonetheless –

“Has not the LORD God of Israel commanded...” Judges 4:6

The words would be music to their ears. They are words of decision coming from the mouth of the Lord God...

– **Arise, Barak.**

This sums up the command of the Lord that was expressed in her next words to Barak –

“Go and deploy *troops* at Mount Tabor;
take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun; ⁷ and against you I will deploy Sisera,
the commander of Jabin’s army,
with his chariots and his multitude at the River Kishon.” Judges 4:6-7

– **And lead captive your captivity, son Abinoam.**

This tells of the victory that lay ahead. Those who held Israel captive, inclusive of Barak (your captivity), would be led captive. It is reflected in the closing words of her initial statement to him –

“and I will deliver him into your hand?” Judges 4:7

With this bridge between stanzas complete, we note the interesting a/a followed by a word of instruction and then a b/c-d/c pattern:

uri uri d’vorah uri uri dabri shir qum baraq u-shaveh shevykha ben avinoam

(a) Awake, awake, Deborah!

(a) Awake, awake!

Speak a song:

(b/c) Arise, Barak

(d/c) And lead captive your captivity, son Abinoam.

What has been done is that the two c's are divided by two commands. Instead of saying, "Arise and lead captive your captivity, Barak, son of Abinoam," she poetically divides them for emphasis. As such, it truly forms a song instead of simple prose.

The words of Deborah will continue in the next sermon. Until then, we can consider the overall typology in relation to what was seen in Chapter 4. Deborah typologically anticipates the New Testament. Israel was under law and unable to please God because the law only forms an impossible wall between the two.

However, with the coming of the New Testament and the grace of God revealed there, man can once again be restored to complete and total fellowship with God. This has been hinted at in several ways in the passage today.

The Lord has brilliantly used real people and real circumstances to show us what He will do in the sending of Jesus. Through Him, we become righteous. Because of this, our deeds can now be considered in the same light. God no longer sees our sin.

Therefore, the things we do, even if they are exactly the same in nature as what others in the world do, are now acceptable. At the same time, the deeds of those not in Christ cannot be reckoned as acceptable. The difference is not in what is done, but in who makes what is done acceptable, meaning Jesus.

The point is that we cannot buy off God with good deeds. Our sin separates us from such a notion. But our good deeds, when done in Christ, can rise to God like acceptable sacrifices. Jesus is what makes all the difference. Don't try to earn what He gives freely through grace. Accept the gift, and then do what is pleasing to God.

Closing Verse: *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."* Romans 12:1, 2

Next Week: Judges 5:13-23 *Everybody will say ooh, ahh! It's so niftee...* (The Song of Deborah, Part III) (15th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

(The Song of Deborah, Part II)

6 In days Shamgar, son Anath,
In days Yael,
Ceased ways,
And walked paths, walking ways winding.

7 Ceased peasantry [or magistracy] in Israel – ceased.
Until I arose – Deborah.
I arose mother in Israel.

8 He chooses gods, newbies.
Then war, gates.
Shield, if seen, and spear in forty thousand in Israel.

9 My heart to:
Inscribers Israel.
The volunteering in the people.
Bless Yehovah!”

10 Riders donkeys white,
Sitters upon measures,
And walkers upon road –
Soliloquize!

11 From voice dividers between troughs,
There they celebrate righteousnesses Yehovah,
Righteousnesses His peasantry [or magistracy] in Israel,
Then they shall descend to the gates, people Yehovah.

12 Awake, awake, Deborah!
Awake, awake!
Speak a song:
Arise, Barak
And lead captive your captivity, son Abinoam.

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 5:13-23 (THE SONG OF DEBORAH, PART III)

Some of the words, clauses, and verses of this section are extremely complicated. In addition, there are knotty words, complex structures, difficult thoughts to be expressed, etc. Despite that, there are also obvious points that stand above the complicated details. One of them is indecision. It is true that people can sometimes be overly decisive and wind up in a pickle from acting too hastily.

Conversely, some have a knack for making the right decision at the right time and following through with it for the best results. They do it consistently and they get ahead in life.

As for the inaction just mentioned, some may think about doing something to the point that what is considered is eventually overcome by other events. Admittedly, that describes me in many ways. However, the Lord has put a wonderful wife and great friends in my path to spur me along before it's too late for some opportunities.

There are others who will never come to a decision about anything, even with prompting by those who know exactly what to do, how to do it, etc.

Sometimes we don't act because we just don't want to get involved. We know that it is right to do so, and yet we stay put and go about life as we see fit. Several types of inaction are seen in our verses today. One can see the frustration in Deborah's words as she pours out her complaints to the people because of it.

Text Verse: *"To everything there is a season,
A time for every purpose under heaven." Ecclesiastes 3:1*

In his list of things that there is a time for, Solomon says that there is a time for war and a time for peace. Here, the people of Israel were called to war. Some responded to the call and some did not. Those who responded are commemorated to this day in the pages of Scripture.

They are the heroes of old who heard and obeyed the call of the Lord. There are those who failed to heed the call and they are remembered in a different way. If my thoughts are right on one of the verses, it is actually laughable how they are remembered. I think you will agree.

I have personally talked to people about Jesus who simply couldn't decide what to do. Heaven's doors were opened right before them, but they were so stuck in the world that they wouldn't commit to entering through them. I hope their indecision is over and they have decided to walk through that open door, but that is ultimately their choice.

But for those of us who know the Lord, we still have choices to make about the calling of the Lord. How will we live it out? Israel was given a calling as the Lord's people. They were to live out that calling in a manner that was appropriate.

In the case of times of war, they were to trust the Lord, respond to the call, and join with those on their way to the battle. Deborah's words in these verses will speak of those who lived in a manner worthy of their calling contrasted with those who idled their time away, not acting in accord with the word of the Lord.

Let us think about our lives as believers and learn the lesson of Israel and those within the nation who are remembered according to their deeds. Their deeds were ultimately based on their faith or lack of faith in the Lord. It's all to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Great Searchings of Heart (verses 13-18)

The first verse of today's passage is probably as difficult as any so far in Scripture. This is not only in translation, but in how to translate. For example, depending on how it is pointed, the word translated as "came down" (*yarad*) is spelled the same as the word for "rule," (*radah*) ירד.

The Greek translates it as "came down," but the Masoretic Text went with the more difficult "rule." Therefore, two completely different translations will result. The difficulty begins there because of the highly complicated structure of the words.

Therefore, once one decides on which word, descend or rule, is correct, there are still innumerable possibilities of where to divide the words and how to render them.

**¹³ "Then the survivors came down, the people against the nobles;
The LORD came down for me against the mighty.**

az yerad sarid l'adirim am Yehovah yerad li ba'giborim

It is not sure where to divide the words –

Then ruled (or descended) remnant to majesties people
Yehovah ruled (or descended) to me in the mighties

Or

Then ruled (or descended) remnant to majesties
People Yehovah ruled (or descended) to me in the mighties

From this most basic translation, the intent must be determined and then explained with accompanying words for it to make any meaningful sense. For example, if the word *radah*, to rule, is decided upon, then it is causative –

Then He caused a remnant to rule against the nobles of the people.
Yehovah caused me to rule among the warriors.

This has given a brief snapshot of the difficulty of the words. We could explore them for an hour without coming to a proper resolution. Therefore, I will use the pointing of the Masoretic Text, just to give you an analysis.

– **Then rule remnant to majesties people.**

This translation is assuming all that we have looked at, and a great deal more. The word remnant is not referring to just a handful of people as it often does. In this case, it is referring to those who entered the battle. Not all of the tribes fought in the battle. Those who did engage were considered a remnant of Israel.

As such they are poetically said to be given rule among the greatest and most majestic of the people. They are the heroes of the song. In parallel to that Deborah next says...

– **Yehovah rule to me in the mighties.**

Because she is Israel's judge, both accompanying and inspiring the warriors going into battle, Deborah is poetically said to be given rule among the great, the mighties, of the people. To paraphrase how I believe the words should be rendered, the verse says –

At that time, He made the remnant to rule among the most majestic,
Yehovah made me rule among the mightiest.

However, if you want to compare the variations of about fifty translations to see how markedly different some of them are, go to this link:

<https://biblehub.com/parallel/judges/5-13.htm>.

As I translated it, the words form an a/a parallel between those who engaged the battle and Deborah who was a participant in the events: *az yerad sarid l'adirim am Yehovah yerad li ba'giborim* –

(a) Then rule remnant to majesties people,
(a) Yehovah rule to me in the mighties.

Of the words of this verse, I defer to the comments of the translators of the King James Version in their preface –

“Therefore as S. Augustine saith, that variety of Translations is profitable for the finding out of the sense of the Scriptures: ... so diversity of signification and sense in the margin, where the text is no so clear, must needs do good, yea, is necessary, as we are persuaded.”

In other words, in the case of such a difficult verse, it is profitable to read many translations to hopefully get the proper sense of the words. This is profitable. Also, read the margin comments (or footnotes) because the text is not so clear. With that, Deborah continues...

¹⁴ From Ephraim were those whose roots were in Amalek.

After you, Benjamin, with your peoples,

From Machir rulers came down,

And from Zebulun those who bear the recruiter's staff.

mini ephrayim sharsham ba'amaleq akharekha Binyamin ba'amamekha mini makhir yaredu m'khoqqim u-mizvulun b'shevet sopher

– **From Ephraim, their root in Amalek**

Again, it isn't certain what is being referred to. What seems likely is that Ephraim settled in the land where Amalek had settled. Although they were settled in many places, a particular designation of one of their dwellings is made in Judges 12:15 –

“And Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died, and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the mount of the Amalekites.”

Therefore, warriors came out for the battle from the area where Amalek was. The term “their root” speaks of where they themselves were planted by the Lord.

– **After you, Benjamin, in your peoples**

The words here can mean one of two things. The first is that Benjamin came after Ephraim to join the battle. Hence, it would be “From Ephraim came this group. After you, Ephraim, came Benjamin to join your peoples.”

Or it could be saying that Benjamin has the preeminence. “From Ephraim came this group, but they came after you, O Benjamin, in the number of your people.” Either way, Benjamin assisted in the call to arms and join in the battle against Sisera. Next...

– **From Machir descended inscribers**

The same word used in Judges 5:9 is used here, *khaqaq*. It signifies to cut in, inscribe, etc. Thus, it is one who makes a decree, as in a lawgiver or a sovereign authority within a group, such as a clan.

Machir was the only son of Manasseh. His descendants settled on both sides of the Jordan, but those on the west side are being referred to. The meaning is that the clan leaders of western Manasseh came down to the battle. The implication is that they led the people of Manasseh under them so that the tribe was well represented. After that, it next says...

– **And from Zebulun, drawers in rod, counter**

Zebulun is likewise represented. The word *mashak* means to draw or drag. The rod is a symbol of either authority or it represents a tribe. The word *saphar* means to count. Here it is used to describe what the person does, and so many translations will make it a noun, such as scribe –

“Zadok the son of Ahitub and Abimelech the son of Abiathar *were* the priests; Shavsha *was* the scribe [*saphar*, counter].” 1 Chronicles 18:16

In the case of what Deborah is saying, this is the one who would number the people for battle. It may even extend to a recruiting officer, such as in 2 King 25 –

“He also took out of the city an officer who had charge of the men of war, five men of the king’s close associates who were found in the city, the chief recruiting officer [*ha’sopher*, the counter] of the army, who mustered the people of the land, and sixty men of the people of the land *who were* found in the city.” 2 Kings 25:19

Therefore, the verse is poetically referring to those who responded from these four tribes. It forms an a/a b/b pattern: *mini ephrayim sharsham ba’amaleq akharekha Binyamin ba’amamekha mini makhir yaredu m’khoqqim u-mizvulun b’shevet sopher* –

- (a) From Ephraim, their root in Amalek.
- (a) After you, Benjamin, in your peoples.
- (b) From Machir descended inscribers,
- (b) And from Zebulun, drawers in rod, counter.

¹⁵ And the princes of Issachar *were* with Deborah;

As Issachar, so *was* Barak

Sent into the valley under his command;

Among the divisions of Reuben

***There were* great resolves of heart.**

*v'saray b'yisas'khar im d'vorah v'yisas'khar ken baraq ba'emeq shulakh b'raglav
biphlagoth reuven gedolim khiqe lev*

– **And my commanders in Issachar with Deborah.**

The word *sar* is used. It signifies a commander, a prince, a ruler, etc. In Isaiah 9, the Messiah is called *sar shalom*, or Prince of peace. The commanders of the people of Issachar accompanied Deborah. But more, though not translated this way by any Bible, the word is commonly accepted as first person singular. Thus, “my commanders.”

Keil disagrees and says, "...‘my princes,’ does not furnish any appropriate meaning, as neither Deborah nor Barak was of the tribe of Issachar, and it is not stated anywhere that the Issacharites gathered round Deborah as their leaders. The reading שָׂרִי (stat. constr.), adopted by the old versions, must be taken as the correct one, and the introduction of the preposition ב does not preclude this."

First, how does Keil know where Deborah was from? Just because she judged between Bethel and Ramah in Mount Ephraim, it doesn't mean she isn't from Issachar. But even if she wasn't, saying, "my commanders" could simply be a way of showing pride in Issachar's commanders in the army she had called to battle through Barak.

Further, repeating her own name in the words doesn't negate this at all. Rather, it would add to the poetic nature of the words. Render "my commanders" and ignore Keil. As for naming the commanders, the implication is that there were troops under them. Thus, Issachar was well-represented. Further...

– **And Issachar, so Barak.**

The words mean that even as Issachar sent in commanders to lead the battle with troops under them, Barak was also a leader among the people. Next, it notes he led them...

– **In the valley, sent in his feet.**

The words first note that he was "in the valley." The *emek* signifies depth. Therefore, it is a broad depression. That is followed with the same term as Judges 4:10, *b'raglav*, or "in his feet." It is as if he is leading and the men are following his steps, being in submission to him. Deborah is reveling in leading the people who then lead their troops into battle. With that, a contrast is seen in the next words...

– **In divisions Reuben.**

Here is a new word to Scripture, *pelugah*. It will only be seen here, in the next verse, and in 2 Chronicles 35. It comes from *palag*, to split, or divide. Thus it is a section or division of the tribe. Its other use helps get the sense of the meaning –

“And stand in the holy *place* according to the divisions [*pelugah*] of the fathers’ houses of your brethren the *lay* people, and *according to* the division of the father’s house of the Levites.” 2 Chronicles 35:5

As a side note, instead of divisions, some translations say streams or watercourses. The reason for this is a similar word, *palagah*, is found in Job 20:17 where it speaks of streams and rivers. Obviously, rivers divide the land and so this is where the meaning meets up. However, that doesn’t hold up when considering that it would make no sense translating the other use of *pelugah* in 2 Chronicles as “streams.”

As for Reuben, rather than joining in the battle, something else is noted...

– **Great resolutions heart.**

Here is another new word, *kheqeq*. It is derived from *khoq*, a decree or statute. Therefore, this speaks of a decree, enactment, or resolution. Some translations say, “thoughts of the heart,” but that doesn’t seem to be strong enough. It is a thought that has been decided upon or which is being decided upon. Thus, it is a resolve or resolution.

Deborah implies that while the tribes she has named acted and resolved to go to battle, Reuben was trying to resolve the matter but coming to no resolution. Instead, he sat idle, whittling away the time, inwardly muttering out his mental machinations.

This state of Reuben is highlighted by the fact that its leaders are not even mentioned. It simply mentions the divisions of Israel, leaders and people, all just sitting there pondering what to do.

As for the structure, the second clause complements and builds upon the first. The third then explains the first two. The fourth clause introduces the contrast, while the fifth explains it: *v’saray b’yisas’khar im d’vorah v’yisas’khar ken baraq ba’emeq shulakh b’raglav biphlagoth reuven gedolim khiqeq lev* –

- (a) And commanders in Issachar with Deborah
- (a) And Issachar, so Barak:
- (b) In the valley, sent in his feet
- (c) In divisions Reuben:
- (d) Great resolutions heart

¹⁶ **Why did you sit among the sheepfolds,
To hear the pipings for the flocks?
The divisions of Reuben have great searchings of heart.**

More difficult words to consider: *lamah yashavta ben ha'mishptayim lishmoa s'riqoth adarim liphlagoth reuven gedolim hiqre lev*

The translation of the first clause depends on the root of the main noun –

– **Why sit between the trivets.**

It is actually unknown what the word *mishpethayim* means. Most just go with sheepfolds because of the next clause. It comes from one of two roots, *shaphah*, to sweep bare, or more likely *shaphath*, to set (on the fire, like a pot being set for cooking).

If the latter, it is assumed to be something like fireplaces or ash heaps. However, while considering the word and comparing it to the other two uses of the root verb *shaphath* which do not describe setting a pot (Psalm 22:15 & Isaiah 26:12), I believe this is more precisely referring to a trivet, on which pots are placed.

Thus, it is a firm base. That would match the other two uses of the root verb. The only other use of *mishpethayim* is in Genesis 49:14 which most people translate as either sheepfolds or burdens. However, if I analyzed the next clause properly, trivet makes sense to me...

– **Hearing hissings flocks.**

The word *sheruqah* (or *sheriqah*) is first found here. It is only seen again in Jeremiah 18:16. It is a noun, coming from *sharaq* to hiss or whistle. Being a plural noun, it signifies hissings. The word *adarim* signifies flocks, herds, or droves. It is an arrangement or muster of animals, be it sheep, cattle, etc.

As sheep and goats bleat and cattle low, I don't think this is referring to the animals' front end, if you catch my drift. It says hissing. Hence, Deborah is picking on them for idling around fireplaces with trivets, listening to the flatulence of their animals.

Mind you, the words are so obscure that they could be referring to pretty much anything. Regardless, the intent can be understood from the next clauses...

– **To divisions Reuben.**

This is the second use of *pelugah*. Saying divisions again appears to be the intent. The divisions of Reuben, sitting among their flocks seems proper. In Numbers 32, it said –

“Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of livestock; and when they saw the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead, that indeed the region *was* a place for livestock, ²the children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spoke to Moses, to Eleazar the priest, and to the leaders of the congregation, saying, ³“Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Shebam, Nebo, and Beon, ⁴the country which the LORD defeated before the congregation of Israel, *is* a land for livestock, and your servants have livestock.” Numbers 32:1-4

Reuben associated itself with its livestock. Deborah is picking on them for sitting among the droves of livestock listening to them hiss. While sitting there, they had...

– **Great searchings heart.**

Another new word, *kheqer*, or searchings, is introduced. It is etymologically connected to *kheqeq* seen in the previous verse. It signifies a thing to be searched out. Being plural, Reuben is idling away their time thinking about what to do. You can see the parallelism between the verses –

In divisions Reuben:
Great resolutions heart.

To divisions Reuben:
Great searchings heart.

They were trying to come up with a suitable resolution, but each time they did, they searched out another, unable to simply get up and act. Be advised, this verse is so complicated and widely translated, that whatever version you read, the meaning will be dubious. As for its structure, it is an a/a b/c where c explains b:

*lamah yashavta ben ha'mishptayim lishmoa s'riqoth adarim liphlagoth reuven
gedolim hiqre lev –*

- (a) Why sit between the trivets,
- (a) Hearing hissings flocks?
- (b) To divisions Reuben:
- (c) Great searchings heart.

The difficulty of these words again brings to mind the thoughts of the translators of the KJV –

“...it hath pleased God in his divine providence, here and there to scatter words and sentences of that difficulty and doubtfulness, not in doctrinal points that concern salvation.”

So far, within the Song of Deborah, this is certainly the case. In the next words, she continues to implicitly upbraid the tribes who did not participate in the battle...

**¹⁷ Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan,
And why did Dan remain on ships?
Asher continued at the seashore,
And stayed by his inlets.**

*gilad b'ever ha'yarden shaken v'dan lamah yagur oniyoth asher yashav l'khoph yamim
v'al miphratsav yishkon*

– **Gilead in side the Jordan dwelt.**

The word *b'ever*, or in side, can mean either side. It depends on the reference. In this case, it means that Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, whose inheritance was the land of the Gilead east of the Jordan remained in his inheritance and did not assist in the battle.

Manasseh was not unrepresented because Machir was noted in verse 14 as participating. Thus, to clarify the situation, Deborah defers to the name of the son, Gilead who dwelt in the Gilead.

– **And Dan, why sojourn ships?**

Dan is along the Mediterranean Sea. Deborah's question could mean that Dan continued to ply his trade on ships, ignoring the call to battle, or that Dan fled to his ships in fear. The former seems more likely.

Dan just ignored the matter because it wasn't in their backyard. The affairs to the north didn't interest them so they took their ships out as usual, sojourning where their business took them. In this, Deborah is chiding them for caring more about their own business than the needs of the nation. Next...

– **Asher sat to coast seas.**

Based on Asher's location, this is a disgrace. Asher lay on the northwest coast adjoining Zebulun and Naphtali. They were close enough to easily muster troops and join the battle, but they simply sat on the coast twiddling their thumbs. Deborah then repeats the sentiment as a second slap in the face...

– **And upon his breakings dwelt.**

She uses another word that is found only here in Scripture, *miphrats*. It comes from *parats*, to break through. Thus, it is a break in the coastline because of a harbor, river, outcropping of rocks, etc. Her displeasure at the idleness of the tribe is seen in the use of "sat" as in idling away the time and "dwelt" as if he is permanently stuck there doing so.

It is an a/a/a/b pattern: *gilad b'ever ha'yarden shaken v'dan lamah yagur oniyoth asher yashav l'khoph yamim v'al miphratsav yishkon* –

(a) Gilead in side the Jordan dwelt.

(a) And Dan, why sojourn ships?

(a) Asher sat to coast seas,

(b) And upon his breakings dwelt.

¹⁸ **Zebulun is a people *who* jeopardized their lives to the point of death, Naphtali also, on the heights of the battlefield.**

z'vulun am khereph naphsho lamuth v'naphtali al m'rome sadeh

– **Zebulun people exposed his soul to death.**

The word *kharaph* comes from a primitive root signifying “to pull off.” Thus, it is as if Zebulun stripped off his frail humanity and literally exposed his soul, that which animates the body, to death. This doesn’t mean that the soul dies. Rather the body dies leaving the soul in an unnatural state because the body it is joined to no longer lives.

The men of the tribe, stated in the singular “people” and “his soul” were united as one in the effort. It didn’t matter if they fought to the last person and the tribe died with them, they would fearlessly engage the enemy. Also...

– **And Naphtali upon heights field.**

The words appear incomplete. But the thought is that Naphtali joined with Zebulun and Barak on Mount Tabor (Judges 4:6). When the time for battle was decreed, Naphtali was there, ready to expose his soul to death as well by descending to the open field of battle below.

The words are given to contrast the failings of those of Reuben, Gilead, Dan, and Asher. By highlighting their failings, the resolve of Zebulun and Naphtali is deemed exceptional in her eyes.

The verse is a complementary a/a pattern where the main substance of the first clause is implied in the second: *z’vulun am khereph naphsho lamuth v’naphtali al m’rome sadeh* –

(a) Zebulun people exposed his soul to death.

(a) And Naphtali upon heights field.

*Who will walk worthy of the calling
By which we are called in Christ Jesus?
Don’t hesitate, shuffle your feet, or be stalling
Instead think on what He has done for us!*

*How can we not be faithful to respond
When Christ devotedly answered the call of His Father?
May our actions likewise correspond
Let us not treat our calling as an irritating bother*

When the Lord instructs us to act

*May we pay heed and do as He has said
His way is right and good, that's a fact
Let us be faithfully obedient to our glorious Head*

II. Curse Meroz (verses 19-23)

¹⁹ **"The kings came *and* fought,
Then the kings of Canaan fought
In Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo;
They took no spoils of silver.**

*bau m'lakhim nilkhamu az nilkhamu malkhe k'naan b'taanakh al me m'gido betsa
keseph lo laqkhu*

- **Came kings – fought.**

The words are short and direct for effect. In this, she is essentially showing their readiness and military preparedness. They came to strike without any timidity. She then expands on the thought for greater effect...

- **Then, fought kings Canaan.**

In Judges 4:2, it said that Jabin was king of Canaan who reigned in Hazor. It didn't call him "the king." Thus, he was one of many kings. Here, it notes kings in the plural. Therefore, the army of Sisera was either joined by confederate kings or with vassal kings who reigned under Jabin. Either way, it was a large contingent that entered into battle...

- **In Taanach, upon waters Megiddo.**

This is the first time that Taanach is mentioned in relation to the battle. In Judges 1:27, it specifically noted that Manasseh failed to drive out the inhabitants of Taanach and its villages. Therefore, the people there would not likely side with Israel.

The meaning of Taanach is uncertain. Some think it is derived from an Egyptian word, while others think it is from an Arabic word. There is no corresponding root word found in Scripture. However, without explanation, Charles Ellicott says it means Sandy Soil.

Megiddo comes from *gadad*, to penetrate or cut. Hence it signifies Invading or Intruding. The waters of Megiddo are a poetic term for the river Kishon mentioned twice in Judges 4. Despite being readied for battle and in a favorable location...

– **Plunder silver – no took.**

These kings and their army expected a rout and probably to continue on, defeating Israel throughout the land. However, the battle belonged to the Lord. Instead of plundering for silver, they got nothing except dead.

In a direct translation, one can see the straight, abrupt nature of the words, especially the first and last clauses that highlight the scene. It is an a/a b/c pattern: *bau m'lakhim nilkhamu az nilkhamu malkhe k'naan b'taanakh al me m'gido betsa keseph lo laqkhu*

- (a) Came kings – fought.
- (a) Then, fought kings Canaan.
- (b) In Taanach, upon waters Megiddo.
- (c) Plunder silver – no took.

Next, Deborah uses anthropomorphism to excite the minds of those who hear...

²⁰ **They fought from the heavens;
The stars from their courses fought against Sisera.**

min shamayim nilkhamu ha'kokhavim mimsilotam nilkhamu im sisra

– **From heavens – fought.**

Again, the words are short and abrupt. They anticipate the words of the next clause to be completed. One must strip out the sensationalism from innumerable commentaries. Deborah is using anthropomorphism, nothing more. In this, she introduces a striking contrast to the kings of Canaan from the previous verse.

- Came kings – fought.
- From heavens – fought.

In both, the explanation is found in the subsequent words...

– **The stars from their highways fought with Sisera.**

Obviously, stars do not fight. This is also not speaking of angels. The battle was fought by men, it was guided by the Lord, and Israel was victorious. Deborah is stating that the battle was so miraculous that it was as if God used the stars of the heavens to assist Israel.

Instead of keeping on their designated highways in the heavens, they departed from there, came down, and wiped out the enemy. The contrast is highlighted between the second clause of both verses –

Then, fought kings Canaan.

The stars from their highways fought with Sisera.

It is an a/a pattern where the second clause explains the first: *min shamayim nilkhamu ha'kokhavim mimsilotam nilkhamu im sisra*

(a) From heavens – fought.

(a) The stars from their highways fought with Sisera.

Again, Deborah next turns to nature to show that both the heavens and the earth were participants in the battle.

²¹ **The torrent of Kishon swept them away,
That ancient torrent, the torrent of Kishon.
O my soul, march on in strength!**

nakhal qishon g'rapham nakhal q'dumim nakhal qishon tidr'khi naphshi oz

– **River Kishon swept them away.**

The river, like the stars, is given the attributes of a warrior, as if it helped in the battle. It was Israel, by the guiding hand of the Lord, that defeated the enemy. But because the battle was so profound and the odds so obviously uneven, that it was as if the river actually took part, sweeping away the foe before them.

As for the name, Kishon comes from the verb *qush*, to lay bait or lure, thus, it means Snarer or Place of Snaring (or Ensnarement).

Another word found only here in Scripture is given, *garaph*. It signifies to sweep away. It comes from a primitive root meaning to bear off violently. It is as if the river reached out, grabbed the men, and carried them away as plunder.

What was probably the case is that the enemies were chased up to the river where they were slaughtered. Their bodies falling into the river would have then been swept away. Next, Deborah says...

– **River antiquities, river Kishon.**

Again, another unique word is seen. It is a plural noun, *qedumim*, coming from the same as *qedem*, or east. But east in Scripture speaks of aforetime, the past, and even eternity itself as in Micah 5:2 when referring to the origins of the Messiah.

Being plural, it signifies ancient times or antiquities. The type of river is a *nakhal*, or torrent. That comes from the verb *nakhal*, to inherit. This is normally a river that doesn't flow all year, but only when the rains come. They then rush, often suddenly, through the land, inheriting it.

This may explain the plural word antiquities. Even though it doesn't always flow, it was carved out in the ancient past and has flowed innumerable times since creation. The words form their own type of pun – the enemy is the Inheritance of the Snarer.

Following this comes a short, abrupt, and difficult to pin down thought...

– **March my soul – strength.**

Most translations heavily paraphrase what is said, trying to convey some type of meaning, but the short and abrupt nature of the words speaks for itself. As Ellicott says, "These sudden exclamations, which break the flow of the poem, add greatly to its fire and impetuosity." That is the whole point.

Deborah is a female and did not directly participate in the battle. And yet, despite her gentler frame, she led the army to subdue a superior force. Therefore, she claims strength, expressed in the marching of her soul. This is probably affixed to the verse about the river to show that just as the river was swift and powerful, so is she because of her trust in the Lord.

The words form an a/a/b pattern: *nakhal qishon g'rapham nakhal q'dumim*
nakhal qishon tidr'khi naphshi oz

- (a) River Kishon swept them away.
- (a) River antiquities, river Kishon.
- (b) March my soul – strength.

**²² Then the horses' hooves pounded,
The galloping, galloping of his steeds.**

Deborah continues to introduce new and rare words into Scripture: *az halemu iqve sus*
midaharoth daharoth abirav

– **Then hammers heels horse.**

The word *halem* is now brought in. It signifies to beat, hammer, strike down, etc. Some translations say that this indicates the breaking of the horses' hooves from being ridden too hard as they gallop. This is not what it means. The word indicates the action, not what happens from the action.

Deborah is describing what it was like during the battle, "At that time, the horses' hooves hammered." With that, the source of the action, the hammering, is next described...

– **From gallopings – gallopings his mighties.**

The noun is *daharoth*, coming from *dahar* to rush or dash. As it is a horse, it indicates prancing or galloping, but it is plural - gallopings. Deborah uses a literary tool known as an anadiplosis, the repetition of a word or words to excite the mind. In this case, it is to convey the ongoing nature of the horse as it runs.

Using the plural noun form further stimulates the mind, bringing the hearer into the account. And more, the word *dahar* is a form of onomatopoeia – *dahar dahar dahar* as the horse runs. As such, the words are literally filled with the liveliness of the battle as the horse darts according to the reins of its master.

Lastly, she calls the horses *mighties* from another new word, *abir*, coming from the adjective *abir* which is used to poetically describe God as Mighty.

The words literally exude excitement and mental pictures making an a/a patten with a special repetition for effect: *az halemu iqve sus midaharoth daharoth abirav*

(a) Then hammers heels horse.

(a) From gallopings – gallopings his mighties.

With that, Deborah conveys her anger at those unwilling to participate...

²³ **‘Curse Meroz,’ said the angel of the LORD,
‘Curse its inhabitants bitterly,
Because they did not come to the help of the LORD,
To the help of the LORD against the mighty.’**

Having spoken forth one anadiplosis, Deborah continues with that literary tool: *oru meroz amar malakh Yehovah oru aror yosh’veha ki lo bau l’eizrath Yehovah l’eizrath Yehovah ba’giborim*

– **Curse Meroz said messenger Yehovah.**

The verb is imperative, “You are to curse Meroz.” This is the only time Meroz is mentioned in Scripture. It is undoubtedly referring to a city. Barnes says it was a village twelve miles from Samaria. The JFB commentary says that it was “on the confines of Issachar and Naphtali, which lay in the course of the fugitives.”

The NAS says the name is connected to the word *erez*, a cedar. But Abarim ties it to a Semitic verb *erez* – to withdraw or hide. If so, the *m* prefix signifies an agent or place of, and thus, Place of Withdrawing. Jones’ Dictionary simplifies that and says Refuge.

In other words, it appears that Meroz was close to the battlefield or on the trek of the flight of some of the warriors, probably providing a chance to hide and recuperate. This is speculation, but it may be that the name Meroz was given because of the events that took place. It also seems likely based on the last two clauses.

Next it says, “said messenger Yehovah.” There is no article before messenger and the verb curse is plural. Thus, it is referring to a human, not an angel. It is Deborah

speaking of herself. She was wholly enraged at the conduct of Meroz for its conduct. And so...

– **Cursing curse her inhabitants.**

The words are an imperative followed by an infinitive absolute. In essence, “You are to definitely be cursing her with a curse.” This city failed in its primary obligation of supporting Israel and was to be cursed by the people. This is because...

– **For no came to help Yehovah.**

A city so close to the battle should have participated in it. But the meaning of the name adds its own emphasis. They didn’t just fail by not coming to help in the battle, they were no help at all after the battle. They probably allowed those who fled to retreat right through their area. Their inaction was inexcusable.

Here, as always, the army of Israel and the power of the Lord are united as one. Referring to the same battle, it will often say both the Lord won the battle and that Israel fought the battle. That is the idea here. Meroz was unwilling to help Israel, and thus they were unwilling to help the Lord. For effect, she then repeats the matter...

– **To help Yehovah in the mighties.**

A different word than that of verse 22 is translated as mighties. It speaks of one who is strong or mighty, such as warriors. The implication is that they had proven themselves anything but valiant warriors. Therefore, in her eyes, they were a city of sissies.

The words form a marvelous a/a b/b pattern filled with repetition: *oru meroz amar malakh Yehovah oru aror yosh’veha ki lo bau l’ezerath Yehovah l’ezerath Yehovah ba’giborim*

- (a) Curse Meroz said messenger Yehovah,
- (a) Cursing curse her inhabitants,
- (b) For no came to help Yehovah,
- (b) To help Yehovah in the mighties.

With these words, our verses for today are complete. But let us remember a lesson from these people and their interactions with the Lord. We are called with a calling that is irrevocable. But we are admonished to walk worthy of our calling.

Israel was called and they generally failed to walk worthy of it. At times, some in the nation did while others didn't. Sometimes a calling was made and a part of the people failed to respond. That happened with Meroz, and they received a curse.

In Judges 20, another calling will be made. In Judges 21, those who failed to respond will be struck with the sword. We are called to holy living. If we fail at that, we may reap the consequences of our actions. The way to keep from such things is to know the Lord through knowing His word.

In living according to what He says, things will go well with our souls, we will walk worthy of our calling, and we will receive rewards when we stand before His judgment seat. Let us, therefore, determine to walk worthy before Him all of our days.

Closing Verse: *"Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, ¹² that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ."*

-2 Thessalonians 1:11, 12

Next Week: Judges 5:24-31 *Ay chihuahua... wonders galore!* The Song of Deborah, Part IV) (16th Judges Sermon)

The Song of Deborah, Part III

13 Then rule remnant to majesties people,
Yehovah rule to me in the mighties.

14 From Ephraim, their root in Amalek.
After you, Benjamin, in your peoples.
From Machir descended inscribers,
And from Zebulun, drawers in rod, counter.

15 And commanders in Issachar with Deborah
And Issachar, so Barak:
In the valley, sent in his feet.

In divisions Reuben:
Great resolutions heart.

16 Why sit between the trivets,
Hearing hissings flocks?
To divisions Reuben:
Great searchings heart.

17 Gilead in side the Jordan dwelt.
And Dan, why sojourn ships?
Asher sat to coast seas,
And upon his breakings dwelt.

18 Zebulun people exposed his soul to death.
And Naphtali upon heights field.

19 Came kings – fought.
Then, fought kings Canaan.
In Taanach, upon waters Megiddo.
Plunder silver – no took.

20 From heavens – fought.
The stars from their highways fought with Sisera.

21 River Kishon swept them away.
River antiquities, river Kishon.
March my soul – strength.

22 Then hammers heels horse.
From gallopings – gallopings his mighties.

23 Curse Meroz said messenger Yehovah.
Cursing curse her inhabitants.
For no came to help Yehovah.
To help Yehovah in the mighties.

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard

Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 5:24-31 (THE SONG OF DEBORAH, PART IV)

A question that I am commonly asked is, “Which translation is the best one to use?” It shows that the person is truly caring about knowing and understanding what is right and good. Unfortunately, there is no sufficient answer to that question.

There are translations that I would never recommend. There are others that are interesting, but not very literal. Some are so literal that they are hard to read without an accompanying explanation. Others are geared toward a particular group, like children’s Bibles, that speak in a particular way, even if they are not especially literal.

When I translate a verse for a sermon or commentary, I give the most literal possible rendering. That is because it has already been given with an understandable translation, the NKJV – unless otherwise noted – for sermons and commentaries.

There are some words in the original languages that are hard to pin down as to their exact meaning. Or they may have several meanings, just like some English words do. In the Song of Deborah and other poetic passages, another layer of translation is necessary to get the sense as well.

In fact, it may be that a less literal rendering, while matching the secondary layer, may be the better choice for translating. For example, in Judges 5:25, it says “She brought out cream in a lordly bowl.” In the Hebrew, there is an alliteration that is sadly missed. Hence, something like, “brought buttermilk,” “came with curd,” or “carried cream” actually gives a sense of the intended alliteration.

The point is that the only way to properly convey the original is to give the original. But that would mean we all would need to be proficient in Hebrew, something totally unnecessary.

Text Verse: *“...according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹² in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.”*
-Ephesians 3:11, 12

Paul speaks of confidence through faith in Christ. We should not be so dogmatic in choosing a particular translation that we forget that we are to have confidence in Christ. In Judges 4, Sisera was seen to represent misplaced confidence or even pride.

Instead of having our priorities out of whack as to where we will place our confidence (I'm talking to translational snobs here), we should be confident in Jesus and the overall message of Scripture. All the rest of what we do is to bolster that, be it in deeper prayer, researching translations, learning the original languages, etc.

Let us not get sidetracked and have our eyes torn away from the main object of our faith, Jesus. Sound doctrine is important. A good translation is too. These can be determined with time and effort, but the basics should be understood so that we don't get lost in our walk toward glory.

Eyes on Jesus! That is the most basic and important point of all. It is a truth that is clearly presented in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. She Pounded Sisera (verses 24-27)

In the last verse, there was a curse pronounced upon those who failed to attend to the call –

Curse Meroz said messenger Yehovah,
Cursing curse her inhabitants,
For no came to help Yehovah,
To help Yehovah in the mighties.

That curse upon Meroz of Israel is now responded to with a great blessing upon an individual Gentile woman...

²⁴ **“Most blessed among women is Jael,
The wife of Heber the Kenite;
Blessed is she among women in tents.**

t'borakh minashim yael eshet khever ha'qeni minashim ba'ohel t'borakh

– **Blessed from women Jael.**

The expression “from women” indicates a superlative as in “more than.” If there is a group of women all sitting together, and one is ~~Funused~~ especially gorgeous,

someone might say, “From all of them, she is the most beautiful.” This is the sense of the phrase.

In this case, the group is not yet further defined. Thus, at least at this moment, it speaks of all women. Yael is blessed more than, or above, all other women.

This then is set in contrast to the words about Meroz: “Cursing curse her inhabitants.” Where they are cursed with a curse, Jael is blessed above all others. It is an expression not unlike that later spoken to Mary by her relative, Elizabeth –

“Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, ‘Blessed *are* you among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of your womb!’” Luke 1:42

As for Jael, to ensure that the proper Jael is identified, the next words are given...

– **Wife Heber the Kenite.**

These words confirm the imprecation called down upon Meroz. Yael is the wife of Heber the Kenite, a non-Israelite. And yet, she acted, responding to the need of the nation. While Meroz was providing refuge to the enemy, Jael was living out her name.

As noted when she was introduced, the name means Mountain Goat. But in a deeper sense, it conveys the idea of One Who Gets Somewhere Because of a Practical Skill. Jael had a practical skill, hammering tent pegs. In applying that skill, she has gotten somewhere.

She has the adoration of Deborah and indeed all of Israel. To this day, she is remembered in the word of God in the exact opposite manner as Meroz. With that, the fuller definition of how she is blessed is next stated...

– **From women in the tent, blessed.**

The same word begins and ends the three clauses. Also, in the first and second clause, there is a poetic connection between the name Yael and the words “in the tent” (*ba’ohel*). The words are pleasing to the ear while calling to mind the idea of the greatly blessed nature of the heroine –

Blessed from women Yael

From women *ba'ohel*, blessed.

This final clause ensures that the “from women” is restricted to a certain category, meaning “in the tent.” That way, it will not later cause a contradiction or confusion when the words to Mary are spoken. Yael is blessed from women in the tent; Mary is blessed among all women, without any qualifiers.

However, the word “tent” is also used to describe the human body, such as in the words of Paul –

“For we know that if our earthly house, *this* tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”
-2 Corinthians 5:1

Peter uses the same expression in his second epistle. Therefore, it could be argued that Jael is blessed above women who literally dwelt in tents, but she is also blessed above women dwelling in “human tents.”

As noted, the words are set in contrast to the previous verse about Meroz. They were cursed with a curse while Jael is blessed with a blessing. The words form an a/b/a pattern with a pleasingly poetic internal structure: *t'borakh minashim yael eshet khever ha'qeni minashim ba'ohel t'borakh* –

- (a) Blessed from women Jael,
- (b) Wife Heber the Kenite,
- (a) From women in the tent, blessed.

Next to lavish further praises upon Jael, Deborah takes time to explain what it was that made her the great heroine of the nation...

**²⁵ He asked for water, she gave milk;
She brought out cream in a lordly bowl.**

mayim shaal khalav nathatnah b'sepheh adirim hiqrivah khemah

The words are masculine and feminine, explaining who did what, but as long as the subject is understood, there is no need to say he and she. Such specific identifiers are not used by Deborah. To represent the abruptness of the words, I have left them out.

– **Water asked; milk gave.**

The words take us back to Judges 4 –

“Then he said to her, ‘Please give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty.’ So she opened a jug of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him. ²⁰ And he said to her, ‘Stand at the door of the tent, and if any man comes and inquires of you, and says, “Is there any man here?” you shall say, “No.”’”

-Judges 4:19, 20

Sisera was parched. He needed water, and so he asked. But going a step further to accommodate him, she brought him milk. Next, to highlight the superlative nature of the milk and the honorable way it was presented, Deborah says...

– **In bowl majesties, came curd.**

The same word used in verse 5:13 to describe the people, *adirim*, or majesties, is used to describe the bowl. Some translations paraphrase the word to explain the meaning, saying something like “a bowl fit for nobles” or “a princely bowl.”

Even in the tent of nomads, there would be expensive things that would be brought out for the most special of occasions or for the most honorable of guests. That is the sense here. A new word is introduced, *sephel*, a bowl.

It comes from an unused root, meaning to depress, and so it is a basin, as if it is deepened out. It will be seen only here and in Judges 6:38, where Gideon will wring out a fleece into a *sephel*, or bowl. This one is not just any bowl, but one of majesties.

Jael has brought forth the bowl with curd. Curd signifies milk that is in a partially solid or solid state, such as in thick cream or even butter. It, along with honey, is expressly stated to be what Messiah will be nourished on –

“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. ¹⁵ Curds and honey He shall eat, that He may know to refuse the evil and choose the good.” Isaiah 7:14, 15

It would be both refreshing and nourishing. But because Sisera was already exhausted from his flight, the curds would help make him sleepy as well. The words help explain the comfort Sisera would have felt leading to confidence that he could trust Jael enough to nap before continuing his flight.

The clauses form an overall a/b pattern with internal thoughts that are short, abrupt, and lead the mind to anticipate what must then follow: *mayim shaal khalav nathatnah b'sephel adirim hiqrivah khemah* –

- (a) Water asked; milk gave,
- (b) In bowl majesties, came curd.

With the mental tension produced by the words, the thoughts of the reader are impelled forward, anticipating what is coming...

**²⁶ She stretched her hand to the tent peg,
Her right hand to the workmen's hammer;
She pounded Sisera, she pierced his head,
She split and struck through his temple.**

There is as much verbal energy in the words as there was physical energy used by Jael. One can actually sense the action as the words unfold: *yadah la'yathed tishlakhnah viminah l'halmuth amelim v'halmah sisra makhaqah rosho u-makhatsah v'khalpha raqato*

I have tried to retain the alliteration and action of the words while still maintaining the original sense they convey. Sisera is peacefully napping, having filled himself from a bowl of majesties chock-full of curd. As he lay there, secure and comfortable...

– **Her hand to the peg stretched.**

With her hands, she had brought forth the princely bowl of curd. With them, she stretches out for other implements she is intimately familiar with. First, she uses her (left) hand, reaching for the peg. Next...

– **And her right to hammer workmen.**

The word “hand” is left out, but it is again implied. By doing this, Deborah maintains a desired brevity to highlight each movement –

Her (left) hand to the peg stretched,
And her right (hand) to hammer laborers.

The word translated as “hammer” is found only here, *halmuth*. It is derived from the verb *halam*, to hammer, that was seen in verse 5:22 when referring to the hammering of the horses’ hooves. It will again be used in the next clause.

To retain the alliteration and consistency, I have translated it as hammer and hammered. The intent is to maintain Deborah’s special use of alliteration.

Also, another new word is introduced, *amel*. It comes from the verb *amal*, to labor or toil. Thus, it means to labor or suffer. As such, it is a laborer. Being plural, it signifies the laborers’ hammer.

With that, the alliteration referred to is seen next...

– **And hammered Sisera – smashed his head.**

With the hammer, she hammered and smashed. It is another word found only here, *makhaq*. It comes from a primitive root signifying to crush. Because the coming words form an alliteration, smashed gives the necessary meaning and sound.

And more, the Hebrew is onomatopoetic. One can hear the sound reflected in her words, *makhaqah rosho* – smashed his head. Adam Clarke takes this as one action, whacking him with a hammer, followed by another action, nailing his head to the ground.

There is no need for that. It is probably one action being described in two ways which is highlighted by an alliteration. The needed alliterative pairing to this is next seen...

– **And smushed; and slid through his temple.**

The previous word was *makhaq*. This is *makhats* – to dash asunder, crush, etc. Deborah, taking every opportunity to highlight the marvelous handiwork of Jael, says she smashed and she smushed. Sisera’s head was perfectly pulverized as she profusely pounded. And because of her action, the peg is said to *khalaph*, or pass

through, his temple. To maintain a background “s” sound, “slid through” simply and yet sumptuously successfully satisfies.

As in the comments of Chapter 4, the actions of Jael are bafflingly considered as immoral or completely inappropriate by many scholars. They chide her for her work of assassination and say that nothing morally justifies her actions.

That is ridiculously absurd when considering the absolute delight in which Deborah, the Lord’s appointed judge, heaps praise upon her actions through the use of the superlative words.

The brevity, alliteration, and onomatopoetic nature of what she says resounds with implied accolades heaped upon Jael. It is an a/a b/b pattern with beautiful internal structure: *yadah la’yathed tishlakhnah viminah l’halmuth amelim v’halmah sisra makhaqah rosho u-makhatsah v’khalpha raqato* –

- (a) Her hand to the peg stretched,
- (a) And her right to hammer laborers,
- (b) And hammered Sisera – smashed his head,
- (b) And smushed; and slid through his temple.

With all of the violent action attributed to Jael, the heroine of the battle, the reaction to what she had done is next described...

**²⁷ At her feet he sank, he fell, he lay still;
At her feet he sank, he fell;
Where he sank, there he fell dead.**

Scholars take this as something other than what it says. For example, John Lange says, “The smitten chieftain draws himself together, he seeks to rise, and falls back. Twice more he writhes convulsively, and dies.”

Similarly, John Gill says, “Perhaps at her first approach to him, and attempt to drive the nail, or at the blow she gave, he rose up, but she had done the business so effectually at the first stroke, that he dropped at once, and laid down his head again.”

Consider the facts previously stated, he was fast asleep. Her adeptness with the hammer and peg, would have killed him in a single moment. The rest of this is simply for

effect: *ben ragleha kara naphal shakav ben ragleha kara naphal ba'asher kara sham naphal shadud*

– **Between her feet curled, fallen, lain.**

The three verbs are all in the perfect aspect, accomplished and complete. The words “between her feet” mean that he was right where she was squatting to pound out his brains. Once she hammered the peg through his head, there he lay. The next word, *kara*, comes from a primitive root signifying to bend the knee.

He was already lying down. He didn't sink or crouch. Rather, he was either already in a fetal position while sleeping, or the muscles in his knees contracted, pulling in when his brains got blasted. The scene is being described after he was terminated.

The next word, *naphal*, means to fall. In this case, saying fallen may lead to the wrong impression, such as that he had fallen. Instead, it means he lay there fallen. To ensure that this is understood, Deborah next says *shakav*, a verb meaning to lie down. In this case, it is stated in the perfect aspect – lain.

With that, and for maximum effect, Deborah repeats much of the first clause...

– **Between her feet curled, fallen.**

It is as if Deborah is rejoicing over the gruesome scene. The enemy and oppressor has been subdued and eliminated. And then, once again she repeats two of the previous words to make sure that we understand the poetic nature of the occurrence.

Sisera never had a chance to struggle. Jael took advantage of the situation and subdued him with a bowl of curd. The cleanup operation was to pound out his brains...

– **In which curled, there fallen, pulverized.**

Right where he was curled up, signified by the locator “in which,” is where his body lay fallen. And more, Deborah uses the word *shadad*, a word that comes from a root signifying to be burly. Thus, figuratively, it refers to being powerful. In this case, it was a pointedly, poignantly, and perfectly powerful pulverization.

The clauses are complementary and repetitive, giving a marvelous sense of the outcome of Jael's cunning work. They reveal an a/a/a pattern: *ben ragleha kara naphal shakav ben ragleha kara naphal ba'asher kara sham naphal shadud* –

- (a) Between her feet curled, fallen, lain.
- (a) Between her feet curled, fallen.
- (a) In which curled, there fallen, pulverized.

With the death of Sisera, the poem turns to the sad words of a mother who will never see her son again...

*In whom have you your trust placed
And where is your confidence located
There is one path to God that has been traced
All others are ways that God has hated*

*Have confidence in what He has decided
In the giving of His Son for reconciliation
All other avenues are to be derided
But in Christ there is hope-filled anticipation*

*To have misplaced confidence is an unhappy trust
To be filled with pride will only lead to sadness
Trust in Jesus, that is a must
And with it then comes eternal gladness*

II. The Sun in His Strength (verses 28-31)

²⁸ **"The mother of Sisera looked through the window,
And cried out through the lattice,
'Why is his chariot so long in coming?
Why tarries the clatter of his chariots?'**

*bead ha'khalon nishq'phah vatyabev em sisra bead ha'eshnav madua boshesh rikhbo
la'vo madua ekheru paame markvothav*

- **Through the window looked and shrilled.**

The word translated as looked is from a root signifying to lean out. Hence, by implication, it means to look. One can see a woman (the verb is feminine) leaning out of a window. While doing so, she cries out in a shrill voice.

Then, a word found only here, *yavav* is used. It comes from a primitive root meaning to bawl. In this case, and because she doesn't know her son is dead, she is simply shrilling. She is hopefully, but hesitantly affirming her confidence that everything is ok. The next words tell us who this is...

– **Mother Sisera through the lattice.**

Here is yet another new word, *eshnav*. It refers to a lattice. The lattice is opened and she is leaning out through the open window and lattice, gazing into the distance and asking what any mother whose son has gone off to battle would be asking at this point...

– **Why delayed his chariot to come?**

The word translated as delayed gives the sense of being ashamed. One can think of a battle going on too long. That would be an embarrassment. If the army was defeated, the soldiers that lived would be embarrassed and delay their return. Her anxiety over the delay of his chariot is evident.

– **Why tarried cadences his chariots?**

Another word concerning delay is used, *akhar*. It means to remain behind. Thus, figuratively to tarry or procrastinate. She is obviously tense about the delay of the sound (*paam*) of the chariots.

That word, *paam*, signifies a stroke, beat, or repeating event, as in set times during the year. The cadences of the chariots as drawn by the horses makes such a repetitive sound. She is asking why that sound has tarried.

The words precisely speak of a mother tensely awaiting the return of her son from battle. They form an a/a b/b pattern: *bead ha'khalon nishq'phah vatyabev em sisra bead ha'eshnav madua boshesh rikhb la'vo madua ekheru paame markvothav* –

(a) Through the window looked and shrilled.

- (a) Mother Sisera through the lattice.
- (b) Why delayed his chariot to come?
- (b) Why tarried cadences his chariots?

With her tense emotional state, and to give full assurance that all is ok, it next says...

**²⁹ Her wisest ladies answered her,
Yes, she answered herself,**

The words are difficult but understandable: *khakhmoth sarothaha taanenah aph hi tashiv amareha lah*

- **Wise, her princesses, answer.**

After her longingly looking out the window and shrilling about the return of Sisera, and in order to comfort her anxiety, the wise princesses give her encouraging words. As she listens, she takes in the words and...

- **Yea, she returns her sayings to herself.**

The words are extremely difficult. It could be she assumes that one of the ladies said something she can cling to, thus returning that lady's answers to herself. Or she may not have heard anything that encouraged her, and so she comes up with her own comforting words, returning them to herself.

I would guess it is the former. She heard something that she then said, "Yes, that is certainly it." She then repeats it to herself. That answer to herself comprises her last words, which are coming up in the next verse. The irony is that the counsel of the wisest of her ladies will eventually be proven incorrect.

It is a mournful a/b pattern for anyone who has a heart for a forlorn mother who awaits her son's return: *khakhmoth sarothaha taanenah aph hi tashiv amareha lah* –

- (a) Wise, her princesses, answer,
- (b) Yea, she returns her sayings to herself.

With that, the words of hope to comfort Sisera's mother are given...

³⁰ **'Are they not finding and dividing the spoil:
To every man a girl or two;
For Sisera, plunder of dyed garments,
Plunder of garments embroidered and dyed,
Two pieces of dyed embroidery for the neck of the looter?'**

There needs to be a lot of mental addition to the words. They are short and direct. My translation may be hopeful as the words are complicated: *halo yimtesu y'khalqu shalal rakham rakhamathayim l'rosh gevev sh'lal ts'vaim l'sisra sh'lal ts'vaim riqmah tseva riqmathayim l'tsav'ere shalal*

– **Nay! Finding and dividing spoil.**

It could be the opening of a statement or a question: "Are not" or "Nay." I went with a statement, as if she is brushing off her previous fears. "Why are they tarrying? Nay! They are out finding and dividing the spoil! They will come back filled with plunder!"

– **Damsel. Damsels to every man.**

She starts with the female captive but then doubles it. There will be so many dead soldiers that the women will be unprotected and easy prey. Every soldier will come home with a couple of captives.

The word *rakham*, damsel, literally means compassion or mercy. In this case, however, it extends to what the compassionate spoil implies, a female. From there, the list continues...

– **Spoil colors to Sisera.**

The word is a noun signifying dye or dyed stuff. Thus, to keep it a single noun, colors is sufficient. However, the mind must fill in the rest. To then explain what the colors are, she continues with her hopeful list of booty...

– **Spoil colors embroidery color.**

Here is another new word, *riqmah*. It signifies variegated stuff and thus colored embroidery. Her son's army is choosing their newest fashions from the dead army

of Israel. Yes! They will all look marvelous upon their victorious return. The colors will also be highlighted in how they are worn or in how much is gathered...

– **Embroideries to necks, spoil**

It is a most obscure set of words, ending with a noun. What it may be signifying is that there will be so much spoil that the men are laden down with the colored embroidery as it is heaped upon their necks.

Or it could mean that the spoil taken, meaning the damsels, would have colorful embroideries adorning their necks. I would go with that. Thus, it would be a return to the original spoil that she contemplated, meaning damsels of the earlier clause.

Either way, Sisera's mother is content to console herself, being happily hopeful of having a hearty hello for her hero as he returns with so much plunder.

The first clause introduces what is coming. That is then categorized and also expanded upon. It then ends with a return to the original plunder, the women.

Thus, a/b/c/c/d is the pattern: *halo yimtesu y'khalqu shalal rakham rakhamathayim l'rosh gevev sh'lal ts'vaim l'sisra sh'lal ts'vaim riqmah tseva riqmathayim l'tsav'ere shalal* –

- (a) Nay! Finding and dividing spoil:
- (b) Damsel. Damsels to every man.
- (c) Spoil colors to Sisera,
- (c) Spoil colors embroidery color.
- (d) Embroideries to necks, spoil.

With her hopeful ponderings complete, Deborah shows little pity towards the soon-to-be mournful mom. Rather, she exalts in the marvelous victory of the Lord over the enemies of His people...

³¹ **“Thus let all Your enemies perish, O LORD!
But *let* those who love Him *be* like the sun
When it comes out in full strength.”
So the land had rest for forty years.**

*ken yovdu kal oyvekha Yehovah v'ohavav k'tseth ha'shemesh bigvuratho vatishqot
ha'arets arbaim shanah*

– **Thus: Perish all Your enemies, Yehovah!**

This clause certainly includes everything that has been recorded concerning the enemy: their total defeat to the last man, the ignoble way in which Sisera was crushed, etc.

However, the sudden spontaneity and bursting forth of these words is surely intended to be a mocking conclusion to the prideful thoughts of Sisera's mother. She fully supported her son's decision to go into battle and eradicate Israel.

Her anticipation of his glorious return and the plunder she would see heaped upon the army excited her. The thought of helpless damsels brought captive, bereaved of fathers, is turned upside down. Instead, she is bereaved of her mighty son. This is what Deborah's words most poignantly refer to. As for those not His enemies, they are defined with the next words...

– **And loving Him: According to coming out the sun in his strength.**

The verb is plural. Thus "those loving Him" is understood. If one is not loving Yehovah, he is – by default – an enemy of Him. Therefore, all who love Him are included in these final words of her poem. They are the righteous before God.

The sun in his strength speaks of the midday sun. It is the hottest and brightest time when the sun stands in radiant glory over the earth. Her words are reflective of the words of Matthew 13 –

"Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" Matthew 13:43

But the righteousness Jesus refers to must come from somewhere apart from the people themselves. What He is saying is in that day the people of the Lord will be like the Lord. That was given in prophecy by Malachi, just as the final words of the Old Testament were set to close out –

"But to you who fear My name
The Sun [*shemesh*] of Righteousness shall arise

With healing in His wings;
And you shall go out
And grow fat like stall-fed calves.” Malachi 4:2

Jesus is the Sun of righteousness. His people will shine forth as that sun, bearing His righteousness. Thus, Deborah’s poetic words, like the typology of Chapter 4, anticipate the coming of Christ and His kingdom. For those of the church, it will be realized at the rapture. For Israel, that will be realized after the tribulation during the millennium.

Ultimately, the words anticipate the time when all evil will be swept away and the peaceful rule of the Messiah will last forever after. No person, in any dispensation, is reconciled to God apart from Jesus Christ. This is the message being conveyed.

The Song of Deborah has poetically and beautifully expressed this truth. With that, the final words of the chapter are affixed to this verse...

— **And rested the land forty years.**

It is letter for letter the same as the corresponding words found in Judges 3:11 at the time of Othniel.

Forty is defined by Bullinger as “a period of probation, trial, and chastisement — (not judgment, like the number 9, which stands in connection with the punishment of enemies, but the chastisement of sons, and of a covenant people).”

And more, because “it relates to enlarged dominion, or to renewed or extended rule, then it does so in virtue of its factors 4 and 10.”

Four, “is the number of things that have a beginning, of things that are made, of material things, and matter itself. It is the number of material completeness. Hence it is the world number, and especially the ‘city’ number.”

Ten signifies “Completeness of order, marking the entire round of anything, is, therefore, the ever-present signification of the number ten. It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete.”

The period of forty years is given to express the wholeness of the victory of Christ over His enemies. Those who are His have both a state and a duration of time that is impossible for us to properly imagine. That day is coming, and the key to participating in it is found in Jesus.

As for the words of this verse, they comprise a contrasting a/a pattern with a closing thought for the narrative: *ken yovdu kal oyvekha Yehovah v'ohavav k'tseth ha'shemesh bigvuratho vatishqot ha'arets arbaim shanah* –

(a) Thus: Perish all Your enemies, Yehovah!

(a) And loving Him: According to coming out the sun in his strength.
And rested the land forty years.

The Song of Deborah is a marvel of beauty and intricacy. It has introduced many rare or unique words to Scripture, and it has brought forth an amazing array of literary structures to tantalize us. But beyond that, it has presented the thoughts of Chapter 4 to us in a new way that only more perfectly highlights the workings of God in Christ.

Deborah anticipates the New Testament. Jael anticipates the body of believers who have accepted that word and who are thus granted the righteousness of Christ. For now, that is the church. In the future, it will be those of Israel along with all others who have come to accept that Jesus is God's Messiah to bring fallen humanity back to Himself.

The final restoration of all men comes only through Jesus. As Jesus is the incarnate Lord fully revealed in the New Testament, it is He who even the saints of old sought out as their distant hope. Whether it was those like Job under government or those under law like David, they knew Him as Yehovah. Now, we have a fuller understanding of what that means. Yehovah has revealed Himself in the Person of Jesus.

Sisera, representing misplaced trust or pride, is a sad picture of most of the world, even innumerable souls within the physical church. Instead of trusting Christ, people turn to the law. If the law could save, there would have been no need for Jesus.

But the Lord united with human flesh, bridging the infinite – and thus impossible – gap between God and man. This was the final and ultimate anticipation of Deborah and those with her, even if they didn't fully understand it at the time. The battle they faced was a look into the greater battle that was fought and won by the hand of the Lord.

Let us remember this and hold fast to Him. It is the Lord who ultimately has won the battle, even if He is using imperfect warriors like us in the process. May our trust be in Him and remain in Him alone. All hail the name of Jesus, who has done such great things for us.

Closing Verse: *“For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” Ephesians 3:3*

Next Week: Judges 6:1-10 (I Am the Lord Your God) (17th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

The Song of Deborah, Part IV

24 Blessed from women Jael.
Wife Heber the Kenite.
From women in the tent, blessed.

25 Water asked; milk gave,
In bowl majesties, came curd.

26 Her hand to the peg stretched,
And her right to hammer laborers,
And hammered Sisera – smashed his head,
And smushed; and slid through his temple.

27 Between her feet curled, fallen, lain.
Between her feet curled, fallen.
In which curled, there fallen, pulverized.

28 Through the window looked and shrilled.
Mother Sisera through the lattice.
Why delayed his chariot to come?
Why tarried cadences his chariots?

29 Wise, her princesses, answer,
Yea, she returns her sayings to herself.

30 Nay! Finding and dividing spoil:
Damsel. Damsels to every man.
Spoil colors to Sisera,
Spoil colors embroidery color.
Embroideries to necks, spoil.

31 Thus: Perish all Your enemies, Yehovah!
And loving Him: According to coming out the sun in his strength.
And rested the land forty years.

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 6:1-10

(I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD)

At the outbreak of hostilities between Israel and Gaza in October 2023, a Jewish “rabbi” Chaim Richman, was being interviewed and said to the interviewer –

“You guys are worshiping one Jew. That’s a mistake. You should be worshiping every single one of us because we all die for your sins every single day. And that’s exactly what’s going on here. We’re all God’s firstborn, and we’re dying for your sins right now.”
Chaim Richman

Rather disgusting, but this is not unlike the attitude of the Jewish people who attacked Paul, and it has permeated their society to this day. They cannot accept that it is they who need forgiveness of sin, not only individually but as a nation.

Until one comes to Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, there is a mental disconnect between one’s state as a sinner and the infinite holiness of God. This is why people grade themselves on a bell curve when asked why they should be allowed to go to heaven. A common answer is, “Well, I’m not as bad as...” or “Well, I’m a good guy.”

Such evaluations make oneself the acceptable standard of goodness, a standard that sets the bar for God’s decision. This is what Chaim Richman has done in relation to Israel.

He has openly avowed that Israel is the standard of God’s holiness, that they alone have met it, and they are, therefore, to be worshiped as a people. All others are to be subject to them, not because of who God is in relation to them, but who they are in relation to God.

Rather, there can be only one standard of holiness: God. The incarnation of Jesus Christ means that Jesus is God come in human form. He, therefore, is the standard – the bar – by which all men will be judged. One will stand in relation to Him and be condemned or saved, and the only way to be saved is by faith that He is the offering for man’s sin.

This is the message of the Bible. We must come to God through Jesus, and when we do so, God’s infinite perfection – His righteousness, holiness, etc., is imputed to us. Without this, we are condemned already. Let us hail God, who has brought us back to Himself through Jesus!

Text Verse: *“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.” Hebrews 4:12, 13*

The word of God, meaning the Bible, is what reveals Jesus to the world today. He is not physically here. He is not popping into people’s heads, dreams, living rooms, or churches. He has left us with His word, and He has given His Spirit to those who accept what His word proclaims.

This is the way it is. And because of that, we have the often-repeated syllogism at the Superior Word to consider –

We cannot rightly know God apart from Jesus Christ.

We cannot know rightly Jesus Christ unless we know the Bible.

Therefore, we cannot rightly know God without knowing the Bible.

Israel will find this out someday. That will be seen in the pictures presented in our passage today. Get ready! It’s all to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. As Numerous as Locusts (verses 1-6)

¹ Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD.

vayaasu b’ne Yisrael ha’ra b’ene Yehovah – “And did sons Israel the evil in eyes Yehovah.” It is now the sixth of eight times that the term “the evil” is seen in Judges. It is an offense that is done openly, almost as mocking or challenging the authority of the Lord, testing Him to see what He would do about it.

Chapter 5 recorded the Song of Deborah. To close out the chapter, it noted that the land rested for forty years. With Israel doing such evil openly and brazenly before the Lord, He will now act to discipline them and bring them back to a right relationship...

^{1 (con’t)} So the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years,

vayitnem Yehovah b'yad midyan sheva shanim – “And gave them, Yehovah, in hand Midian seven years.” Midian is descended from Abraham by his second wife, Keturah. It says in Genesis 25:6 that he and his brothers born to Keturah were sent eastward, away from Isaac. These descendants encompassed nomadic tribes that were wealthy and which spanned a large area.

Moses' father-in-law was from Midian. Israel warred against Midian in Numbers 31 after they had allied with Moab in an attempt to seduce them through the treachery of Balaam. Verse 3 will note their alliance with the Amalekites and other people of the east. Judges 8:24 includes them under the Ishmaelites. Thus, Midian was allied with various Arab groups in differing ways.

The name comes from *madon*, strife, or contention. That is derived from *din*, to judge. Thus, it means Strife or Place of Judgment.

As for the number seven, it signifies spiritual perfection.

² and the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel.

Rather: *va'taaz yad midyan al yisrael* – “And prevailed hand Midian over Israel.” It is a new sentence rather than a continuation of the previous one. The Lord delivered Israel into the hands of Midian. From there, Midian began to increase over Israel.

This is unlike the internal warfare of Deborah's time. Rather, it is an external foe who has come to raid and plunder the land. It is as if their hand comes crushing down upon Israel during these attacks...

^{2 (con't)} Because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made for themselves the dens, the caves, and the strongholds which *are* in the mountains.

Rather than a general “because,” it provides a specific explanation to the thought that began the verse: *mipne midyan asu lahem b'ne Yisrael ha'minharoth asher b'harim v'eth hamaroth v'eth hamtsadoth* – “From faces Midian made to them, sons Israel, the dens which in the mountains, and the caves, and the strongholds.”

Midian began to come against Israel. In response to that, places where the people could run to (from faces Midian) were constructed. Israel is on the defense against attackers.

Two new words are brought into the Bible. The first is seen only in this verse, *minharah*. It is from *nahar* which has two distinct meanings: to shine or beam and to flow or stream. It thus signifies a channel or fissure. By implication, it means a cavern or den. John Lange's commentary provides an explanation of these dens –

"At some rocky, elevated, and dry place, a shaft was sunk obliquely into the earth; and at a depth of about twenty-five fathoms, streets were run off, straight, and from six to eight paces wide, in the sides of which the dwellings were excavated. At various points these streets were extended to double their ordinary width, and the roof was pierced with airholes, more or less numerous according to the extent of the place. These airholes are at present called, rôsen plural rawâsin (windows)."

This would then explain the word *minharah*. The air and/or light would stream into these dens. Lange continues with the commentary, saying –

"...watchmen were employed, who gave alarm signals when the enemy approached. As soon as these were given, the ploughmen and herds hurried quickly into the earth, and were secure. Commonly, says Wetzstein, these excavations had a second place of exit; and consequently, in a region whose inhabitants are liable to constant attacks from the desert (he speaks of the Hauran), are regarded as strongholds."

The second place of hiding is "the caves." That comes from *ur*, to be bare or exposed. One can think of the place in the earth being exposed, either naturally or by man, leaving a place to hide.

The third place of hiding is the second new word, *metsad*. It comes from *tsud*, to hunt. By implication, it signifies a stronghold or fort.

Everything about the verse shows oppression by the enemy and retreat by Israel. They had forsaken the Lord, and He has brought this trouble upon them.

³ So it was, whenever Israel had sown, Midianites would come up; also Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them.

Rather, it is all singular: *v'hayah im zara Yisrael v'alah midyan va'amaleq u-b'ne qedem v'alu alav* – "And was if sown Israel, and ascended Midian, and Amalek, and sons East. And ascended against him."

Saying “if sown” instead of “when sown” gives a sense of intensity in the minds of Israel: “Should we even bother to sow?” But when someone did, the oppressor would be there to plunder the effort.

Amalek was the first of Israel’s enemies after leaving Egypt. The Lord declared war upon them from generation to generation (Exodus 17).

The name is derived from the word *am*, people, and *malaq*, which means to nip or wring off the head of a bird with or without severing it from the body. Thus, they are The People Who Wring Off. They are those who are disconnected from the body and strive to disconnect the body.

The *b’ne qedem* or “sons East” would be the various people groups, including Arab tribes, Ishmaelites, etc. These words are a way of saying that anyone and everyone found Israel a source of plunder and easy pickings. It thus speaks of real desperation.

⁴Then they would encamp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza,

The narrator inserts the hearer into the narrative by using the second person singular: *vayakhanu alehem vayashkhithu eth yevul ha’arets ad boakha azah* – “And encamp upon them, and destroy produce the earth until your (2nd person sg.) coming Gaza.”

The heaviness of the oppression is seen in the words as the plunderers from the east would encamp upon Israel from the east to the west and towards the southwest where Gaza lay, destroying everything Israel had brought forth in the harvest season.

Gaza is a feminine form coming from *az*, strong. It signifies Strong or Strong Place. So heavy was their oppression that they destroyed it all...

⁴ (con’t) and leave no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep nor ox nor donkey.

v’lo yashiru mikhyah b’Yisrael va’sseh va’shor va’khamor – “And no remain sustenance in Israel: and sheep, and ox, and donkey.” This will be explained in the next verse. For now, it is as if these raiders came in, set up camp, and waited for the produce to come. When it was ready, they would take it for themselves. But more, because of their presence, there wasn’t even sustenance left for any type of animal...

⁵For they would come up with their livestock and their tents,

ki hem u-miqnehem yaalu v'aholehem – “For they, and their livestock ascend, and their tents.” The invaders are contrasted to Israel, their livestock are contrasted to Israel’s, and their tents – being easy open-air dwellings – are contrasted to the oppressive dens, caves, and strongholds in which Israel hid. They are words of absolute superiority and dominance. They were...

^{5 (con’t)} **coming in as numerous as locusts;**

yavou k’de arbeh la’rov – “coming according to abundance locust to the multitude.” These words are given to explain the complete lack Israel faced. This is then expressed again for greater effect...

^{5 (con’t)} **both they and their camels were without number;**

v’lahem v’ligmalehem ein mispar – “And to them, and to their camels, not number.” Just as the locust that moves around, making it impossible to count them, so was the hoard of invaders alighting upon Israel.

Noting camels is intended to show another level of their absolute subjugation of the land. Camels were not found in abundance in Canaan. They were brought in by the invaders, and they demonstrate both ease of travel and ability to load and carry away plunder.

As for the *gamal*, or camel, that comes from the verb *gamal*, to deal fully or adequately with. Thus, it can mean to wean, repay, require, reward, ripen, and so forth. As such, it refers to the treatment, either well or ill, that a person will receive.

As such, the invaders would pick up and encamp from place to place, eating up or loading up everything as they went...

^{5 (con’t)} **and they would enter the land to destroy it.**

vayavou ba’arets l’shakhatah – “And came in the land to destroy her.” The words of this verse are well reflected later in Joel 1 when referring to the Day of the Lord. It speaks of invaders coming into the land of Israel as locusts, destroying everything in their path. The words are striking and magnificent, being summed up with the words –

“What the chewing locust left, the swarming locust has eaten;
What the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten;
And what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten.” Joel 1:4

To get a better sense of the level of devastation, take time to read Joel 1. It is probably not unlike what is being described here in Judges. Thus...

⁶So Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites,

Other than Midianite being singular, the translation is fine. The word *dalal* is used. It comes from a root meaning to slacken or be feeble. It gives the sense of the people being so thin and gaunt that they could hardly lift their arms. As such...

⁶ (con't) and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD.

It is the anticipated result from the words of verse 1 –

v.1 – “And gave them, Yehovah, in hand Midian seven years.”

v. 6 – “And cried out, sons Israel, unto Yehovah.”

The Lord’s hand of discipline, through the subjugation of Israel by Midian, resulted in the necessary response to the corrective measures. Instead of crying out to the gods of the land, doing what was despicable according to the law, and failing to honor the Lord as expected, Israel again cries out to Yehovah...

*Years of trouble have come upon us
Misfortune that is of our own making
We rejected God’s provision in Jesus
When it was always there for the taking*

*We are without sustenance all day
We have nothing but want and lack
We hear everyone of Israel now say:
“If we could only take it all back”*

*We are impoverished in the Place of Judgment
We have only one path left that we can go
Every other avenue has been spent
The Lord Jesus alone can take away our woe*

II. I Am The Lord Your God (verses 7-10)

⁷ And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD because of the Midianites,

v'hi ki zaaqu b'ne Yisrael el Yehovah al odoth midyan – “And was, when cried out sons Israel unto Yehovah upon turnings Midian.” The word *odoth* is a plural noun with an almost poetic connotation. It comes from the same as the word *ud*, or firebrand.

Just as one uses a firebrand to turn the coals to keep them hot and burning, so were the “turnings” of Midian. The things they did stirred up the life of Israel. Hence, one might say events, happenings, or occasions. It was because of their actions, leading to these great woes, that Israel cried out to the Lord. Again, look at the way the Lord arranged this:

v.1 – “And gave them, Yehovah, in hand Midian seven years.”

v.7 – “And cried out, sons Israel, unto Yehovah ... upon turnings Midian.”

Notice that it doesn't say Israel repented of their sins. They simply cried out to the Lord. It can be assumed that at this point, they no longer even knew what the law demanded.

They had turned from Him and gone about their own ways during the forty years of peace after the battle against Sisera. Because of this, the Lord sent trouble upon them. But rather than acknowledging their wrongdoing, they simply cry out to the Lord. Because of these things, it was...

⁸ that the LORD sent a prophet to the children of Israel,

It is amazing how many translations brazenly omit a key word found in this clause. See if you can find it before I get to the explanation: *vayishlakh Yehovah ish navi el b'ne Yisrael* – “And sent Yehovah man, prophet, unto sons Israel.”

The majority of translations skip the word man, as if it was an irrelevant thing. The word *navi*, or prophet, is masculine. Therefore, the word may have been considered superfluous by the translators. However, it is the same addition as was stated of Deborah in Judges 4:4, “And Deborah, woman, prophetess, wife (or woman) Lapidoth.”

This is the first time any person is said to be a prophet or prophetess since then. There is meaning that is being conveyed that will never be understood without a proper

translation of the words. And yet, in both the account of Deborah and this one now, the identifiers, woman and man, are simply ignored by most translators.

Equally damaging as leaving out words in the translation are the writings of the Jews, stating that the prophet was Phineas. That may be true, and it is fine to speculate but to state it as a fact when the Bible leaves it out can only lead to unclear analysis of the story. Once something like that is introduced, it is what the mind will focus on rather than the story with its necessary typology.

It was seen that Deborah prefigured the New Testament. What is the progression of the stories so far? Do they form an understandable sequence of events? If so, what would be the logical progression of events concerning Israel during the church age?

The account now being presented is explaining the ongoing redemptive narrative with key words being presented to keep us on the right track. Understanding this, the words of this man, a prophet, are next conveyed to Israel at the end of the seven years of oppression by Midian...

^{8 (con't)} **who said to them, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel:**

vayomer lahem koh amar Yehovah Elohe Yisrael – “and says to them, ‘Thus said Yehovah God Israel.’” The prophet is conveying a proclamation of the Lord previously spoken to Israel. They had been spoken to, and now they are being reminded of what was said to them. The proclamation is...

^{8 (con't)} **‘I brought you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of bondage;**

It bears emphasis: *anokhi heeleti ethkhem mimitsrayim va’otsi ethkhem mibeth avadim* – “I ascended you from Egypt and you from house slaves.” The idea of being ascended from Egypt has been stated repeatedly since early in Exodus. Egypt pictures life under the bondage of sin. The Lord ascended Israel from that, exalting them to life under the law.

However, the law is its own type of bondage to sin. As Paul says, “for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.” (Romans 3:20). This is why Paul specifically calls the law bondage several times in Galatians. Despite this, with the proper observance of the allowances given under the law, sin was atoned for.

The law was a necessary step in the process of redemption. It was given to Israel to teach them, and the world at large, a lesson concerning their need for God's provision found in Jesus, the Messiah (Galatians 3:24).

As for ascending Israel from Egypt and the house of bondage, the prophet continues with the words of the Lord...

⁹ and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians

More literally: *va'atsil etkhem miyad mitsrayim* – "I plucked you from hand Egypt." It is as if the Lord literally grabbed Israel and tore them right out of the grasping hand of Egypt. Think of life in sin. One is a slave to sin in a world full of sin. But the Lord, through the work of Christ, literally plucks us out of that. And more...

^{9 (con't)} and out of the hand of all who oppressed you,

u-miyad kal lokhatsekhem – "and from hand all your oppressors." Again, think of the state of people under sin. You are not just bound in sin, but you are tightly in the grasp of the oppressions of sin – drugs, drink, porn, idolatry, etc.

These things grasp us, and they hold fast to us. And yet, through the power of the Lord, one can be completely plucked out of that kind of life. This is what He had done for Israel. And more, the Lord's words through the prophet continue...

^{9 (con't)} and drove them out before you and gave you their land.

va'agaresh otham mipnekhem va'etnah lakhem eth artsam – "And cast out them from your faces and gave to you their land." It speaks of sanctification. First, the Lord saves people from the penalty of sin, Egypt, providing salvation. Then He removes from them the power of sin, providing sanctification.

Being given the land of Canaan pictures salvation, while casting out the occupiers pictures the process of sanctification. These things are being reminded to Israel in their actual history. But the things picture other things. The Lord did these things for them...

¹⁰ Also I said to you, "I *am* the LORD your God;

v'omrah lakhem ani Yehovah elohekhem – “And saying to you, ‘I Yehovah your God.’”
The appeal is made based first upon the revelation of Himself as Yehovah, the Lord, as seen in Exodus 3:13-15 –

“Then Moses said to God, ‘Indeed, *when* I come to the children of Israel and say to them, “The God of your fathers has sent me to you,” and they say to me, “What *is* His name?” what shall I say to them?’”

¹⁴ And God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ And He said, ‘Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, “I AM has sent me to you.”’ ¹⁵ Moreover God said to Moses, ‘Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: “The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This *is* My name forever, and this *is* My memorial to all generations.”’”

The appeal is next based upon the covenant made at Sinai that the people had agreed to, saying “your God” –

“And God spoke all these words, saying:

² ‘I *am* the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.’” Exodus 20:1, 2

It is Yehovah, Israel’s God, that then said...

¹⁰ (con’t) **do not fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell.”**

lo tiru eth elohe ha’emori asher atem yovoshvim b’artsam – “No fear gods the Amorite which you dwelling in their land.” The words “dwelling in their land” are not speaking of the Amorite, which is singular. Rather, it is speaking of the gods of the Amorite who are feared by the Amorite.

The Lord is telling them to not fear those gods, as if they had any power, authority, or ability. They do not. Thus, it is ridiculous that they would be feared by Israel. Of this word *yare*, or fear, John Lange observes...

“The words put into the mouth of the unknown preacher, reproduce the old penitential discourse. In various but similar forms that discourse ever reappears; for it rests on Mosaic warnings and declarations whose truth all the fortunes of Israel confirm. For the first time, however, the verb יָרָא, to fear, elsewhere used only with reference to God, is here connected with heathen gods; but only to point out the fact that disobedient Israel has yielded to idol gods the reverence which it owed to the eternal God. When such

rebukes are gladly heard by the people, deliverance is near at hand. When they believe themselves to have deserved such admonitions and punishments, they again believe God. In accepting the judge, we secure the deliverer. Such is the historical experience of all ages.” John Lange

Stated more briefly, it never actually says, “Do not fear their gods” prior to this. Rather, that is implied in the multiple instances where Israel was told to fear the Lord, thus implying not serving the gods of Canaan. They were to ignore them, destroy the idols that represent them, etc. Israel ignorantly or willfully snubbed this, even though it was implicit. As for the name, Amorite means Renown.

^{10 (fin)} **But you have not obeyed My voice.”**

v’lo sh’matem b’qoli – “And no heard in my voice.” The meaning of “hear” is to both listen and to obey. That is no different than the army sergeant saying to the private, “You didn’t listen to what I said.” He couldn’t help but hear, but he didn’t act on what was said to him. Hence, he is on KP duty for the next week.

Israel failed to hear, and they went on an extremely long term of serving other gods, culminating in seven years of absolute leanness, oppression, and deprivation in order to bring them back to the Lord.

That ending will be described as the verses in the next section are entered upon. The hero who will act on behalf of the Lord is named Gideon.

*I AM the Lord Your God, the God of Israel
I brought you up from the land of Egypt
You were sold out to sin, a sad story to tell
Of any hope, your chances had been stripped*

*I delivered you from the hand of Egypt
And from the hand of every oppressor
But from Me, you gladly skipped
Leaving your God for everything lesser*

*You did not heed My voice; you left Me behind
You did not pay heed to My word
You made the choice, one cold and unkind
When You rejected Jesus Christ your Lord*

III. The Ending of a Nightmare

The passage today has been an introductory note into what lies ahead with the calling and leadership of Gideon. This is what the Bible does from time to time. It opens a new thought with a short introduction or maybe a summary of something, and then it expands on it.

In this case, it speaks of the past and continues to the present of the narrative. Israel is said to have done “the evil” in the eyes of Yehovah. To see the progression of what has happened, a review of the earlier passages will help.

First was Othniel, who battled Cushan-Rishathaim. That was a picture of the Gentiles carrying the message of Christ until the House of Israel and the House of Judah would accept that message. That, in itself, was also a type of introduction to what lay ahead. It gave a snapshot of what would occur after the work of Christ, even before the work was detailed.

Next came the story of Ehud giving it to Eglon right where it hurts. As was noted in that sermon –

“:...it is a picture of the complete atonement of transgressions of the law. It represents the full, final, finished, and forever, satisfaction of the law in Christ’s work. The sword went in, the fat covered it over, and he did not draw the sword out of the belly. It is finished.”

It was further noted that this work was fully sufficient to save both Jews and Gentiles. Shamgar was then introduced giving a brief but complementary display of how to appropriate the work of Christ.

After that was Judges 4 and Deborah – the New Testament. The passage referred to the Dispensation of Grace which is represented by the Gentile-led church. As was noted during that sermon –

“That will come to its completion someday at the rapture, another noted mystery of Christ, when it will be too late for the wise of the world. Destruction will come on a global scale and a new dispensation will be ushered in after that time. ... God is working through the church to accomplish the redemptive plans set forth during this dispensation. He is revealing His nature, His goodness, His sole path to reconciliation, His wisdom, and so much more through the church.”

Judges 5, the Song of Deborah, was a rejoicing over the events of Judges 4. They were placed into a poetic narrative, gloriously revealing the obvious pleasure the Lord takes in His church. But, as noted, the church will end at the rapture.

What comes after that in the redemptive narrative? Yes, you, in the third row... Why yes, the tribulation period. For an extra bonus, can you tell how long that will be? Yes, very good... Seven years.

That is what is referred to in verse 1 of today's passage. Israel, who has rejected the Lord, will face seven years of Strife in the Place of Judgment (Midian). It is a time when the world will prevail against Israel.

It is also a time when the whole world, not just Israel, will hide "themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains" (Revelation 6:15). The terminology in Judges anticipates the state of things in Revelation.

Mentioning Amalek means that there will be those who continue to wring people off from what is right. They will strive to disconnect Jews from their true Head, just as Jesus warned –

"For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵ See, I have told you beforehand."

-Matthew 24:24

Indeed, He told them. Who will listen? As for the *bene qedem*, or "sons East," the word *qedem* means not only east, but beforetime. That which has already been." It seems logical that this would be referring to those who continue to cling to the law, annulled in the past through Christ's work, simply because they cannot let go of it. That is carefully detailed in Hebrews.

Destroying the produce as far as Gaza (Strong Place), means that there will be nothing left of value in all of Israel every false hope will be shown for what it is and there will eventually be no place left to turn. That is explained in mentioning that these oppressors will be as numerous as locusts.

The symbolism of the Day of the Lord, as presented in Joel, which refers to the tribulation of the end times, is quite clear. Likewise, mentioning the camel then fits as well. There will be a sufficient treatment of what the nation deserves laid upon Israel.

For example, this is the general thought of what the word means –

“The LORD *is* merciful and gracious,
Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.

⁹ He will not always strive *with us*,
Nor will He keep *His anger* forever.

¹⁰ He has not dealt with us according to our sins,
Nor punished [*gamal*] us according to our iniquities.” Psalm 103:8-10

The psalmist essentially says, “He had not *cameled* us according to our iniquities.” In the case of the tribulation period, a fully sufficient *cameling* will be meted out.

All of this, however, has an intended purpose, which is for Israel to turn and cry out to the Lord (verse 6). As was noted –

“And gave them, Yehovah, in hand Midian seven years.”

“And cried out, sons Israel, unto Yehovah ... upon turnings Midian.”

The turnings of the firebrand in the Place of Judgment (the tribulation) will meet its final goal of bringing Israel out from the law and into the grace of God found in Jesus Christ. It will be during that time that a prophet will speak to them (verse 8).

It does not say “the Prophet,” which would anticipate Jesus. Rather, it is a prophet. The difference between Deborah and this unnamed prophet is clear. Deborah referred to the New Testament. The word *diathéké*, a covenant or testament, is a feminine noun.

However, this passage refers to “man, prophet.” It is the full word of God: Hebrew – *davar*, (word, masc.); Greek – *logos* (word, masc.). Israel had rejected the New Testament, but at some point, they will go to it, compare it with the Old, just as Jesus told them two thousand years ago, and they will finally listen.

In their search, they will realize that it was Jesus who led them out of what Egypt only pictured, the life of sin that they clung to. The law could never save them. Instead, they were brought out of oppression into another type of bondage because they failed to see that it had an end purpose of leading them to Jesus.

As noted, the passage is anticipatory of the battle itself. Gideon will be the judge directed by the Lord to wage it. Whatever typology comes from the rest of what is said

about him, the passage today is one of recognizing that Israel will go through the tribulation.

As for the contents, it clears up some amazingly poor theology. It demonstrates that the words of Jesus in Matthew 24 are not referring to the church at all, that the tribulation period will be seven years, and that the church will not be here during those seven years. The attention is focused on Israel and those who failed to come to Jesus during the church age.

These things are evident. While Israel is currently fearing all of the gods of the Amorite, there are faithful people in the world – both Jews and Gentiles – who are fearing the Lord who presented Himself to the world in the Person of Jesus Christ.

It is He who prevailed over the law. It is He who is revealed in the New Testament, and it is He who is concealed in the Old, until the Old is compared with the New. Then everything fits like a glove.

Each step of what we have seen has been used to build a picture of the world in which we now live, and of what is coming upon it, probably in the near future. Think of the arrogance of Chaim Richman who was mentioned at the beginning of the sermon today.

We don't worship a nation, and we sure don't worship the people of a nation who have rejected and maligned the name of the Lord for thousands of years. They cannot atone for anyone's sin, much less their own.

There is only One who can do that. Someday, Israel as a nation will discover this. Until then, fix your eyes on Jesus. Give God all of your hope, faith, adoration, and praise for what He has done in the coming of Christ. We serve the Lord God Almighty when we serve the Lord Jesus. Hallelujah and amen!

Closing Verse: *"All flesh is grass,
And all its loveliness is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers, the flower fades,
Because the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
Surely the people are grass.
The grass withers, the flower fades,
But the word of our God stands forever." Isaiah 40:6-8*

Next Week: Judges 6:11-16 *Jay has a lot of work to do until Gideon is done...* (Gideon, Judge of Israel, Part I) (18th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

I Am the Lord Your God

Then the children of Israel
Did evil in the sight of the LORD as we understand
So the LORD delivered them
For seven years into Midian's hand

And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel
Because of the Midianites from afar
The children of Israel made for themselves
The dens, the caves, and the strongholds which
-----in the mountains are

So it was, whenever Israel had sown
Midianites would come up again
Also Amalekites and the people of the East
Would come up against them

Then they would encamp against them and destroy
The produce of the earth as far as Gaza; acts so wonky
And leave no sustenance for Israel
Neither sheep nor ox nor donkey

For they would come up with their livestock and their tents
Coming in as numerous as locusts, they just wouldn't quit
Both they and their camels were without number
And they would enter the land to destroy it

So Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites
-----as we have heard
And the children of Israel cried out to the LORD

And it came to pass, when the children of Israel
Cried out to the LORD because of the Midianites
-----a sad story to tell
That the LORD sent a prophet to the children of Israel
Who said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel:

'I brought you up from Egypt
And brought you out of the house of bondage too
And I delivered you out of the hand
Of the Egyptians and out of the hand of all who oppressed you

And drove them out before you
And gave you their land, so I did do

Also I said to you, "I am the LORD your God
Do not fear the gods of the Amorites. I gave you that choice
In whose land you dwell
But you have not obeyed My voice

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 6:11-16

(GIDEON, JUDGE OF ISRAEL, PART I)

This portion of the account of Gideon meeting the Person identified here will continue next week, but there is enough detail given to demonstrate, at least from the Hebrew text, that the Lord, meaning Yehovah, was truly incarnate when He appeared to Gideon.

The meaning of the word incarnate is “embodied in flesh,” specifically human form. As we proceed through the verses, it will be evident that this Person engaging Gideon is face-to-face with him. As we progress, we will be reminded that this is not the first time the Bible indicates such an occurrence.

The incarnation, however, is something denied by Jews. There are innumerable commentaries found concerning their position on why it is not possible that Jesus could be both God and Man. Here is an example from JewsforJudaism.org –

“Christians claim that in the birth of Jesus there occurred the miracle of the incarnation of God in the form of a human being. To say that God became truly a human being invites a number of questions. Let us ask the following about the alleged truly man- truly god Jesus. What happened to his foreskin after his circumcision (Luke 2:21)? Did it ascend to heaven, or did it decompose as with any human piece of flesh? During his lifetime what happened to his hair, nails, and blood shed from wounds? Did the cells of his body die as in ordinary human beings? If his body did not function in a truly human way, he could not be truly human as well as truly God. Yet, if his body functioned exactly in a human way, this would nullify any claim to divinity. It would be impossible for any part of God, even if incarnate, to decompose in any way and still be considered God.

“By definition, not mystery, the everlasting, one God, in whole or in part, does not die, disintegrate, or decompose: ‘For I the Lord do not change’ (Malachi 3:6). Did Jesus’ flesh dwell in safety after his death? 1 Peter 3:18 states Jesus was ‘put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.’ 1 Corinthians 15:44-45 claims Jesus was ‘raised a spiritual body,’ that is, he ‘became a life-giving spirit.’ No mention of the survival of the flesh is alluded to. In Acts 2:31, it is claimed Peter stated that following the alleged resurrection Jesus’ body did not see decay. Paul is alleged to have also made this claim (Acts 13:34-37). However, unless Jesus’ body never underwent ‘decay’ during his lifetime he could not be God, but if it did not undergo ‘decay’ then he was not truly human.” Gerald Sigal ([Jews for Judaism.org](http://JewsforJudaism.org))

Text Verse: *“Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Hebrews 2:14, 15*

The commentary by Mr. Sigal contains several presuppositions about the incarnation that are incorrect. They are not based on a proper reading of Scripture, and they construct straw man arguments. In fact, if he is using Scripture as a baseline for his words, his entire commentary is a straw man fallacy.

To assume that Jesus’ body was “a part of God” would be to misunderstand or misrepresent the idea of the incarnation. Only the poorest of theologians would claim that Jesus’ human body was a part of God. If creation (including any part of it) were a part of God, we would be dealing with pantheism or some concept similar to it.

The incarnation means that God united with His creation. As His creation is clearly fallen, it means that the Lord united in a manner that reflects the words of Hebrews 2, meaning that “in all things He had to be made like *His* brethren” (Hebrews 2:17).

Therefore, to assume that Jesus’ foreskin could not decay is as illogical as to say that God died on the cross. God did not die on the cross. Rather, the human Jesus did. The incorruption of Jesus’ body after death signified that He had prevailed over death because of His sinless nature.

To assume that His fingernails, which were naturally worn down or purposefully clipped from His human frame, could not decay if He is fully God is a fallacy known as a category mistake. Mr. Sigal simply does not understand, or he rejects, what the actual meaning of the incarnation is.

The hypostatic union is what defines the Person of Jesus. There is a distinction between the humanity and deity of Christ. This point of doctrine describes the union of God and Man in the person of Jesus Christ: two hypostases, or states, in one.

He didn’t possess humanity before His conception, but since His conception, He is clothed in humanity forevermore. And although He is united with human flesh in this union, His deity is not bound by human nature; He remains fully God. His two natures are not in any way separate, and yet they in no way intermingle.

This is what the Bible reveals, not only in the New Testament, but in the Old as well. The encounter of Gideon with the Lord is something that points us directly to the incarnation of Jesus. It is a reasonable and logical point of doctrine to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. If the Lord Is with Us, Why Then...? (verses 11-13)

¹¹ Now the Angel of the LORD came

Rather: *vayavo malakh Yehovah* – “And came messenger Yehovah.” There is no article before “angel/messenger.” As such, the identification is indeterminate at this point. This is important because of what occurs as we continue through the verses.

The problem with translating it as “the Angel” (with a capital) is that it is either based on a presupposition, if no further information is given, or it is based on knowledge that is not yet available in the narrative. It is correct, as will be seen, but the text is highlighting a point of theology.

This is a messenger of Yehovah (YHVH). This messenger came...

¹¹ (con’t) and sat under the terebinth tree which *was* in Ophrah,

vayeshev takhath ha’elah asher b’apherah – “and sat under the terebinth which in Ophrah.” In Judges 4, Deborah was said to have sat under the palm of Deborah. The palm is a symbol of uprightness and righteousness. Here, this angel sits under the *elah* or terebinth. That is the feminine of *ayil*, or ram, coming from *ul*, strength.

Also, to sit implies judgment, as when a king sits for that purpose. This messenger has sat in order to communicate a judgment, just as Deborah did. The name *apherah* means Female Fawn, but that comes from *aphar*, dust. And so, it may also mean Of the Dust.

¹¹ (con’t) which *belonged* to Joash the Abiezrite,

Rather: *asher l’yoash avi ha’ezri* – “which to Joash father the Ezrite.” First, depending on the root, the name Joash means either Yehovah is Strong, Fire of Yehovah, Yehovah Has Bestowed, or Yehovah Has Blessed.

Next, in Joshua 17:12, Abiezer was noted. Here, the name is divided by an article. Thus, it says, “My father, the Ezrite,” or “Father *of* the Ezrite.” The word *ezer* signifies Help, coming from the verb *azar*, to help. Therefore, we have some picture developing.

A messenger has sat to render a judgment under a tree denoting strength, in Of the Dust, which belonged to Yehovah Has Bestowed, My Father the Helper. This messenger appeared...

¹¹ (con’t) **while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide *it* from the Midianites.**

v’gidon b’no khovet khitim ba’gath l’hanis mipne midyan – “and Gideon, his son, was beating wheat in the winepress to flee from faces Midian.” Gideon comes from *gada*, to cut down or cut asunder. Thus it means Cutter, Cutter Down, Feller, etc.

Next, the word translated as “threshed” is not the usual one where an ox pulls a cart over the wheat. Here, it signifies to beat. It is the same word used when Ruth beats out what she gleaned. In this case, Gideon is threshing the wheat by beating it, and he is doing it in the winepress.

The reason for this is because of what it said in Judges 6:1-10. The Midianites came in and plundered Israel. In order to hide from them, Gideon is threshing secretly in a vat. A winepress is the last place one would expect to be used at this time of year because it is not the season for pressing.

After beating the wheat, Gideon would thresh it by hand so that the chaff would not fly off into the open sky and be visible from a distance. Rather, as it says, it would “flee from faces Midian.”

As for the winepress, it is a place of judgment symbolized by the treading out of grapes. However, in the treading out of grapes, there is also a sense of joy because of the produce derived from the process. This is seen in the symbolism of Revelation –

“Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. ¹⁸ And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, ‘Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.’ ¹⁹ So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw *it* into the great winepress of the wrath of God. ²⁰ And the

winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.'"

-Revelation 14:17-20

There is judgment brought upon the enemies of God, but there is also the obvious joy connected with their destruction. When Christ was in the Garden of Gethsemane (Garden of the Oil Press), He was there enduring the suffering associated with judgment upon sin. The name Gethsemane is derived from the same Hebrew word used here, *gath*, or winepress.

Also, as seen in the previous sermon, Midian means Strife or Place of Judgment. Everything about the words of this verse speak of defeat, shame, and judgment. The only thing positive is the meaning of the names of Gideon and his father. This positive aspect will be advantageous for the typology being presented. That begins to be seen in the next words...

¹² And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him,

Again, there is no article: *vayera elav malakh Yehovah* – “And appeared unto him messenger Yehovah.” Despite there being no article before “messenger,” we are now given a new insight to consider. The term *vayera*, or “and appeared,” has occurred thirteen times so far in the Bible. In every instance but one, it has been connected to either the Lord or God.

The one exception is when Joseph appeared to his father Jacob in Genesis 46:29, a passage that pointed to the appearance of Christ to the people of Israel. Thus, though it is not appropriate to translate this as “the angel of the Lord” because the text does not say it, we are being led to that conclusion, nonetheless.

¹² (con't) and said to him, “The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valor!”

vayomer elav Yehovah imkha gibor hekhayil – “and said unto him, ‘Yehovah with you, mighty the valor.’” This does not mean that Gideon was already known for his past acts of bravery, as many scholars claim. Verse 15 clearly refutes that. In fact, the previous verse indicated Just the opposite.

Gideon has been peevishly hiding in a wine vat, beating out a little grain for bread. And yet, the Lord prophetically addresses him in this way. It is a blessing being bestowed

upon him based on what will come to pass, not an acknowledgment of what he is already.

As for the words describing him, it says *gibor hekhayil*. It is a phrase that is translated in various ways and needs to be properly understood. The word *gibor* signifies might or strength.

The word *khayil* signifies wealth, strength, ability, and more. In this case, what will come about in his future is what defines the word. As such, the Lord is designating him as a warrior. Thus, it speaks of a man of valor. Such is not yet the case, but it will be slowly drawn out of him as the Lord guides his movements on behalf of Israel.

¹³ Gideon said to Him, “O my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us?”

vayomer elav gidon bi adoni v’yesh Yehovah imanu v’lamah m’tsaatnu kal zoth – “And said unto him Gideon, ‘O me, my lord! And is Yehovah with us? And why found us all this?’” They are words of incredulity, spoken by a thoroughly confused soul to someone that he thinks must be off his rocker. He says this using the term *adoni*, my lord, meaning a human. In this case, it essentially means “Sir.”

The previous two uses of *malakh*, or messenger, are without the article. Gideon doesn’t know who this man is, but he is a man who has claimed to speak on behalf of Yehovah (YHVH). It is the text itself that is building up the profile of the messenger, one step at a time. As such, translations should not get ahead of the text.

As for what Gideon says to this person, it is perfectly reflected in the words of the Lord through Moses –

“Then My anger shall be aroused against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide My face from them, and they shall be devoured. And many evils and troubles shall befall them, so that they will say in that day, ‘Have not these evils come upon us because our God *is* not among us?’”

-Deuteronomy 31:17

Gideon is questioning if the Lord is even among them at all. How could he be? To support his incredulity, he next says...

13 (con't) **And where *are* all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?'**

v'ayeh kal niphotav asher sipru lanu avotenu l'mor halo mimitsrayim heelanu Yehovah –
“And where all His wonders which recounted to us our fathers to say, ‘Not from Egypt ascended us Yehovah?’” The meaning is that if Yehovah is among Israel, then why isn't He acting on their behalf?

The fathers had spoken of all Yehovah had done, performing wonders in order to bring them up from Egypt. If that is so, then shouldn't He be doing the same now?

Gideon seems completely unaware that the disastrous state of Israel is their own fault for doing “the evil” in the eyes of the Lord. But the word, meaning the prophet of verse 8, has alerted them that they have fallen from His ways, not obeying His voice. Gideon is just not aware of that at this point. And so, he continues...

13 (con't) **But now the LORD has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.”**

Nobody properly translates this: *v'atah n'tsanu Yehovah vayitnenu b'kaph midyan* –
“And now, has forsaken us, Yehovah, and given us in palm Midian.” He notes that it isn't merely that Israel has been given into the hand of Midian, but into the palm of his hand or the sole of his foot. The word *kaph* can mean either.

Thus, Israel is like an object that is being squeezed in the palm of the hand or trampled under the sole of the foot. They are forsaken and totally oppressed. With his words of melancholy and dejection, a response from the Messenger is provided...

*Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?
Were we not set before Him among the nations?
But our glory and honor have been stripped
And this, for many generations*

*Why has all of this come upon us?
The answer is there, recorded in Your word
We turned away when we rejected Jesus
And we crucified our Lord*

Lord, restore us as in times past

*Bring us to the place of Your favor once again
This seemingly endless trouble, let it no longer last
How long, Lord? We ask You, until when?*

II. O My Lord, How Can I Save Israel? (verses 14-16)

¹⁴ Then the LORD turned to him

vayiphen elav Yehovah – “And turned unto him, Yehovah [YHVH].” Of these words, Albert Barnes shows his inability to accept the obvious, saying, “The change of phrase from ‘the angel of the Lord’ to ‘the Lord’ is remarkable. When messages are delivered by the Angel of the Lord, the form of the message is as if God Himself were speaking.”

Though this messenger has simply been called an angel of Yehovah until now, the reason has been to build within the narrative itself the misunderstanding of Israel to accept that God can come in human form. But there has already been precedent for this, such as in the Lord appearing to Abraham and Joshua in like form as well. For example –

“Then the LORD [YHVH] appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. ²So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw *them*, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, ³and said, ‘My Lord [Adonai], if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant.’” Genesis 18:1-3

The wording in this Genesis account clearly indicates the incarnation of the Lord. An honest evaluation of the text leaves no other option. As for this narrative with Gideon, despite the unambiguous rendering of the Hebrew, the Greek translation continues to say, “the angel of the Lord.” Ellicott states –

“The reason why the LXX. retains the phrase ‘the angel of the Lord’ throughout is because they had the true Alexandrian dislike for all anthropomorphic expressions—i.e., for all expressions which seemed to them to lower the invisible and unapproachable majesty of the Almighty.”

He is partially correct, but more specifically, it is the biased inability of Jews and others to accept that God can present Himself in human form that is the crux of the matter.

However, the text now reveals that this is exactly what is occurring. It is not the word of the Lord through another. Rather, this is Yehovah incarnate. It is the eternal Christ, Jesus...

¹⁴ (con't) **and said, “Go in this might of yours,**

vayomer lekh b'khoakha zeh – “and said, ‘Go in your power, this.” The Lord indicates that the power Gideon already possesses is sufficient for the calling he is directed to. Therefore, He says...

¹⁴ (con't) **and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?”**

Again, the translation is incorrect: *v'hovoshata eth Yisrael mi'kaph midyan halo salakhtikha* – “And shall save Israel from palm Midian. Not I sent you?” The man claims to be Yehovah. This is explicit now because this time He has not said, “The Lord has sent you.” Instead, the words are stated without any such qualifier.

He has identified Gideon, he has selected Him, and He is sending him. Notice the structure of the words. Gideon has questioned the Lord's doings. The Lord then turned around and claimed He would perform again. Gideon (who has been rather slow on the uptake) will now realize that the Person in front of him is claiming to be Yehovah –

Not [*halo*] from *Egypt ascended us +Yehovah? And now, has forsaken us, Yehovah, and given us in palm [*b'kaph*] Midian. (Gideon)

And shall save Israel from palm [*mi'kaph*] *Midian. Not [*halo*] +I sent you? (Yehovah)

Just as the Lord sent Moses to bring Israel up from Egypt, so now He is sending Gideon to save Israel from Midian. But, just as Moses failed to understand that the Lord's choice was the correct one, Gideon also questions the appointment...

¹⁵ **So he said to Him, “O my Lord, how can I save Israel?**

Gideon finally gets who he is talking to, despite the lack of confidence in himself: *vayomer elav bi Adonai bamah ovoshia eth Yisrael* – “And said unto Him, ‘O me, my Lord, in what I save Israel?’” Instead of *adoni*, my lord (as to a human), he now addresses Him as Yehovah by saying, Adonai (as to Yehovah incarnate).

The text slowly and precisely presents what is going on, developing a theme for the reader to understand and accept what is presented. It is presented this way so that someday Israel will go to the word and accept what they have denied for so long. This was clearly presented in Judges 6:1-10.

With his understanding now coming to clarity, Gideon still protests the appointment based on his perceived qualifications...

15 (con't) **Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh,**

hineh alpi ha'dal bimnasheh – “Behold, my thousand the dangling in Manasseh.” The form of the word *alpi* is found only here. It is derived from *eleph*, cattle. That is derived from *alaph*, to learn.

The connection is that when cattle are yoked, they learn obedience and are tamed. However, the word is always used in the plural to refer to cattle. This is singular. To say, “My cow is the least in Manasseh,” wouldn’t match with the parallelism of the next clause.

Hence, most scholars and many translations take this as coming from *eleph*, a thousand, and translate it as “my thousand.” The connection is that an ox’s head represents the first letter, *aleph*, of the aleph-beth and also the numeral one. Thus, the *eleph* is used to represent a thousand. That would then correspond to the words of the blessing of Moses upon the tribe –

“His glory *is like* a firstborn bull,
And his horns *like* the horns of the wild ox;
Together with them
He shall push the peoples
To the ends of the earth;
They *are* the ten thousands of Ephraim,
And they *are* the thousands [*alphe*] of Manasseh.” Deuteronomy 33:17

The NKJV paraphrases the idea of a thousand and says, “my family.” The only other meaning would be to go with the root signifying to learn and say, “My learning is the dangling in Manasseh.” But the parallelism seems to point to “thousand.”

As for the word *dal*, to dangle, that comes from *dalal*, to languish. Thus, *dal* means dangling, like a weak person whose arms simply hang by his sides, unable to raise them.

Gideon is describing his portion of Manasseh as the most impoverished and weakest of the tribe. Manasseh means both To Forget and From a Debt. With that, he next says...

¹⁵ (con't) **and I *am* the least in my father's house."**

v'anokhi ha'tsaiyr b'beith avi – "and I the insignificant in house my father." From the most impoverished section of Manasseh, Gideon then acknowledges that in the house of his father Joash, Yehovah Has Bestowed, he is the smallest, least, or most insignificant. Thus, he can be of little or no help at all.

Again, as we have seen, notice the lowly state of those who have been selected as Judges –

Othniel was specifically noted as Caleb's *ha'qaton* or "the younger." The word is derived from *qut*, to feel a loathing. The implication is that the elder is greater, and anything less is to be despised. And yet the younger, the lesser, was the first Judge.

Then came Ehud, the left-handed, a perceived weakness. Next was Shamgar, son of Anath, or There a Stranger, Son of Affliction. The name implies that he was an unlikely candidate to do anything great.

After him was Deborah, who was specifically noted as a woman to highlight her supposed inferiority. Now, Gideon, a person who believes that he is the least of the least, has been chosen. Despite his perceived inability to get out of his own way, the Lord makes a promise to bolster his confidence...

¹⁶ **And the LORD said to him, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man."**

vayomer elav Yehovah ki ehyeh imakh v'hikitha eth midyan k'ish ekhad – "And said unto him, Yehovah, 'For I will be with you and shall strike Midian according to man one.'" Despite the huge number of Midianites, they will be gathered as one and destroyed. As the Lord has spoken, Gideon is to be assured.

With this verse complete, we will pause the narrative for today and continue to explore the mystery of the incarnation that is so clearly and evidently presented in the text.

*Oh God! You are our Father, and we are your children
You brought us forth for Your honor and glory*

*You created all the children of men
We have become a part of Your redemption story*

*It is You who begat us, and to You we lift our praise
It is You who created so that we came forth to You
It is we who turned away for seemingly endless days
But You never abandoned us; You are ever faithful and true*

*O God our Father, bring us back to You
Turn our hearts so that we are right again
Lead us on paths that are righteous and true
Look with favor on Your wayward children*

III. The Incarnation

In the introduction, the fallacious arguments of Gerald Sigal were briefly analyzed. To give a fuller idea of what Judaism teaches, another portion of a commentary, Against Messianic Judaism, from medium.com is provided –

“First and foremost, the divide between Judaism and Christianity has to do with the role of Jesus, not simply if he was the messiah, but whether or not he was a god. Judaism explicitly rejects Jesus as the messiah because of his failure to fulfill the requirements of the role. Judaism also rejects the idea that a human being can be God and on principle will not worship other gods. The Christian deification of Jesus violates both the concept of monotheism and the rejection of a human incarnation of God. Both principles can be found in the Bible. Furthermore, the Torah explicitly warns against false prophets, which by any rational standard Jesus (and the apostles) would fall into, even if we accepted the idea that he (they) performed miracles.

“The Jewish commitment to monotheism can be found throughout the Bible. The first and second commandments state, “I the Lord am your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, the house of bondage: You shall have no other gods besides Me. You shall not make for yourself a sculptured image [...] You shall not bow down to them or serve them” (Exodus 20:2–5). The central statement of Jewish faith can be found in Deuteronomy 6:4–5, “Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.” And finally, God declares his utter singularity in Isaiah 45:5, “I am the Lord and there is none else; beside Me there is no god.” These verses reveal the absolute unity of God in Jewish theology. God identifies himself as the savior of the Jews from Egyptian slavery,

and declares that the Jews will worship no other gods, in fact that there are no gods beside (with) him. Jewish interpretations of these verses have led them to completely reject the Christian doctrine of the Trinity as having no basis in the Bible. Moses Maimonides, one of the greatest and most authoritative Jewish legal scholars in history, included in his 13 principles of faith belief in the absolute unity of God. Divisions like those of the Trinity are rejected.

Maimonides also included a rejection of divine incarnation as one of his principles of Jewish faith, which he grounded in the Bible. The Jewish faith rejects the idea that God would have a physical body. The prophet Hosea quotes God as saying, "I am God and not a man" (Hosea 11:9). In the Torah, the idea that God could be a human being is explicitly rejected, "God is not a man to be capricious, or mortal to change his mind. Would he speak and not act, promise and not fulfill?" (Numbers 23:19). Moving away from the Bible there is also the logical inconsistency of the idea of an infinite, eternal God truly becoming a finite, contingent human being. The concept of God is inherently mutually exclusive from that of humanity. One cannot truly become the other without totally leaving behind the nature of the former being. I.e. if God were to truly become a human being, he would cease to be God. The Incarnation not only violates the fundamental teaching of Jewish theology, but also flies in the face of logic." medium.com

Although it would take too long to argue against every point of what is said here and in the rest of their article, a few highlights can be noted. For example, "The Christian deification of Jesus violates both the concept of monotheism and the rejection of a human incarnation of God. Both principles can be found in the Bible."

Actually, just the opposite is true. Only through selecting verses that are taken out of the greater biblical context can this argument be made. The human incarnation is clearly identified in the passage concerning Abraham that was cited, as well as these verses in Judges 6.

One might argue that this Man is not the same as Jesus, but it is ridiculous to deny an incarnation occurred in those and other accounts. The references to monotheism provided in the commentary in no way negate an incarnation.

And more, the idea of a singularity in deity, as explained by the author, carries the same problem as that of the false god of Islam. If God was an absolute monad and not a Godhead, there would be no ability for Him to extend beyond Himself. He would be incapable of creating anything.

But more, how could a being that didn't understand fellowship create anything beyond Himself which fellowships? The twelfth First Principle, the Principle of Analogy, states that "The cause of being cannot produce what it does not possess."

If God does not possess – and thus understand – fellowship, He could not create that which fellowships. The principle is undeniable, and the precept that comes from the principle is irrefutable. Because of this, the mere fact that we are social beings confirms a plurality within a single essence such as the Trinity.

As proof of their incorrect idea concerning absolute monotheism, Isaiah 45:5 was cited, "I am the Lord and there is none else; beside Me there is no god." That says nothing about a possible Trinity, nor does it refute the incarnation, especially if the Trinity is correct.

To demonstrate the illogical nature of their own analysis, the Bible in countless other verses, specifically says there are other "gods," naming dozens, if not more, of them. The Lord is merely making a point that He is the only true God, regardless of how He has revealed Himself or how Scripture reveals Him.

In citing Hosea 11:9, where the Lord says He is God and not a man, they fail to acknowledge their own Scriptures that identify His incarnation. But more, those words do not disprove the idea of the incarnation.

As noted earlier, the hypostatic union says that God is God and that the human Jesus is a Man who is also God. There are two separate natures, eternally united but distinct from the other. There is nothing illogical about it.

As for their citation of Deuteronomy 6:4, they translate it as, "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone." The Hebrew uses the ordinal number (one) – "The Lord is One."

However, the meaning of the number extends beyond an absolute oneness, such as in Genesis 2:24 –

"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one [*ekhad*] flesh."

The word *ekhad*, or one, allows this. For example, a cluster of grapes is one. Likewise, the people Israel are one people. Both of these are made up of individual parts and yet are termed “one.”

There is another word which means one and only one – *yakhid*. It was used, for example, when speaking of Abraham’s one and only son, Isaac, in Genesis 22:2. It is remarkable, but not unexpected, that *ekhad*, rather than *yakhid*, was used in the *Shema*, because the Bible elsewhere reveals that the Godhead is a plurality within a single essence.

Also, in the commentary, they said, “Jewish interpretations of these verses have led them to completely reject the Christian doctrine of the Trinity as having no basis in the Bible.” This is known as a false dichotomy.

It is a fallacy where a set of options is presented and then the claim is made that there are only two possibilities to explain them. “The verses we have presented show that the incarnation is not possible. Therefore, we are right, and any other view is wrong.”

There are problems with that. First, even the verses cited are shown to not support their limited explanations of them. Also, they fail to encompass all potential options. They also fail to explain the obvious incarnations cited above in Genesis and Judges.

The fallacious nature of their thinking is again seen in stating, “Maimonides also included a rejection of divine incarnation as one of his principles of Jewish faith, which he grounded in the Bible.”

This is known as a genetic, or source, fallacy: “This must be true because someone we hold as important and learned says it is true.” Claiming that Maimonides grounded his principles in the Bible must be borne out by a proper analysis of the Bible, which this point concerning the incarnation does not.

The almost laughable statement that “The Jewish faith rejects the idea that God would have a physical body” is completely upended when the Lord, who is God, is shown multiple times to have a physical body right in their own Scriptures. Likewise, the final comments are equally fallacious, being straw man points. They claim that Christianity teaches something other than the hypostatic union –

“The concept of God is inherently mutually exclusive from that of humanity. One cannot truly become the other without totally leaving behind the nature of the former being. I.e. if God were to truly become a human being, he would cease to be God. The Incarnation

not only violates the fundamental teaching of Jewish theology, but also flies in the face of logic.”

No reasonable teacher of the Trinity says that God became a human being. Thus, their argument is not based on reality but a rejection of what God has clearly presented in both testaments of Scripture. This rejection is exactly why the Jews have suffered the punishments of Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 for the past two thousand years.

It is also the reason for the typology that is clearly presented in the histories of the first four Judges of Israel and which continues to be presented in the fifth judge, Gideon.

To show the odd and dismissive thinking of Judaism for their Lord, Yeshua, whom they crucified but who rose again, the following words from Chosen People Ministries, a messianic body, are provided –

“In a broad sense, it is accepted that Judaism believes that God can never be represented in human form, and this remains a major obstacle for Jewish people accepting Jesus as being who He claims to be. Judaism recognizes that human beings are created in the image of God, and that God is present in the world and the nation of Israel. However, Christianity’s claim that Jesus is God is simply not within the realm of Jewish thought. Yet the concept is not foreign to mainstream and historic Judaism. Judaism believes that the Torah was created before the world, thus historic Judaism came to accept that the Word (The Torah) can be legitimately viewed as a form of incarnation. Some Jewish scholars will argue that even the nation of Israel is an incarnational process, and that Ezekiel 37 speaking of the “dry bones” addresses this.”

The ridiculous words concerning Israel being an incarnational process will be overlooked, but if the Torah, the Word of God, existed before creation, then it implies that something that is not God has always existed. It would be inane to say that the Torah is God if the Torah is not God.

But what is the Word of God that truly must have existed before Creation? It is explained not in the Old Testament but rather the New –

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. ⁴In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.” John 1:1-5

This is one of numerous verses that indicates the preexistence of the Word, meaning Jesus. The Word, as it says in John 1:14, became flesh. He is the incarnate Word that is revealed in Scripture. The very Word that Jews claim always existed.

For there to be a beginning, there must have been a Beginner. And if that Beginner spoke the world into existence as the Bible states (Psalm 33:9), then the Word existed with God before the beginning. But if there was only God at the beginning, then the Word was God, is God, and will forever be God.

The state of the Jewish people today is reflected in the state of Israel at the time of Gideon. They were out of favor with the Lord, they had transgressed the covenant, and they had no legitimate claim to make against Him. It is they, not He, who failed to uphold the covenant between them.

And yet, He covenanted with them as well. And in His promises to them came the unconditional word that they would forever remain before Him as a people. This has remained true without a moment of exception since their coming before Him to agree to the covenant at Sinai.

In their rejection of Jesus, they rejected their God. And yet, His infinite grace has kept them and has now reestablished them. And that grace will soon be extended to bringing them into the New Covenant that was promised in the Old.

Something better lies ahead for Israel. We are being shown this in the ongoing Judges narrative. God is ever-faithful to His people. And that now means to those of His church as well. The blood of the New Covenant now covers the sins of those who come to Him through the cross of Christ.

Let us not neglect so great a salvation. Let us accept the gospel to the saving of our souls. May it be so, to the glory of God who redeems man unto Himself. Thanks be to God for Jesus Christ our Lord.

Closing Verse: *"Let all the earth fear the LORD;
Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.
⁹ For He spoke, and it was done;
He commanded, and it stood fast."* Psalm 33:8, 9

Next Week: Judges 6:17-24 *More exciting than shooting a gun. And that's pretty swell, I'm telling you...* (Gideon, Judge of Israel, Part II) (19th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Gideon, Judge of Israel, Part I

Now the Angel of the LORD came
And sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah
-----maybe for a little rest
Which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite
While his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress

In order to hide it from the Midianites
And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him, yes to that feller
And said to him
“The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valor!”

Gideon said to Him, “O my lord, if the LORD is with us
Why then has all this happened to us? We are feeling jipped!
And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about
Saying, ‘Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?’

“But now the LORD has forsaken us; we face all these plights
And He has delivered us into the hands of the Midianites”

Then the LORD turned to him and said
“Go in this might of yours, so you shall do
And you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites
Have I not sent you?”

So he said to Him
“O my Lord, how can I save Israel, me small like a mouse?
Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh
And I am the least in my father’s house”

And the LORD said to him
“Surely I will be with you
And you shall defeat the Midianites
As one man; this you shall do”

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 6:17-24 (GIDEON, JUDGE OF ISRAEL, PART II)

In the previous sermon, we saw the narrative carefully advance to allow for Gideon's understanding of who he was talking to. The words were purposefully vague for our learning as well. A Messenger appeared to Gideon with a proclamation concerning Gideon's abilities. There was no definite article to indicate who this Messenger was.

Gideon's respectful response indicated that he thought he was talking to some unknown person. Later, it clearly identified the One talking to him as Yehovah. Gideon responded with the word, Adonai, honorably indicating he understood the Messenger to be the Lord.

It is clear to the reader that the text identifies this One as Yehovah. With that understood, and knowing that the Lord incarnate is none other than Jesus, we must then ask, "How did this come about?" How could Jesus appear in His own history to direct events concerning Himself?

It is a conundrum that Hollywood movies work with all the time. One great movie about such an event is *Somewhere in Time* starring Christopher Reeve. He was living his life when an old lady came up to him, handed him his timepiece and asked him to come back to her. He eventually found out who she was and determined to travel into the past to be with her.

This is known as a temporal paradox. If it was his timepiece, but she handed it to him, then when did the timepiece come into existence? There are various temporal paradoxes: the bootstrap paradox, the grandfather paradox, the Hitler paradox, etc.

The Bible actually presents some of these paradoxes because Jesus appears in His own history causing events to come about. But how could these things be if He didn't yet exist when He directed things to lead to Himself or to events that allowed the right conditions for His incarnation?

Text Verse: *Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."*
⁵⁷ *Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"* ⁵⁸ *Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."* John 8:56-58

There are obvious problems with the paradoxes I mentioned, one being that we cannot time travel. So attempting to answer them becomes nothing more than a mental exercise. But suppose we discovered how to go back in time, people have proposed various ways of explaining how these things could still work out.

Some answers are the Self-Healing Hypothesis, the Multiverse, the Erased Time Hypothesis, etc. Take time to read up on them. You'll see that none of them explain what happens in Scripture. So how could Jesus have appeared in His own history if He didn't yet exist? Or how could He have come to exist at His birth if He already existed in His own history?

The theories that have been submitted to answer the time travel conundrum cannot explain this because they fail to recognize who Jesus is. When we understand who He is, then we find that such things are certainly possible. Jesus is God. He is not limited by time, space, or matter. He created those things.

For Him to appear in His own past in order to direct events that will lead to His own appearing is no longer contradictory. Rather, though quite astonishing, it is certainly possible. Jesus appeared in this meeting with Gideon. That account continues in our verses today.

Great things, such as the time-traveling Messiah are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. I Will Wait (verses 17-20)

¹⁷ Then he said to Him, "If now I have found favor in Your sight,

The words form a humble appeal: *vayomer elav im na matsati khi b'enekha* – "And says unto Him, 'If, I pray, I found grace in your eyes.'" Gideon has addressed the Messenger as Adonai, my Lord (verse 15). The Lord has confirmed that He will be with Gideon and that he shall defeat the Midianites as one man (verse 16).

Gideon was confident enough to address this Man as the Lord, but not confident enough to either 1) take Him at His word, or 2) believe his own senses. The latter is likely. Just as Peter wasn't sure if what he saw on the Sea of Galilee was actually Jesus, so Gideon is probably questioning the reality of the encounter. Hence...

¹⁷ (con't) **then show me a sign that it is You who talk with me.**

Inserting the words “it is,” as many translators do, makes it sound as if Gideon is doubting the Source. Rather: *v’asita li oth sa’atah m’daber imi* – “And make to me sign that You speaking with me.”

Rather than doubting the Source, he is more likely doubting himself because if he is talking with the Lord, then it would be expected that he would die. As for the word *oth*, or sign, it is something that stands for something else. It is not a sign in and of itself. With this stated, he continues...

¹⁸ **Do not depart from here, I pray, until I come to You and bring out my offering and set it before You.”**

al na tamush mizeh ad boi elekha v’hotsethi eth minkhati v’hiakhti l’phanekha – “Not, I pray, depart from this until I come unto You and bring out my offering and set to your face.” The respectful language continues and the note of a *minkhah*, or offering, indicates an offering of one to another who is greater (such as the offering of Ehud to Eglon in Judges 3:15), but also as an offering to the Lord (as in Genesis 4:3-5), and as required in the law.

In this case, Gideon is undoubtedly making an offering to the Lord. There would be no reason for him to do so otherwise.

¹⁸ (con't) **And He said, “I will wait until you come back.”**

vayomar anokhi eshev ad shuvekha – “And says, I remain until you return.” The Lord agrees to the appeal and will remain under the terebinth tree while Gideon prepares his offering. Remembering that it is a time of extreme deprivation, even a small offering would be considered generous. And yet, Gideon goes further...

¹⁹ **So Gideon went in and prepared a young goat, and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour.**

v’gidon ba vayaas gedi izim v’ephath qemah matzoth – “And Gideon went and makes kid, goats, and ephah flour unleavened bread.” The animal is described as a *gedi*, a kid. That comes from an unused root signifying to cut off.

In the eight times it has been used in Scripture to this point, one can get the sense of finality, or a matter being decided (cut off). As an example –

“Then he turned to her by the way, and said, ‘Please let me come in to you’; for he did not know that she *was* his daughter-in-law.

So she said, ‘What will you give me, that you may come in to me?’

¹⁷ And he said, ‘I will send a young goat [*gedi*] from the flock.’

So she said, ‘Will you give *me* a pledge till you send *it*?’

¹⁸ Then he said, ‘What pledge shall I give you?’

So she said, ‘Your signet and cord, and your staff that *is* in your hand.’ Then he gave *them* to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him. ¹⁹ So she arose and went away, and laid aside her veil and put on the garments of her widowhood.

²⁰ And Judah sent the young goat [*gedi*] by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive *his* pledge from the woman’s hand, but he did not find her. ²¹ Then he asked the men of that place, saying, ‘Where is the harlot who *was* openly by the roadside?’

And they said, ‘There was no harlot in this *place*.’

²² So he returned to Judah and said, ‘I cannot find her. Also, the men of the place said there was no harlot in this *place*.’

²³ Then Judah said, ‘Let her take *them* for herself, lest we be shamed; for I sent this young goat [*gedi*] and you have not found her.’” Genesis 38:16-23

The goat is what finishes the matter between the two concerning the agreement. As she was not there to receive the kid, the matter was not completed. The next word, *izim*, signifies goats. It is the term used for the sin offering, including that mandated on the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16:5.

Next is the *ephath qemah matzoth*, or ephah flour unleavened bread. It is finely ground flour of a particular size that is prepared into cakes without leaven. This would make a large amount of bread.

The standard amount for a single person to eat each day was one *omer*, or one-tenth of an ephah (Exodus 16). This one-tenth of an ephah is also what was frequently the required offering to the Lord at the tabernacle. Of this, Matthew Poole misses the point—

“Of an ephah of flour, to wit, out of the choicest part of a whole ephah; as also he brought to him the best part of a kid dressed; for a whole ephah and a whole kid had been very superfluous, and improper to provide for and set before one man.”

There is nothing superfluous here, and it wasn't just a portion of the whole that was presented. It is a magnanimous offering in a time of severe deprivation. Gideon is not doubting the Lord. He is confirming that it is the Lord. But he is simply not sure of what is in himself.

19 (con't) The meat he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot;

The words are more precise: *ha'basar sam basal v'hamaraq sam baparur* – “The flesh put in the basket and the broth put in the pot.” Here is a word found only in this and the next verse, *maraq*, or broth. It comes from the verb *maraq*, to scour or polish. Thus, it is the juice stewed out of the meat (as if rinsed out).

19 (con't) and he brought *them* out to Him under the terebinth tree and presented *them*.

The words are exceedingly precise: *vayotse elav el takhat ha'elah vayagash* – “and brought unto Him, unto under the terebinth, and comes near.” The entire scene is carefully explained as Gideon returns to the Lord. Using the word *nagash*, or draw near, reveals its own sense of allowance on the part of the Lord. In Leviticus, it says of the priests –

“No man of the descendants of Aaron the priest, who has a defect, shall come near [*nagash*] to offer the offerings made by fire to the LORD. He has a defect; he shall not come near [*nagash*] to offer the bread of his God.” Leviticus 21:21

Likewise, there is a sense of expectation on the part of Gideon. That is similar to the account of Jacob and Isaac in Genesis 27 –

“Isaac said to Jacob, ‘Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, whether you *are* really my son Esau or not.’ ²² So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, ‘The voice *is* Jacob’s voice, but the hands *are* the hands of Esau.’ ²³ And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau’s hands; so he blessed him.” Genesis 27:21-23

The use of the word indicating nearness is given to elicit the bond that is being formed between the two as the account proceeds. Now that Gideon has approached...

²⁰ **The Angel of God said to him,**

Rather: *vayomer elav malakh ha'elohim* – “And says unto him Messenger the God.” The use of the article before God is expressive. It is used when referring to the one true God in relation to man. But more especially, it is in relation to those who are in a right relationship with Him, or it is used to contrast those who are not in a right relationship with Him.

This is the only time in the chapter that the word Messenger is affixed to the word *elohim*, or God. The offering is accepted and Gideon, Cutter Off, stands in a right relationship with God's Messenger. As such, he stands in a right relationship with God.

It is wholly apparent what is being conveyed. The Messenger has been identified as the Lord. He has been acknowledged as such by Gideon. The Messenger has accepted the Lord's offering, meaning He is the Lord, and the Lord is the Messenger of God. This human standing before Him is Jesus, the Lord God incarnate. Therefore...

²⁰ (con't) **“Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay *them* on this rock, and pour out the broth.” And he did so.**

The verbs are imperative: *qakh et ha'basar v'eth ha'matsoth v'hanakh el ha'sela halaz v'eth ha'maraq s'pokh vayaas ken* – “‘Take the flesh and the unleavened bread and put upon the rock this, and the broth pour.’ And did, thus.” There is a new word to specify the rock, *hallaz*. It is a common pronoun specifying this or that.

This is not a fellowship offering where Gideon would partake of it with the Lord. Rather, by designating the rock and having Gideon place the offering on it, the rock has become an altar upon which a burnt offering is made. That is next seen...

*How can I know if the message is true?
Can it really save my people, Israel?
What is it that they need to do?
Is this the message that will make things go well?*

*The Lord of Peace is there for you
If you are willing to trust and accept
This is all that He asks you to do
Unlike the law, there is a single precept*

*Have faith in the word, and you will be saved
And God will again look with favor on you
No matter how you once behaved
You will be forgiven and granted life anew*

II. The Lord of Peace (verses 21-24)

²¹ Then the Angel of the LORD put out the end of the staff that *was* in His hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened bread;

vayishlakh malakh Yehovah eth qetseh ha'misheneth asher b'yado vayiga ba'basar u-ba'matsoth – “And sends, Messenger Yehovah, extremity the support staff which in His hand, and touches the flesh and the unleavened bread.”

The word translated as support staff, *mish'enah*, is rarer than the words usually used to describe a staff. It is a supporting staff, something one leans on or is assisted with. It is the feminine form of *mish'en* which signifies a support or staff –

“They confronted me in the day of my calamity,
But the LORD was my support [*mish'en*].

²⁰ He also brought me out into a broad place;
He delivered me because He delighted in me.” 2 Samuel 22:19, 20

That is then derived from the word *shaan* which signifies support, lean, rely on, etc. For example –

“Who among you fears the LORD?
Who obeys the voice of His Servant?
Who walks in darkness
And has no light?
Let him trust in the name of the LORD
And rely [*shaan*] upon his God.” Isaiah 50:10

As the Lord doesn't need a staff to support Himself, it is forming a picture for us to consider. The Lord is the support. The Lord is the rock that becomes the altar of sacrifice that sanctifies the offering. The Lord is reflected in the elements of the offering. The Lord is the consuming fire that will rise from the rock. And so on. These things continue to be reflected in the next words...

²¹ (con't) **and fire rose out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread.**

vataal ha'esh min ha'tsur va'tokal eth ha'basar v'eth ha'matstosth – “And ascended the fire from the rock and consumed the flesh and the unleavened bread. The fire consuming the offering indicates acceptance of it by the Lord. Each aspect of the scene before Gideon reveals aspects of the coming Christ. These things are all anticipatory of Israel's future.

²¹ (con't) **And the Angel of the LORD departed out of his sight.**

Rather: *u-malakh Yehovah halakh me'enav* – “And Messenger Yehovah departed from His eyes.” Again, there is no article before Messenger. Despite this, He has already been identified as the Lord (YHVH) and “Messenger the God.” It is hard to understand how commentaries deny the obvious nature of what is being conveyed.

As for how He departed, that is left unstated. It can be assumed that it was immediate and complete. He was there and then He wasn't.

²² **Now Gideon perceived that He was the Angel of the LORD.**

It is emphatic: *vayar gidon ki malakh Yehovah hu* – “And sees, Gideon, for Messenger Yehovah, He.” If there were any lingering doubts, either about the identification of the One standing before him, or about the reliability of his own senses, they are now ended. He fully perceives what has transpired...

²² (con't) **So Gideon said, “Alas, O Lord God! For I have seen the Angel of the LORD face to face.”**

vayomer gidon ahah Adonai Yehovah ki al ken raiti malakh Yehovah panim el panim – “And says Gideon, “Alas, Adonai Yehovah! For upon thus, I have seen Messenger Yehovah face unto face.” The sentence is elliptical. Gideon is suddenly terror stricken at the realization of what has occurred, calling out “Alas!”

The omitted words of the ellipsis are, “For I shall surely die.” It was taken as an axiom that if one were to see the Lord face to face, death would be the result. This is not true, nor can it be inferred from Scripture, that this would be the case with a created angel.

The words clearly indicate that He believes he has seen Yehovah. Further, the words, “For upon thus,” are an explanation of what has occurred. He had asked, “And make to me sign that You speaking with me.” What he beheld (For upon thus) was that sign. There could be no doubt.

Because of this, he feels as if doom is going to immediately descend upon him. He has personally faced the manifestation of the Lord in human flesh. This is especially poignant because the words *panim el panim*, or face unto face when in relation to the Lord, are only found a few times so far in Scripture, such as—

“So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.” Exodus 33:11

“But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face.” Deuteronomy 34:10

The only other time the sentiment is close to this is when Moses reminded the people that the Lord spoke to them “face in face” during the giving of the Ten Commandments at Sinai or when he is said to have spoken mouth to mouth with Moses in Numbers 12:8, or even “eye to eye” in Numbers 14:14. Because of the overwhelming incident, Gideon is beside himself with terror. However, words of comfort come to him...

²³ Then the LORD said to him, “Peace *be* with you; do not fear, you shall not die.”

vayomer lo Yehovah shalom lekha al tira lo tamuth – “And says to him, Yehovah, ‘Peace to you. Not fear, not dying.’” Though he has departed from sight, the Lord (YHVH) is still present to make the audible pronouncement of peace, reconciliation, and surety of life.

The purpose of the Lord coming in human form is that Gideon would live. However, the term “preincarnate Christ” is a logical contradiction. For example, Verse By Verse Ministry International says –

“A messenger is one who is sent from someone else to deliver a message, and of course, Jesus fits this perfectly. He says in John 8:18, ‘I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me.’ Just as the Father sent Jesus, so also did He send the Angel of the Lord. Based on all the above, we conclude that the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus was the Angel of the Lord.”

Their thinking is correct, but the terminology is not. If the Lord appeared as a Human, even eating with those He visited, such as in Genesis 18, then He was incarnate. Pre-incarnate, or “prior to the incarnation,” is therefore illogical.

If this is the Messenger of the Lord, it is the Lord incarnate. As this messenger is the Second member of the Godhead, then it is the Lord Jesus. But Jesus’ incarnation occurred at His birth to Mary. Therefore, as difficult as it is to understand, Jesus is appearing in His own history.

It is He alone who can bring about the peace that He now speaks unto Gideon. Because of this...

²⁴ So Gideon built an altar there to the LORD, and called it The-LORD-Is-Peace.

vayiven sham gidon mizbeakh l’Yehovah vayiqra lo Yehovah shalom – “And builds there, Gideon, altar to Yehovah, and calls to Him (or to it) ‘Yehovah Shalom.’” The name is based on the previous words –

“And says to him, Yehovah, ‘Peace [Yehovah, Shalom] to you. Not fear, not dying.’” Gideon now calls out to either the Lord or to the altar (which is a masculine word) Yehovah Shalom. Either way, it is an acknowledgment that the altar is the witness of peace between the two.

As for the name, Yehovah Shalom, it means The Lord of Peace, The Lord Is Peace, or The Peace of the Lord. The thought, regardless of how it is translated, is a reflection of Jesus’ words –

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” John 14:27

With that, the words take us back to verse 11 and forward in time as well...

^{24 (fin)} To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

ad hayom hazeh odenu b’apharath avi ha’etsri – “Until the day, the this, it yet in Ophrah, father the Ezrite.” The altar remains as a testament to the peace established in Of the Dust, Father the Helper.

*The offering is made and is set forth to God
The body of Christ for the sins of the world
Let us accept the message and applaud
As the redemption of man is there unfurled*

*Great is the Lord and mighty to save
In His word the power is made known
Toward the gospel He instructs us to behave
By simply believing what the words have shown*

*The Lord is Peace, offered to you
And it is offered also to the nation of Israel
Simply do what the gospel says to do
And for all who believe, things will go well*

III. Pictures of Christ

Israel will someday be saved. We can take that as an axiom. Paul says as much in Romans 11 –

“The Deliverer will come out of Zion,
And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;
²⁷ For this *is* My covenant with them,
When I take away their sins.” Romans 11:26, 27

This is not speaking of the church. Paul is writing to the Gentile church in Rome and he makes an absolute distinction between Israel and the Gentile-led church, despite the horrifically poor commentaries of replacement theology that have been written over the years.

How will Israel be saved? The answer is seen in our passage concerning Gideon. Gideon is the Cutter, coming from *gada*, to cut off. Just as Deborah anticipated the New Testament, coming from *diathéké*, a covenant or testament, which is a feminine noun, Gideon now anticipates the *euaggelion*, or Gospel, meaning the Good News.

This is a neuter noun in Greek, but that is not surprising. Hebrew does not have a neuter noun. And more, the Gospel is one of grace, a feminine noun. Thus, to express Gideon’s role, a Greek neuter is brilliantly used to express what is pictured.

The connection to his name is found in Romans 11:27, which said, “When I take away their sins.” The word is *aphaireó*, to take away or cut off. For example –

“And suddenly, one of those *who were* with Jesus stretched out *his* hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off [*aphaireó*] his ear.” Mathew 26:51

Paul says the sins of Israel will be taken away [cut off] someday. This is what Gideon will do. In Israel, the gospel is almost nonexistent. After the rapture, at least for a time, it will be missing entirely. But that will change.

In verse 11, the Messenger of the Lord (Jesus) sat under the terebinth tree in Ophrah. Sitting is for rendering judgment. The tree signifies strength. Ophrah signifies Of the Dust. It speaks of man, especially in his fallen state –

“In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread
Till you return to the ground,
For out of it you were taken;
For dust [*aphar*] you *are*,
And to dust [*aphar*] you shall return.” Genesis 3:19

This was said to be of Joash, father of the Ezrite, or Yehovah has Bestowed, My Father the Helper. The words speak of Jesus who was bestowed by God the Father, who helps the fallen state of man.

Gideon was hiding away in the winepress, a place of judgment, from Midian, Place of Judgment. The Gospel is hidden in Israel at this time. Gideon was “beating” the wheat there instead of threshing and winnowing. It is a clear reference to the gospel being hidden away resulting in very little fruit from its labors in Israel.

However, in verse 12, the Lord appears to him, calling him a mighty man of valor and noting that the Lord is with him. How can that be in his state? Gideon even fails to see the connection, calling him *adoni*, my lord, as to a human. The gospel is claimed by Israel to simply be of human origin.

In verse 13, Gideon brings in Egypt, or Double Trouble, and the miracles that occurred at the time of the exodus. At least they had the law, and that had brought nothing but grief. There Israel stands, forsaken and delivered into the palm (or sole) of Midian: Place of Judgment.

They are utterly defeated by their state under the law. However, in verse 14, the Lord says to Gideon (the gospel), “Go in your power, this.” As noted then, “The Lord indicates that the power Gideon [the gospel] already possesses is sufficient for the calling he is directed to. It will save Israel from the palm (or sole) of the crushing power of the Place of Judgment.”

Look again at the comments of verse 14 –

He has identified Gideon, He has selected him, and He is sending him. Notice the structure of the words. Gideon has questioned the Lord’s doings. The Lord then turns around and claims He will perform again:

Not [*halo*] from *Egypt ascended us +Yehovah? And now, has forsaken us, Yehovah, and given us in palm [*b’kaph*] Midian. (Gideon)

And shall save Israel from palm [*mi’kaph*] *Midian. Not [*halo*] +I sent you? (Yehovah)

The law that came from the delivery from Egypt only leads to being forsaken. The gospel will save Israel. With that, verse 15 reveals Gideon’s (the gospel’s) hesitancy. But this time, he at least accepts that the Messenger is Yehovah, calling Him Adonai.

He notes that he is from the “dangling in Manasseh” and the “insignificant in his father’s house.” Manasseh, To Forget and From a Debt (a picture of Christ’s work in regard to sin) pictures the state of the gospel in Israel and in the house of Joash (Yehovah Has Bestowed). It is almost completely ineffective.

However, in verse 16, the Lord (YHVH) says that Gideon (the gospel) will defeat the Place of Midian as one man. It will be completely effective in saving Israel from the tribulation period, as our closing verse will reveal.

In order to confirm that this message is true, verse 17 shows Gideon asking for an *oth*, a sign that it is truly from Yehovah. Therefore, in verse 18, he petitions the Lord to wait while he prepares an offering. The Lord agrees. This is where Israel will finally knuckle down and check what they have rejected for the past two thousand years.

In his offering, found in verse 19, he prepares a kid, goats. The symbolism is the cutting off of sin by the goat of atonement, anticipating Jesus who was the fulfillment of the Day of Atonement goat sacrifice. It is what finishes the matter of sin.

The full ephah of the flour of unleavened bread speaks of the entirely sinless nature of Christ, the Bread of Life of John 6.

The inclusion of the *maraq*, or broth, indicates the full atonement offered by Christ's death. His blood was shed, meaning He died. Thus, His body was a perfect atonement for sin. The word coming from the verb *maraq*, meaning to scour or polish, points to His flesh being fully purged of life – a fully acceptable offering to God.

The next wording was exceedingly precise – “and brought unto Him, unto under the terebinth, and comes near.” The terebinth comes from the feminine of *ayil*, or ram, and that from *ul*, strength. The strength of the gospel is found in the offering of Christ. It is brought forward to Yehovah as Gideon (the gospel) draws near. The words could not be more perfectly described than this verse –

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”

-Romans 1:16

In verse 20, the unique phrase “Messenger the God” is used. As noted, the use of the article is expressive. It is used when referring to the One True God in relation to man. But more especially, it is in relation to those who are in a right relationship with Him. Jesus Christ is the ultimate example of Man in a right relationship with God.

Therefore, He directs that the flesh and the unleavened bread (both picturing Him) be placed upon the particular rock (picturing Him) and the broth (picturing Him) poured out on it. It is all to be a whole burnt offering to God, just as Christ was to be fully offered to Him –

“Previously saying, ‘Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and *offerings* for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure *in them*’ (which are offered according to the law), ⁹ then He said, ‘Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.’ He takes away the first [the law] that He may establish the second [the gospel]. ¹⁰ By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.”

-Hebrews 10: 8-10

With that, the fire rose from the rock and completely consumed the offering. It is finished and it is fully accepted by God. Then the Lord departed out of Gideon's sight –

“So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Romans 10:17

Israel is going to have to go to the word. Christ departed and Gideon (the gospel) is left as the witness. From there, verse 22 noted “And sees, Gideon, for Messenger Yehovah He.” The gospel reveals itself as the Messenger of the Lord –

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” 1 Corinthians 1:18

When Israel finally sees the gospel for what it is (Gideon assumes that role) the terror of having missed it for so long will fill them. In other words, in their acceptance of what the word says, they will be infused with the gospel and will fearfully acknowledge, “Alas, Adonai Yehovah! For upon thus, I have seen Messenger Yehovah face unto face.”

Just as Moses saw the Lord face unto face, and Israel vicariously through him, so Israel, through the gospel, will see Him face to face. The terror will great. Hence, the ellipsis found in this verse. Their unworthy state before the Lord will make them feel that they will surely die, just as it has done to innumerable souls over the millennia.

However, the words of the Lord, reflecting the words of Jesus are *shalom lekha* – peace to you. Israel is not to fear. They will not die. To complete the active part of the verses, Gideon (the gospel) built an altar, calling it Yehovah Shalom, Peace of the Lord –

“And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:
‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace,
Who bring glad tidings of good things!’” Romans 10:15

The gospel is the peace of the Lord because it is what grants peace to those who come to Him through it. With that, the final note of the passage said, “Until the day, the this, it yet in Ophrah, father of the Ezrite.” The altar remains as a testament to the peace found in Of the Dust (man bearing Adam’s image) in Father the Helper –

“The first man *was* of the earth, *made* of dust; the second Man *is* the Lord from heaven. ⁴⁸ As *was* the *man* of dust, so also *are* those *who are made* of dust; and as *is* the heavenly *Man*, so also *are* those *who are* heavenly. ⁴⁹ And as we have borne the image of the *man* of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly *Man*.” 1 Corinthians 15:47-49

The pictures could not be clearer, nor could they more perfectly anticipate what lies ahead for Israel. The pattern that began with the first judge, Othniel, has steadily unfolded the redemptive scene laid out in world history.

Othniel, who battled Cushan-Rishathaim, pictured the Gentiles carrying the message of Christ until the House of Israel and the House of Judah would accept that message. It was a type of introduction to what lay ahead. It gave a snapshot of what would occur after the work of Christ even before the work was detailed.

Next Ehud really gave it to Eglon. It was a picture of the complete atonement of transgressions of the law. It was also noted that this work was fully sufficient to save both Jews and Gentiles.

Shamgar gave a brief but complementary display of how to appropriate the work of Christ.

After that Deborah, the New Testament, referred to the Dispensation of Grace which is represented by the Gentile-led church.

Judges 5, the Song of Deborah, was a rejoicing over the events of Judges 4. They were placed into a poetic narrative, gloriously revealing the obvious pleasure the Lord takes in the work of Christ and in His church. But, as noted, the church will end at the rapture.

The first ten verses of Chapter 6 revealed the tribulation period after the church age. It is at that time that Israel will finally accept the gospel. Everything has been perfectly ordered to reveal the continuing redemptive narrative as outlined in the dispensational model.

This passage about Gideon provides insight into what is yet ahead, but it does so in perfect accord with what Paul says about Israel in the future as detailed in Romans 9-11. It is the gospel of Jesus Christ alone that can restore Israel to God.

They have completely rejected this as a nation, and hard times have come because of this. Even worse times lie ahead. But at some point in the future, the gospel will become perfectly evident to them.

They will search the Scriptures, realize their error, and turn and call out to God through Him. When they do, they will be restored. This is what the Bible teaches. Israel is not out, the church has not replaced Israel, and full restoration with God will come upon them as a nation.

The book is written, the typology is set, and it clears up the muddy waters of poor theology for both Jew and Gentile. This is not a surprise to God. Rather, this has been known to Him all along.

He has it all under control, and everything His word details will come to pass, exactly as is recorded there. Let us trust that it is so. On the day I typed this sermon, Israel was just at the beginning of their raid into Gaza.

Regardless as to how the world perceives this, it is a part of their unfolding history, leading them inexorably into the end times. Only then, when they are so broken as a people that there is nothing left for them, will they finally realize what they have missed for so long. In receiving the gospel, they will finally have the peace of Yehovah resting upon them in its fullness.

If you do not yet have this peace that passes all understanding, if you have not yet been brought near to God through the offering of His Son, all you have to do is believe the gospel. Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, He was buried, and He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. Believe today!

Closing Verse: *"And so all Israel will be saved." Romans 11:26*

Next Week: Judges 6:25-32 *It will be fun. Yes, so swell – you will see...* (Gideon, Judge of Israel, Part III) (20th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Gideon, Judge of Israel, Part II

Then he said to Him, "If now I have found favor in Your sight
Then show me a sign that it is You who talk with me
-----give a token that is true
Do not depart from here, I pray
Until I come to You and bring out my offering and
-----set it before You"

And He said (a response did not lack)
"I will wait until you come back"

So Gideon went in and prepared a young goat
And unleavened bread from an ephah of flour
-----to put in that spot
The meat he put in a basket
And he put the broth in a pot

And he brought them out to Him
Under the terebinth tree and presented them

The Angel of God said to him
“Take the meat and the unleavened bread also
And lay them on this rock, and pour out the broth”
And he did so

Then the Angel of the LORD put out
The end of the staff that was in His hand. This was pretty neat
And touched the meat and the unleavened bread
And fire rose out of the rock and consumed the meat

And the unleavened bread too; yes, that’s right
And the Angel of the LORD departed out of his sight

Now Gideon perceived
That He was the Angel of the LORD who appeared in that place
So Gideon said, “Alas, O Lord GOD!
For I have seen the Angel of the LORD face to face”

Then the LORD said to him, “Peace be with you; do not fear
-----you shall not die”
So Gideon built an altar there to the LORD, now one of Israel’s
-----famous sites
And called it The-LORD-Is-Peace
To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 6:25-32

(GIDEON, JUDGE OF ISRAEL, PART III)

While clicking through YouTube looking for something to watch as Hideko got dinner ready, a video of N.T. Wright came up. He was being interviewed about his thoughts on the modern state of Israel.

He dismissed it as having any future significance in the redemptive narrative. A very brief analysis of his view is provided by Michael G. Vanlaningham –

“Wright presents four arguments to support his interpretation. First, it is essential, he says, to understand that there is no discrete future for Israel ‘as a whole’ because she has been superseded by Jesus Christ, her Messiah. Wright claims that Paul’s theology begins “‘with the realization that what the creator/covenant god was supposed to do for Israel at the end of history, this god had done for Jesus in the middle of history.’ God has brought all of His covenant purposes for Israel to fruition in Israel’s representative, the Messiah Jesus.”

N. T. Wright bases his argument on Paul’s words in 2 Corinthians 1:20, which say, “For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.”

It is true that Jesus is the fulfillment of Scripture. Therefore, the promises of God which were made to the people of God are realized in Him.

N.T. Wright’s view, however, does not accurately explain the entire panorama of what has happened and what will happen. He committed the fallacy of a category mistake. Just because Jesus did everything necessary for Israel’s salvation, etc., it does not mean that everything concerning Israel’s future in the redemptive narrative is complete.

He also committed a false dilemma fallacy. In essence, he says, “Because Jesus is the Messiah who has fulfilled all the promises of God, there is no longer any need for Israel in the redemptive narrative.” He proposes two options, one of which is fulfilled. Therefore, the other must no longer apply.

His thinking is incorrect. Those are not the only two options on the table. Just because Jesus is the fulfillment of all of the messianic promises of God, it does not mean that the promises to Israel are terminated. Israel was promised a Messiah. Israel was not promised to be the Messiah.

Through his faulty logic, he concludes that the church has replaced Israel and that there is no such thing as the rapture, a millennial rule from Jerusalem, etc. He has failed to understand what God is doing because – among other things – he has failed to understand the binding nature of the Mosaic Covenant upon Israel.

Any reasonable theologian will agree that what came upon Israel in the Roman exile is because of their rejection of Christ. But the Mosaic Covenant is what led to that exile, or there would have been no exile.

Otherwise, all the other nations on earth should have been given the same punishments as Israel, punishments which are spelled out in Leviticus 26, and which presuppose a second exile. But only Israel was given the law, and only Israel receives the punishments detailed in it.

As for our verses today, they will typologically reveal (once again) the incorrect nature of replacement theology. Unless one understands what is being pictured, and it is as obvious as the nose on Jimmy Durante's face once it is explained, all kinds of aberrant ideas about Israel are sure to arise.

Text Verse: *“To whom then will you liken Me,
Or to whom shall I be equal?’ says the Holy One.*

*²⁶ Lift up your eyes on high,
And see who has created these things,
Who brings out their host by number;
He calls them all by name,
By the greatness of His might
And the strength of His power;
Not one is missing.” Isaiah 40:25, 26*

If Israel was exiled based on the curses of the law, then that exile must – by default – mean that there is still a purpose for Israel. There is no timeframe given in the law, as interpreted by replacement theologians, for this punishment to end. Thus, the nation is otherwise ostensibly set to endure eternal earthly curses.

However, in properly following the dispensational model, the Bible tells us EXACTLY when the curses of the law will end for them. And more, it tells us exactly how that ending will happen. What is revealed in these typological passages simply confirms this.

By properly handling Scripture, including both the clear text and the underlying typology, one thing is for sure: N.T. Wright is proven to be **Now Totally Wrong** 😊. A nice British accent may make for a trusty-sounding James Bond. However, it doesn't make for sound theology.

That has to come through proper study of Scripture. In this, his nifty accent doesn't help him one iota. For best enjoyment in this area, stick with Bond. He is way more exciting and, unlike N.T. Wright's theology, you already know that James Bond is just make-believe 😊.

What is coming upon the nation of Israel in the future? It's all to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. He Did It by Night (verses 25-27)

²⁵ Now it came to pass the same night

vayhi ba'laylah ha'hu – “And it was in the night, the it.” This means on the night that Gideon had built the altar and called it “The Lord is Peace.” With that accomplished, and in the nighttime...

²⁵ (con't) that the LORD said to him, “Take your father's young bull,

vayomer lo Yehovah qakh eth par ha'shor asher l'avikha – “And said to him, Yehovah, ‘Take bullock the ox which to your father.’” The *par*, or bullock, comes from *parar*, to break asunder, cast off, cause to cease, disannul, etc. For example, it can mean to break a covenant, defeat bad counsel, dissolve the earth, etc.

The *shor*, or ox, comes from *shur*, to travel or journey. That comes from a primitive root meaning to turn, such as in traveling about as a merchant. It is also connected to *shir*, to sing. The connection is a strolling minstrelsy. In these words, one can already see typology developing.

²⁵ (con't) the second bull of seven years old,

u-par ha'sheni sheva shanim – “and ox the second, seven years.” The KJV/NKJV make it sound as if it is speaking of the same bull. To ensure this is understood, the KJV says, “even the second bull.” The NKJV just ignores it and implies that it is the same bull.

They do this because nothing is later said of the first bull. However, there is no need for this. The Hebrew doesn't give any such qualifier. Further, this bull is specifically referred to again as "the second." Therefore, it implies two bulls. You can't have a second without a first.

Thus, it should be translated as if two bulls are being referred to. Without telling why two are selected, we can assume the labor of the first was used to help accomplish the tearing down that is to take place.

There is a second bull belonging to Gideon's father, that was born seven years earlier that was used in the household. It takes us back to verse 1 –

"Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years."

The bull was born at the beginning of the seven years of affliction that had come upon Israel by the hand of the Lord through Midian. This specific ox is to be used for a particular purpose. For now...

²⁵ (con't) **and tear down the altar of Baal that your father has,**

Rather than "of Baal" it says: *v'harasta eth mizbakh asher l'avikha* – "and break down altar the baal which to your father." Each time *baal* is mentioned in this passage, it will be prefixed with the definite article. It is a particular *baal* that was being served. Possibly the sun, but maybe some other.

Baal signifies a heathen god. It is derived from the noun *baal*, signifying a master or owner, which is from the verb *baal*, meaning to marry or lord over. It is as if there is a covenant relationship between the *baal* and those serving it. They have subordinated themselves to the *baal*. Gideon has been instructed to destroy the *baal*, signifying the breaking of this covenant relationship...

²⁵ (con't) **and cut down the wooden image that is beside it;**

Rather than beside, it says, upon: *v'eth ha'asherah asher alav tikroth* – "and the Asherah which upon cut down." Asherahs are based on a nature goddess companion of Baal found in Phoenicia, Assyria, Canaan, etc. They are represented by large wooden pillars or images set up in honor of Ashteroth. Examples can be seen in Judges 2.

The word translated as cut down is *karath*, the same word used in the cutting of a covenant. By destroying the altar and cutting down the Asherah, one gets the sense of the cutting off of a covenant that had once been cut.

The name Asherah is probably of foreign origin, but to a Hebrew audience, it is clearly identified with *ashar*, to go straight, to go on, to advance. That is normally translated, however, as happy or blessed. This is because by going straight, one stays on the proper path.

Israel has not gone straight. Thus, they are not in a happy place but rather the place of judgment. This unfortunate state came about because they failed to heed the word of the Lord through Moses –

“But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their *sacred* pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire.” Deuteronomy 7:5

Instead of doing what they were instructed, Israel joined the pagan practices of the nations, with whom they interacted, and they served gods other than the Lord. Gideon has been commissioned to end this by tearing these things down. In their place...

²⁶ and build an altar to the LORD your God on top of this rock

u-banita mizbeakh l'Yehovah elohekha al rosh ha'maoz ha'zeh: “and build altar to Yehovah your God upon top the strength, the this.” Here is a new word, *maoz*, a place of safety or protection. It can be a fortress, a force, metaphorically a helmet, the Lord, etc. It is derived from the verb *uz*, to take or seek refuge, or the verb *azaz*, to strengthen or be strong. For example –

“For thou hast been a strength [*maoz*] to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones *is* as a storm *against* the wall.” Isaiah 25:4 (KJV)

Gideon is replacing the object of idolatry with an altar of strength to the Lord...

²⁶ (con't) in the proper arrangement,

The words are complicated: *ba'maarakha* – “in the arrangement.” The word is *maarakhah* – an arrangement, coming from *arak*, to arrange or set in order, as in a battle array or setting forth the rows of bread before the Lord in the tabernacle.

This may indicate the proper means of building such an altar as specified by the Lord, or it more likely means arranging what is used for the offering. In other words, the Asherah is cut down, then cut up. Finally, it is arranged for burning. From there, the offering is burnt. Once that is complete...

²⁶ (con't) **and take the second bull and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the image which you shall cut down.”**

v'laqakhta eth ha'par ha'sheni v'haalita olah ba'atse ha'asherah asher tikroth – “And take the bullock, the second, and ascend whole burnt offering in wood the Asherah which you shall cut down.” Either there is one bull that was originally specified, which means taking the word “and” and changing it to “even,” which is not unheard of, but unlikely, or only the second bull is identified to be used as a whole burnt offering.

Because of the specificity of the wording, the latter surely seems to be the case. Ellicott says –

“The Jews point out the peculiar features of this burnt offering: (1) It was not at Shiloh; (2) it was not offered by a priest; (3) it was offered at night; and (4) the fire was kindled with the unhallowed materials of an idol.”

These things are irrelevant because the Lord has commanded them to be done in this way. As such, His word is justification for what takes place. Therefore...

²⁷ **So Gideon took ten men from among his servants and did as the LORD had said to him.**

Rather than “said,” it says, “spoke”: *vayiqakh gidon asarah anashim meavadav vayaas kaasher dibber elav Yehovah* – “And took, Gideon, ten men from his servants and does according to which spoke unto him, Yehovah.” The Lord spoke forth His command, and Gideon did according to the spoken word.

Of the number ten, Bullinger says, “Completeness of order, marking the entire round of anything, is, therefore, the ever-present signification of the number *ten*. It implies that

nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete.”

²⁷ (con't) **But because he feared his father's household and the men of the city too much to do *it* by day, he did *it* by night.**

vayhi kaasher yare eth beith aviv v'eth anshe ha'ir measoth yomam vayaas laylah –
“And was according to which feared house his father and men the city from doing by day, and did night.”

It is doubtful he feared the consequences of what would take place, but that his efforts would be interrupted or thwarted. The consequences would come sooner or later, once the matter was discovered.

The obvious meaning is that his father's house, along with the city inhabitants, would be highly peeved at him tearing down their place of worship.

*An offering has been made
But it was rejected long ago
Instead, Israel made a trade
Their glory for wind, a passing blow*

*But despite this, the offering stands
It is there for the people, Israel
It comes through faith, not commands
And it is fully sufficient as well*

*Nothing more does Israel need
Than to acknowledge their Lord Jesus
To Him alone they will someday plead
And God will respond, as He did for us*

II. Shall Strive In Him the Baal (verses 28-32)

²⁸ **And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, there was the altar of Baal, torn down;**

vayashkimu anshe ha'ir ba'boqer v'hineh nuthats mizbakh ha'baal – “And arising men the city in the morning, and behold!, broken down altar the baal.” Though this is

speculation, the specific mention of rising early may indicate that the men specifically went to this altar as a form of sun worship. No matter what, the destruction of the idolatrous altar was revealed by the daylight. And more...

²⁸ (con't) **and the wooden image that *was* beside it was cut down, and the second bull was being offered on the altar *which had been* built.**

v'ha'asherah asher alav korathah v'eth ha'par ha'sheni hoalah al ha'mizbeakh ha'banui – “And the Asherah which upon it was cut down and the bullock, the second, ascended upon the altar that was built.” The words meticulously reveal full compliance with the Lord’s spoken word.

Of the unusual specificity, Cambridge asks, “There must be some special meaning in this description, the second. Can it refer to his place in the team, the young bullock being the leader, the first, and the seven-year-old the wheeler, the second?”

Instead of tearing apart the text as they normally do, they take it that the wording is so curious that it must be original. Therefore, they attempted to stretch their minds for a reason.

Even if their conclusion is given in the form of an interrogative, it is evident that there must be a particular reason for such specificity in the text. Ellicott further notes –

“It has been supposed that Gideon offered both bullocks, the first as a burnt offering for his family, and the second for the nation. Nothing, however, is said of the fate of the young bullock; and, apart from express direction, Gideon may have hesitated to offer to the Lord a sacrifice which may have been devoted to Baal.”

Why anyone would suppose that the first bull was offered is beyond the pale. The wording is so precise that it does not allow for such speculation. However, Ellicott is right that it would be a violation of the spoken word of the Lord to have offered it. It can firmly be concluded that typology is being conveyed.

²⁹ **So they said to one another, “Who has done this thing?”**

vayomer ish el reehu mi asah ha'davar ha'zeh – “And said man unto his fellow, ‘Who did the word, the this?’” The word *davar*, or word, carries whatever meaning is associated with what is occurring. At this time, it is a matter that is being inquired about.

They see three things: The altar broken down, the Asherah cut down, and a new altar that was used to burn the second bull upon the wood of the Asherah. This is the matter at hand. Therefore, a search is made...

²⁹ (con't) And when they had inquired and asked, they said, "Gideon the son of Joash has done this thing."

The aspect of the verbs implies a search followed by a conclusion: *vayidr'shu vaybaqshu vayomru gidon ben yoash asah ha'davar ha'zeh* – "And inquiring and seeking, and said, 'Gideon, son Joash, did the word, the this.'"

Gideon, Cutter Off, son of Joash, Yehovah has bestowed, is identified as the culprit. The Cutter lived up to his name. He cut down and destroyed the objects of false worship that arose in place of the Lord. Therefore...

³⁰ Then the men of the city said to Joash, "Bring out your son, that he may die,

The words carry a jussive, an implied command: *vayomru anshe ha'ir el yoash hotse eth binkha v'yamoth* – "And said men the city unto Joash, 'Bring out your son, and he dies.'" They have proclaimed a death sentence on Gideon because of what he did...

³⁰ (con't) because he has torn down the altar of Baal, and because he has cut down the wooden image that *was* beside it."

ki natats eth mizbakh ha'baal v'ki karath ha'asherah asher alav – "For broken down altar the *baal*, and for cut down the Asherah which upon it." This is their justification for executing Gideon! They rejected the Lord, broke the covenant relationship, and turned their backs to Him through false worship.

Gideon stood against this. And yet, they would stand against him and his allegiance to the Lord, having him executed. It is almost impossible to imagine, and yet it is what is happening in both Israel and the church today. The words throughout the next verse are exceptionally strong and emphatic...

³¹ But Joash said to all who stood against him, "Would you plead for Baal?"

Using a paragogic *nun* as a form of stress, Gideon's father speaks: *vayomer yoash l'kol asher amdu alav ha'atem t'rivun la'baal* – "And said Joash to all who stood upon him,

‘The you (surely) striving to the *baal*?’ Imagine the people standing completely over Joash, looking down on him, angrily demanding his son die.

In return, he asks them to think through what they are doing. The absurdity of their actions was more than he could take. Thus, he continues...

³¹ (con’t) **Would you save him?**

He again speaks emphatically and uses another paragogic *nun*: *im atem tovoshiun oto* – “If YOU would (surely) save him?” Gideon had just broken down the altar. He then used the wood from the Asherah to offer a whole burnt offering to God. And he couldn’t stand on his own?

The obvious difference between the *baal* and Yehovah is brought forth. In words similar to the text verse today, the Lord, through Isaiah, resoundingly proclaims –

“To whom will you liken Me, and make *Me* equal
And compare Me, that we should be alike?

⁶They lavish gold out of the bag,
And weigh silver on the scales;
They hire a goldsmith, and he makes it a god;
They prostrate themselves, yes, they worship.

⁷They bear it on the shoulder, they carry it
And set it in its place, and it stands;
From its place it shall not move.
Though *one* cries out to it, yet it cannot answer
Nor save him out of his trouble.” Isaiah 46:5-7

This is why the Lord commanded that no image of Him should be made. He is the incomprehensible God that is not to be compared with anything man could fashion. Therefore, Joash proclaims...

³¹ (con’t) **Let the one who would plead for him be put to death by morning!**

asher yariv lo yumath ad ha’boqer – “Whom strives to him dying until morning!” The person who would strive for the *baal* would be executed at the rising of the sun, just when he was to be on his knees worshipping his false god, be it the sun or some lesser god derived from sun worship.

This may mean “until this morning” if they are waiting for the actual sunrise, or it may mean “until the next morning” if he is giving the *baal* a day to avenge itself.

Either way, Joash has set the red line for the people to consider. With it drawn, he turns the thought of striving for the *baal* on its head, saying...

³¹ (con’t) **If he *is* a god, let him plead for himself, because his altar has been torn down!”**

He uses a jussive as a challenge to the *baal* along with highly emphatic words, certainly as a taunt: *im elohim hu yarev lo ki natats eth mizb’kho* – “If god HE, shall strive to him, for has broken down his altar.”

The altar of the *baal*, along with the Asherah which supposedly has power, should wake the *baal* up and make him angry. In his anger, he can then take the necessary action to defend himself.

If he doesn’t, then he is no god at all. Unlike the temple in Jerusalem, where it was prophesied in advance what would happen to it in each catastrophe it faced, the altar of the *baal* had no such word. Therefore, it would be assumed that it would either last forever or be avenged by him for any desecration.

The temple of the Lord was different. Instead of merely standing for the Lord, it stood as a testament to either the faithfulness or faithlessness of Israel to the covenant administered there –

“*But if you or your sons at all turn from following Me, and do not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, ⁷ then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them; and this house which I have consecrated for My name I will cast out of My sight. Israel will be a proverb and a byword among all peoples. ⁸ And as for this house, which is exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and will hiss, and say, ‘Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?’ ⁹ Then they will answer, ‘Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore the LORD has brought all this calamity on them.’” 1 Kings 9:6-9*

Without any such word, because the altar to the *baal* was made by man without any sanction by the false god it deified, Joash insisted that anyone who strove for it should be executed.

³² Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal,

The name is a play on the word *yarev*, to strive, that Joash thrice pronounced: *va'yiqra lo bayom ha'hu yerubaal* – “And called to him in day, the it, Jerubbaal.” The verb is impersonal. Thus it means that people in general, not Joash, called Gideon this name on that day. It is like saying, “On that day, he got called Jerubbaal.”

The name is based on the event, Baal Strives or Let Baal Strive. That would be based on another jussive spoken next by Joash...

^{32 (fin)} saying, “Let Baal plead against him, because he has torn down his altar.”

lemor yarev bo ha' baal ki natats eth misb'kho – “saying, ‘shall strive in him the *baal*, for has broken down his altar.’” The point of the words and the giving of the name is that the *baal* cannot contend with Gideon. If he could, they would have called Gideon Contender with Baal.

But that would imply that the *baal* could contend. Gideon broke down the altar, and neither the altar nor the *baal* could respond. The victory over the *baal* is complete. The Lord, through Gideon, has prevailed.

*The bull is offered to our God
Just as the Lord spoke to us
Through it comes the approval nod
As we call out to Him through Jesus*

*Seven years of hell on earth
Have come upon us to this day
What we need is the new birth
And to follow in His only Way*

*Jesus! We have finally seen our need
And so to Him we will bow the knee
No more with the baal shall we plead
Only our Messiah can set us free*

III. Pictures of Christ

It would be possible to combine the typology together with what is coming in the rest of the chapter, but there would be too much lost.

What we have in this section began with Gideon being tasked by the Lord the night of the same day as when the Lord appeared to Him and gave him his commission to save Israel from the Midianites. As it said, “And it was in the night, the it; and said to him, Yehovah...”

It was seen previously that Gideon anticipates the gospel. It is now being prepared to be brought to Israel. As we saw, it was validated as the good news and that which establishes the peace of the Lord – Yehovah Shalom.

When will it finally and fully come to Israel? Yes, you, in the 22nd row. Yes, that is correct, during the tribulation period. And what is that period called by Paul in 1 Thessalonians? Very good. A+. The night –

“For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. ³ For when they say, ‘Peace and safety!’ then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. ⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. ⁵ You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. ⁶ Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.” 1 Thessalonians 5:2-7

He is told to take the “bullock the ox which to your father.” It is referring to the Law of Moses that Israel repeatedly violated since it was first given. The ox is given to reveal that it is time to disannul that covenant.

That has actually already happened in Christ’s coming, but Israel rejected Him. Thus, they are still bound to the Mosaic Covenant. Only in the future will they realize the disannulment of the law through the work of Christ. –

“In that He says, ‘A new *covenant*,’ He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.” Hebrews 8:13

The author of Hebrews is writing to the Hebrew people collectively about their future. There is a point in time that the law, which is annulled in Christ, will be obsolete for them, and it will pass away.

That first bull was also called a *shor*, or ox. As noted, that comes from *shur*, to travel or journey. The connection is that the Mosaic Covenant has been a journey upon which Israel has traveled, wending its way toward Christ –

“Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” Galatians 3:24

There was also a specific reference to a second bull – “and the ox the second, seven years.” This means that this ox came to be at the same time the tribulation period (the oppression of Midian) began. That was seen in Judges 6:2. It is another covenant that Israel placed itself under –

“Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;
But in the middle of the week
He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.
And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,
Even until the consummation, which is determined,
Is poured out on the desolate.” Daniel 9:27

To fully understand the timeline of the future tribulation period, you can go back and watch the Superior Word 2 Thessalonians 2:8, 9 Bible study entitled *And Then...* The timeline is clearly laid out concerning the order of the coming end times events.

This covenant is made with the Antichrist. Hence, the focus from this point on concerns this second bull. However, it was logically deduced that the purpose of the first bull was to assist in the tearing down of the altar of the *baal*.

The law itself anticipates its own ending, as has been seen previously. In the process of it ending, it will be used to bring down the covenant with the Antichrist. In other words, in the ending of the law, Israel will accept the gospel. At that time, the second covenant, the one with the Antichrist, will be ended as well.

Still in verse 25, each time *baal* is mentioned, it is prefixed by the definite article. It is a specific reference to the idolatry of Israel, believing in their own deeds before God

rather than in the gospel of Jesus. Their deeds under the law had become their object of worship. Ultimately, this is “the *baal*” that must be ended.

In cutting down the Asherah which is upon the altar, it is signifying that Israel, through the gospel, will finally take the straight path that leads to a state of happiness and blessedness (*ashar*, from which Asherah is derived).

Once the task was happily effected, Gideon was to (verse 26) “build an altar to Yehovah your God upon the strength [*maoz*], the this.” The altar anticipates Christ, this is seen in a marvelous pun from Isaiah, where the coming of Jesus is hinted at –

“The LORD *is* their strength,
And He *is* the saving [*yeshuah* - salvations] refuge [*maoz*] of His anointed
[*mashiakh* = Messiah].” Psalm 28:8

Literally: “Yehovah strength to them and Strength salvations His Anointed, HE.”

Still in verse 26, the arranging of the altar is noted. The arrangement anticipates the placing of all of one’s works on the altar of sacrifice before the Lord, who alone provides salvation. Israel is to give up on the errant path and come to Christ.

When that happens, the second bull, the covenant with the Antichrist, will be annulled. Thus, both the Law of Moses and the seven-year covenant end at the same time, exactly as proper dispensationalism has revealed.

The symbolism is seen in the deeds of idolatrous self (the law) being burnt under the seven-year-old bull (the seven-year peace treaty). Listen again to what Ellicott said. It is exactly what lies ahead for Israel –

“The Jews point out the peculiar features of this burnt offering: (1) It was not at Shiloh; (2) it was not offered by a priest; (3) it was offered at night; and (4) the fire was kindled with the unhallowed materials of an idol.”

Rather, it is offered upon Jesus, the true High Priest, during the tribulation period, and it is the ending of Israel’s unhallowed conduct.

Verse 27 saw Gideon, the gospel, taking ten men of his servants. In this, it “implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete.”

Everything necessary for Israel's salvation is tied up in the transmission and reception of the gospel. And again in verse 27, it said that they did this at night. It is a stress all by itself. Israel will come to Christ during the tribulation period.

The actions were complete by the morning (verse 28). What is true for each person who comes to Christ will also be true for national Israel –

“...each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire.” 1 Corinthians 3:13

Verse 28 noted that the work of Gideon was completed and that the people saw the results of it. Therefore, verse 29 referred to the people questioning who had done it. A search was made, “inquiring and seeking,” and the response was, “Gideon, son Joash, did the word, the this.”

The gospel of Christ, son Yehovah has Bestowed, accomplished the word. What a marvelous testimony to the future reception of the gospel by Israel. Christ, the incarnate Word of God, will be seen for who He is in the reception of the Good News that tells of Him.

Obviously, when the leaders of Israel call out to Jesus, it does not mean that all of Israel will have done so. It is the leadership that must receive Him in order for the nation to be saved. Some will hear and protest. Hence the words of verse 30 about bringing out the son (the gospel of Jesus) so that he should die.

They initially buck against what has been done until they too understand the implication of the gospel. That is seen in these verses in the back-and-forth exchange between the people and Joash. The leaders will come back and essentially say what Peter said to the Judaizers two millennia earlier –

“Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? ¹¹ But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.” Acts 15:10, 11

The use of emphatics, paralogic *nuns*, and successive jussives shows the incredible nature of what lies ahead for Israel. “What, are you kidding?” The law has been a weight around the neck of Israel since the beginning. It only brought them trouble. And yet, there will be those who want to cling to it as if it is their salvation.

But Joash, Yehovah has Bestowed, in verse 31 says, “The you (surely) striving to the *baal*?” In essence, “You would strive for the law instead of the gospel? That’s crazy!” He then said, “If YOU would (surely) save him?” In other words, “Can you perfectly meet the demands of the law? Can you stand righteous before God as Jesus did? Can you become Israel’s Messiah?”

Therefore, still in verse 31, Joash says, “Whom strives to him (meaning for the law) dying until morning.” Stated more clearly, “When the tribulation period is over, judgment is coming. If you want to trust in yourself, good luck, buddy boy.”

He then said, “If god HE, shall strive to him, for has broken down his altar.” If the law is your god, the Lord would defend its continuance. But He has sent Jesus to fulfill and end the law. That is God’s testimony.

The altar of the law stood as a testament to either the faithfulness or faithlessness of Israel to the covenant administered there. In the tribulation period, it will be defiled by the Antichrist. This shows God’s approval was not with the law. Rather, it is with Jesus. The word testifies to this. Israel has simply been blinded to the fact.

With that, verse 32 told that Gideon was called by the name Jerubbaal, Let Baal Strive. The law failed to strive against Jesus. Thus, He prevailed over it. The law has no power against Him because the law is not where the power of God is. Rather, our closing verse will explain where it lies.

As you can see, the analysis of N.T. Wright is proven, once again, to be **Now Totally Wrong**. The typology presented has clearly shown this.

Even without the typology, Scripture clearly reveals what the typology presented also shows. God is presenting us portions of the history of Israel and is essentially asking us to question why he chose these stories. Each name, each location, and each event is given to lead us to a better understanding of what will come about in the future.

Keep reading the Bible. The more you do, the more it will reveal to you what is on God’s mind. Jesus has, indeed, fulfilled everything necessary for Israel’s salvation. But this does not mean that Israel is out. It means that the promises to them will only be fulfilled when they accept what Jesus has done for them.

One of the errors of replacement theology is that it mistakenly categorizes biblical issues, conflating some things that should not be conflated, and rejecting core principles that should not be ignored.

Hold fast to the understanding that God is not done yet with Israel. His covenant faithfulness towards them tells us that He also will never be done with you when you come to Him through Jesus Christ. This is the faithfulness of God to His people, unfaithful or otherwise. Thank God for His grace and mercy as is revealed in the giving of Jesus. Hallelujah and amen.

Closing Verse: *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’” Romans 1:16, 17*

Next Week: Judges 6:33-40 *It’s fun. It’s so swell. We get Jay to help some more...*
(Gideon, Judge of Israel, Part IV) (21st Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Gideon, Judge of Israel, Part III

Now it came to pass the same night
That the LORD said to him, “Take your father’s young bull
-----the second bull of seven years old
And tear down the altar of Baal that your father has
And cut down the wooden image that is beside it, so you
-----have been told

And build an altar to the LORD your God
On top of this rock, in the proper arrangement too
And take the second bull and offer a burnt sacrifice
With the wood of the image which you shall cut down
-----so you shall do

So Gideon took ten men from among his servants
And did as the LORD had said to him, doing it just right

But because he feared his father's household
And the men of the city too much to do it by day, he did it by night

And when the men of the city arose early in the morning
There was the altar of Baal, torn down. No more offerings
-----to it would be proffered
And the wooden image that was beside it was cut down
And on the altar which had been built the second bull
-----was being offered

So they said to one another
"Who has done this thing? This makes our ears ring!
And when they had inquired and asked
They said, "Gideon the son of Joash has done this thing

Then the men of the city said to Joash
"Bring out your son, that he may die, we will not acquit
Because he has torn down the altar of Baal
And because he has cut down the wooden image that was beside it

But Joash said to all who stood against him
"Would you plead for Baal? Would you save him? I give
-----you this warning...
Let the one who would plead for him
Be put to death by morning!

"If he is a god, let him plead for himself
Because his altar has been torn down!" (I know he will falter)
Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying
"Let Baal plead against him, because he has torn down his altar

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown

Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen..

JUDGES 6:33-40

(GIDEON, JUDGE OF ISRAEL, PART IV)

Adam Clarke's commentary often has interesting insights into what is going on in the surface text. At times, he provides his own thoughts on what a passage is typologically presenting. At other times, however, he will openly dismiss the idea of any passage, even hinting at typology.

What this shows is that he thinks there is an overall picture of something, but that is all it is. The details are irrelevant to the overall picture. If that is his approach, it is a rather sloppy way of looking at things.

What would be the point of giving such minute details of things that are otherwise completely unnecessary to a particular story unless the Lord is telling us precious details of typology?

Maybe Clarke just couldn't figure out what was being conveyed and so he found fault in those who thought they could. Of this passage from Judges 6, he cites the work of the church father, Origen –

“On the miracle of the fleece, dew, and dry ground, Origen, in his eighth homily on the book of Judges, has many curious and interesting thoughts, I shall insert the substance of the whole: The fleece is the Jewish nation. The fleece covered with dew, while all around is dry, the Jewish nation favored with the law and the prophets. The fleece dry, the Jewish nation cast off for rejecting the Gospel. All around watered, the Gospel preached to the Gentiles. and they converted to God. The fleece on the threshing-floor, the Jewish people in the land of Judea, winnowed, purged, and fanned by the Gospel. The dew wrung out into the bowl, the doctrines of Christianity, extracted from the Jewish writings, shadowed forth by Christ's pouring water into a basin, and washing the disciples' feet.”

Origen's thoughts are interesting and insightful, but there are problems with them that cannot be overcome. Finding proper typology reveals exactly why God chose some stories from history and completely ignores innumerable others.

Improperly analyzing typology will lead people down odd paths of thought that have no real bearing on what is being portrayed. In Origen's case, he lived so long ago that much of what we now know concerning history could not have been deduced.

Thus, there is an excuse if he missed the mark on what was being conveyed. We are further along in history, and we can more clearly see what God is doing. Jesus is the key, but there are key points that are linked to the picture, such as Israel, the law, etc.

Text Verse: *“Therefore they shall be like the morning cloud
And like the early dew that passes away,
Like chaff blown off from a threshing floor
And like smoke from a chimney.” Hosea 13:3*

Of the dew on the fleece, John Lange sees it as the advent of Christ, saying, “...his miraculous sign became the type of the highest and most wonderful miracle known to the church, the birth of Jesus from the Virgin Mary. Origen already speaks of the advent of the Son of God as the fall of the divine dew.”

The thought is poetic, but it does not match the rest of the typology being presented here. Either everything fits or it doesn't. In this case, it doesn't. And yet, what the dew pictures is based on Christ's work and what results from it. As for Clarke, he finished his commentary on Origen and Chapter 6 of Judges saying –

“All this to some will doubtless appear trifling; but it is not too much to say that scarcely any pious mind can consider the homily of this excellent man without drinking into a measure of the same spirit, so much sincerity, deep piety, and unction, appear throughout the whole: yet as I do not follow such practices, I cannot recommend them.”

His words concerning Origen are kind, even gracious. But his thoughts about Origen's finding typology in a passage such as this are dismissive. Hence, he would not appreciate my approach to Scripture. Typology is what explains what is otherwise inexplicable, and it is exactly what God is dealing in.

As for my conclusions concerning today's passage, they are how I read what is going on. Origen's thoughts are not entirely out of the ballpark, but they do land a bit far out in left field. God is telling us a story through typology. And it is a great story indeed because it is about what He has done in and through Jesus Christ.

Yes, it's all to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. A Fleece of Wool in the Threshing Floor (verses 33-40)

³³ Then all the Midianites and Amalekites, the people of the East, gathered together;

The people groups are singular: *v'kal midyan va'amaleq u-b'ne qedem neesphu yakhdav* – “And all Midian and Amalek and sons East gathered together.” The words take us back to the beginning of the chapter –

“Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years, ² and the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel. Because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made for themselves the dens, the caves, and the strongholds which *are* in the mountains. ³ So it was, whenever Israel had sown, Midianites would come up; also Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them. ⁴ Then they would encamp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep nor ox nor donkey.” Judges 6:1-4

The raiders would come annually to steal away whatever produce had arisen from the labors of the land. It is the reason why Gideon was said to thresh wheat in the winepress, hiding from those who might spot him and raid what he had gathered.

Midian is the main group afflicting Israel. The name comes from *madon*, strife or contention. That is derived from *din*, to judge. Thus, it means Strife or Place of Judgment.

Amalek was the first of Israel's enemies soon after leaving Egypt. The Lord declared war upon them from generation to generation (Exodus 17). Amalek is derived from *am*, people, and *malaq*, to nip or wring off the head of a bird with or without severing it from the body. Thus, they are The People Who Wring Off. They are those who are disconnected from the body and strive to disconnect the body.

The *b'ne qedem* or “sons East” would be the various people groups, including Arab tribes, Ishmaelites, etc. It is a way of saying anyone and everyone in the surrounding area gathered together. As for the word *qedem*, east, it means not only east in direction, but before in time, or that which has already been.

This would be a great sized force that has gathered...

³³ (con't) and they crossed over and encamped in the Valley of Jezreel.

va'yaavru va'yakhanu b'emeq yizr'el – “And crossed over and encamped in valley Jezreel.” This is the area referred to in Hosea 1, where the Lord uses naming Hosea’s children as object lessons to Israel. In Romans 9, Paul picks up on the words of Hosea’s prophecy and applies them to Israel during her time of rejection while the church is the focus of God’s attention.

In his first epistle, Peter then uses the words of Hosea 2 to reveal that Israel of the future, after the Gentile-led church age, will again be the people of God.

Jezreel means God Sows. Being prefixed with *emeq*, or valley, it would be the Depth of God Sows, the *emeq* being a deep, broad valley. One can see the similarity between the two names, Israel and Jezreel, when put side by side –

יזרעאל
ישראל

Israel, He Strives with God, has received judgment for striving against God. Now, that time is over, and God will strive with Israel, meaning for Israel, in the valley where God Judges.

³⁴ **But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon;**

v'ruakh Yehovah lavshah eth Gidon – “And Spirit Yehovah clothed Gideon.” The word *lavash*, to clothe, comes from a primitive root meaning to wrap around. One can imagine the Spirit enfolding around Gideon like a garment. The thought is not unlike that of Galatians 3:27 –

“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on [*enduo*: clothed] Christ.”

Gideon was selected as the judge of Israel. The Lord clothed him with His Spirit readying him for the challenges ahead...

³⁴ (con't) **then he blew the trumpet,**

vayitqa ba'shophar – “and blew in the shophar.” The act is a call to arms for warfare. It was seen, for example, in Judges 3 –

“But Ehud had escaped while they delayed, and passed beyond the stone images and escaped to Seirah. ²⁷ And it happened, when he arrived, that he blew the trumpet in the mountains of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mountains; and he led them.” Judges 3:26, 27

Gideon performed according to the word of the Lord by destroying the altar of the *baal*, upon which was the image of Asherah. After that, the Spirit of the Lord clothed him. Now, he is readied for the main part of his calling –

“Then the LORD turned to him and said, ‘Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?’” Judges 6:14

Upon hearing those words, Gideon responded –

“So he said to Him, ‘O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan *is* the weakest in Manasseh, and I *am* the least in my father’s house.’” Judges 6:15

If you remember, theology was being developed in the exchange as Gideon was made to realize that the One he was speaking to was the Lord (YHVH), not merely a man. With that, the Lord responded –

“And the LORD said to him, ‘Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man.’” Judges 6:16

The Lord promised to be with him, and he is clothed with the Spirit of the Lord. Thus, he is suitably prepared for the battle against Midian.

As for the shophar, it is a ram’s horn. The name is derived from *shaphar*, to be beautiful or comely. That comes from a root signifying to shine. Strong’s notes the connection between the two thoughts is the clear sound. As something beautiful shines, so the beautiful sound shines forth from the shophar. Upon blowing in the shophar, it next says...

³⁴ (con’t) **and the Abiezrites gathered behind him.**

vayizaeq aviezer akharav – “And cried Abiezer after him.” It is the same word, *zaaq*, used at the beginning of the chapter to signify the distress of Israel in their affliction –

“So Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried [*zaaq*] out to the LORD.” Judges 6:6

The NKJV saying, “gathered behind” is more of a paraphrase. The idea is that Gideon has sounded the trumpet, and Abiezer has cried out, as in a war cry, after him. One can think of the famous rebel yell of the Confederate South.

As for Abiezer, the spelling is different than in verses 11 and 24. There it said *avi ha’ezri*, My Father, the Ezrite or Father of the Ezrite. Here, it reads *aviezer*, My Father is Help or Father of Help. The entire clan of Abiezer is collectively named in the singular, but it refers to all who descended from him, be it hundreds or thousands. Along with them...

³⁵ And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, who also gathered behind him.

The words concerning Manasseh, Gideon’s tribe, are emphatic: *u-malakhim shalakh b’kal m’nasheh vayizaeq gam hu akharav* – “and messengers sent in all Manasseh, and cried also, HE, after him.” The word translated as messengers means exactly that. But it is the same word, *malakh*, ascribed to the Lord seven times in verses 6:11-22.

Manasseh means To Forget and also From a Debt.

In hearing of Gideon’s support from Abiezer, the rest of the tribe coalesced around Gideon as well, crying after him. And more...

³⁵ (con’t) He also sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali; and they came up to meet them.

u-malkhim shalakh b’asher u-bizvulun u-b’naphtali vayaalu liqratam – “And messengers sent in Asher, and in Zebulun, and in Naphtali. And ascended to meet them.” Asher failed to come forward for battle at the time of Barak’s engaging Sisera, as was noted in Judges 5. However, they are listed first here, indicating a willingness to join with Gideon and his men.

Zebulun and Naphtali, however, willingly joined both battles –

“Asher continued at the seashore,
And stayed by his inlets.

¹⁸ Zebulun *is* a people *who* jeopardized their lives to the point of death,
Naphtali also, on the heights of the battlefield.” Judges 5:17, 18

Asher means both Blessed and Happy. Zebulun means Glorious Dwelling Place. Naphtali means My Wrestlings.

³⁶ **So Gideon said to God, “If You will save Israel by my hand as You have said —**

It is a pregnant verse, filled with things to contemplate: *vayomer gidon el ha’elohim im yeshkha movoshia b’yadi eth Yisrael kaasher dibarta* – “And said Gideon unto the God, ‘If you are Savior – in my hand – Israel, according to which have spoken.’”

Rather than “God,” it says, “the God.” As always, the article is expressive. It is used when referring to the one true God in relation to man. But more especially, it is in relation to those who are in a right relationship with Him, or it is used to contrast those who are not in a right relationship with Him.

In this case, it is directly in relation to Gideon. Inserting the words “in my hand” between Savior and Israel speaks of this intimate relationship.

Also, rather than “as you have said,” it says, “as you have spoken.” It is an authoritative word of the Lord that expects no response or participation. Despite that, Gideon fails to accept the spoken word of “the God.”

However, Adam Clarke says, “Gideon was very bold, and God was very condescending. But probably the request itself was suggested by the Divine Spirit.”

And why not? Gideon is clothed with the Spirit of Yehovah. It would thus appear that the Spirit of the Lord is using Gideon and his request as an object lesson for both the immediate context as well as for typological anticipations of the future...

³⁷ **look, I shall put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor;**

hineh anokhi matsig eth gizath ha’tsemer ba’goren – “Behold, I placing fleece the wool in the threshing floor.” Rather than the common word *sum*, to set, Gideon uses the word *yatsag*. The BDB says, “a vivid and forcible synonym of סָם [sam].” The word comes from a primitive root signifying to place permanently.

Next, the *gizah*, or fleece, is found seven times in Scripture, all in Judges 6. It is a feminine word, coming from *gazaz*, to shear. That comes from a primitive root signifying to cut off.

That is followed by the *goren*, or threshing floor. This is the only time it is seen in Judges. It is a place of separation and, thus, judgment. The chaff of the grain is separated from the kernel. It was referred to in the text verse from Hosea. This is also referred to by John the Baptist –

“Now as the people were in expectation, and all reasoned in their hearts about John, whether he was the Christ *or* not, ¹⁶ John answered, saying to all, ‘I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fan *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire.’” Luke 3:15-17

Next, Gideon continues...

³⁷ (con’t) **if there is dew on the fleece only, and *it is* dry on all the ground,**

im tal yihyeh al ha’gizah l’baddah v’al kal ha’arets khorev – “If dew become upon the fleece, to her separation, and upon all the earth dryness...” The word *tal*, or dew, comes from *talal*, to cover. The idea is that dew covers the vegetation each day. However, dew is something transitory and fleeting. That was seen in our text verse where it said, “And like the early dew that passes away.”

The words speak for themselves. Gideon is asking for a sign concerning the challenge of the battle that is set before him. As for the word *khorev*, or dryness, it is the same spelling as Horeb, the mount where the law was received. Both the word and the name come from the verb *kharav*, to be dry or dried up. For Gideon, if he receives his request...

³⁷ (con’t) **then I shall know that You will save Israel by my hand, as You have said.”**

Again, it says spoken, not said: *vayadati ki tovoshia b’yadi eth Yisrael ka’asher dibarta* – “And I shall know for saving – in my hand – Israel.” Gideon again places himself between the idea of saving and Israel. The significance is that the Lord is the One saving, but he is using Gideon to be the instrument of that salvation. And again, he uses the word *davar*, to speak. The Lord has spoken, and He will accomplish.

³⁸ **And it was so. When he rose early the next morning and squeezed the fleece together,**

vayhi ken vayashkem mimakhorath vayazar eth ha'gizah – “And is thus. And rising early from morrow, and pressing the fleece.” Just as Gideon requested, so it was. Here is a new and rare word, *zur*. It signifies to press down and out. To get the sense, the Lord says to Job –

“The wings of the ostrich wave proudly,
But are her wings and pinions *like the* kindly stork’s?

¹⁴ For she leaves her eggs on the ground,
And warms them in the dust;

¹⁵ She forgets that a foot may crush [*zur*] them,
Or that a wild beast may break them.” Job 39:13-15

Upon pressing the fleece...

³⁸ (con’t) **he wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowlful of water.**

vayimets tal min ha'gizah melo ha'sepheh mayim – “and drained dew from the fleece: fullness the bowl water.” In pressing the fleece, the water drained out, and not just a bit. The word bowl is *sephel*. This is the second and last use of it in the Bible. The first was in Judges 5:25, where Jael gave Sisera a majestic bowl of curd. The word comes from an unused root meaning to depress. Thus, it is a deep bowl.

³⁹ **Then Gideon said to God, “Do not be angry with me,**

Gideon’s words of the verse are filled with cohortatives, jussives, interjections, anthropomorphisms, etc. Here, he uses a jussive, an implied command: *vayomer gidon el ha' elohim al yikhar apekha bi* – “And said Gideon unto the God, ‘Not do burn Your nostril in me.’”

Gideon can see that he might get the Lord upset enough to have fire and smoke pour out of his nose and catch him on fire. Hence, he uses this jussive, do burn. Next, he says...

³⁹ (con’t) **but let me speak just once more:**

The verb is cohortative: *vaadaberah akh ha'paam* – “and let speak, surely the once.” The word *paam* signifies a beat, as if pounding out on an anvil. In this case, he has spoken, but he wants to speak again. It is a request for another beat upon the anvil.

39 (con't) Let me test, I pray, just once more with the fleece;

Again, the verb is cohortative: *anaseh na raq ha'paam ba'gizah* – “Let, I pray, only the once, in the fleece.” It is as if he is begging for the event to take place. If Clarke was right in suggesting that it was by the Spirit that Gideon was asking for a sign in the fleece, it is surely now only Gideon who is asking.

The Spirit provided a confirmation of “the God’s” intention for what was to take place. However, Gideon suddenly realizes, “Maybe there was dew everywhere, and it evaporated off the ground first.” This should not be unexpected. Charles Ellicott, citing Lord Bacon (mmmm, bacon), notes –

“Sailors have used every night to hang fleeces of wool on the sides of their ships towards the water, and they have crushed fresh water out of them in the morning.”

The fleece, then, is like an absorbent sponge. Gideon would have known this and begs for another, clearer, sign...

39 (con't) let it now be dry only on the fleece, but on all the ground let there be dew.”

The first verb is a jussive: *yehi na khorev el ha'gizah l'badah v'al kal ha'arets yihyeh tal* – “Let there be, I pray, dryness unto the fleece, to her separation, and upon all the earth, become dew.” Gideon knows this is impossible apart from the supernatural hand of the Lord. It is something that could not be otherwise...

40 And God did so that night.

Instead of “the God,” it now simply says, “God.” *vayaas elohim ken balaylah ha'hu* – “And did Elohim thus in the night, the it.” The God whom Gideon stood in a right relationship with is the Powers over creation, the one true God. He accomplished the sign Gideon requested and gave a memorial for future redemptive history...

40 (fin) It was dry on the fleece only, but there was dew on all the ground.

vayhi khorev el ha'gizah l'badah v'al kal ha'arets hayah tal – “And is dryness unto the fleece, to her separation. And upon all the earth was dew.” The miracle occurred as proposed. The fleece is being used as a metaphor for the small army of Israel, while the surrounding area depicts the vast army of Midian. As Matthew Henry rightly states –

“These signs are truly miraculous, and very significant. Gideon and his men were going to fight the Midianites; could God distinguish between a small fleece of Israel, and the vast floor of Midian? Gideon is made to know that God could do so.”

This is the immediate signification of the details in the story. Gideon has been given assurances that God has made a firm and complete distinction between Israel and the Midianites. However, one must ask, “What is it that separates Israel from the other nations?” In determining that, one can then perceive the typology being pictured.

*A fleece to show what God is doing
Phases in a process going since time began
In what happens to the fleece, we are viewing
Steps He is taking in a wondrous plan*

*He was working in one way in the past
Revealing the heart found in man
What was found there could not last
But He knew that since before time began*

*One step leading to another along the way
Revealing what we need most of all
Christ Jesus put that on full display
Are you yet ready to heed the call?*

II. The Law or Grace

In the introduction today, Adam Clarke summed up Origen’s thoughts about this passage. He said, “The fleece is the Jewish nation.” Though that may be the surface intent, as Matthew Henry stated, and it may be insightful in regard to typology, there is a fatal problem with that analogy. The Lord regularly uses gender in typology, and He does so consistently.

In fact, He actually fills the Old Testament with gender discords to ensure proper typology is maintained. We saw one of those in the account of Jael and Sisera where the text used a masculine imperative when it should have been a feminine imperative –

vayomer eleha amod petakh ha’ohel – “And said unto her, ‘Stand (ms.imp.) door the tent.”

In the book of Ruth, there are nine instances of gender discord in Chapter 1 and seven of them are spoken by Naomi. Other gender peculiarities are found elsewhere in the book. Unless one understands that the Lord is working through typology in such instances, these discords make no sense.

The problem with Origen's analysis is that the word nation, the name Israel, the word people, etc., are all masculine nouns. Therefore, his analysis cannot be correct, even if it is both insightful and mentally surprising. Giving credit where credit is due, he was not that far off from what is being pictured.

The question just proposed as we closed out the mechanical analysis of the verses needs to be evaluated, "What is it that separates Israel from the other nations?" It is true that the Jewish nation is separate from the other nations, but this was because of their calling. And that calling, as a nation, was based on the Torah, the Law, a feminine noun.

Verse 33 took us back to the fact that Midian, Amalek, and the sons of the East had come against the land, just as was noted at the beginning of Chapter 6. Midian, Place of Judgment, is the main force. It speaks of the tribulation period that Israel will someday endure.

Amalek, the People Who Wring Off, are those disconnected from the body (meaning the body among whom God is present) and who strive to disconnect the body. This has been consistent since their first appearance of coming against Israel in Exodus 17.

That chapter ended with the words, "Because the LORD has sworn: the LORD *will have* war with Amalek from generation to generation" (Exodus 17:16). They are a true enemy, but they anticipate anyone who would attempt to nip the people of God off from the main body of His redeemed.

As noted, the word *qedem*, or east, also means beforehand or past times. For example –

"You will give truth to Jacob
And mercy to Abraham,
Which You have sworn to our fathers
From days of old [*qedem*]." Micah 7:20

The *b'ne qedem*, or “sons East,” refers to those who continue to cling to the law, annulled in the past through Christ’s work, simply because they cannot let go of it. Such a thought is carefully detailed in the book of Hebrews, such as –

“Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?”
-Hebrews 10:29

It next noted that these enemies “crossed over and encamped in valley Jezreel.” The words mean the “depth of God Sows.” It signifies Israel’s false ways and God sowing just due into their lives –

“It shall come to pass in that day
That I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel.” Hosea 1:5

Like most prophecies, Hosea’s has an immediate fulfillment and a future one. First, Hosea prophesies of the casting off of Israel, “You are not my people,” (Hosea 1 / Romans 9). He then prophesies of the calling again of Israel, “You *are* my people,” (Hosea 2 / 1 Peter 2) –

“Now when she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son. ⁹Then *God* said:
‘Call his name Lo-Ammi,
For you *are* not My people,
And I will not be your *God*.’” Hosea 1:8, 9

“As He says also in Hosea:
‘I will call them My people, who were not My people,
And her beloved, who was not beloved.’” Romans 9:25

///

“Then I will sow her for Myself in the earth,
And I will have mercy on *her who had* not obtained mercy;
Then I will say to *those who were* not My people,
‘You *are* My people!’
And they shall say, ‘You *are* my God!’” Hosea 2:23

“But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”

-1 Peter 2:9, 10

In verse 34, the Spirit of the Lord clothed Gideon (the gospel, as seen in previous sermons). The meaning was seen in citing Galatians 3 where acceptance of the gospel means being clothed in Christ. It is the gospel that makes that come about.

At that time, Gideon blew the trumpet. It is the calling of the gospel, resounding out. The seven-year treaty Israel made with the Antichrist will be annulled.

As noted, saving Israel from the Place of Judgment (Midian) is the main part of Gideon’s calling. This came after the first objective, tearing down the altar of Baal, was taken care of. The truth is that the Messenger of the Lord is, in fact, the Lord incarnate, Jesus. He is not merely a man who is the Messiah of Israel, but the God/Man. This is key and central in understanding the true gospel.

It next noted, “And cried Abiezer after him.” It is an anticipation of the approval and help of the Father (Father of Help) upon those who accept the gospel message –

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”

-John 14:26

At the same time, verse 35, said, “and messengers sent in all Manasseh, and cried also, HE, after him.” As always, the name Manasseh (To Forget/From a Debt) anticipates Christ, who forgets our sins, having paid our sin debt.

Likewise, it also noted, “And messengers sent in Asher, and in Zebulun, and in Naphtali. And ascended to meet them.” It is like a smorgasbord of theology. The state of the people upon reception of the gospel is Blessed, they are given an eternal inheritance (Glorious Dwelling Place), and these are a result of the work of Christ alone (My Wrestlings), apart from works or personal merit.

This will be the state of Israel in the future. However, in anticipation of that, and to be certain that this is what is being conveyed, Gideon goes through the account of the

fleece. Thus, the account is personal, using the term “the God” that demonstrates a right standing with the Lord –

“And said Gideon unto the God, ‘If you are Savior – in my hand – Israel, according to which have spoken.’”

Think of the typology, “If you are the Savior, in my (the gospel’s) hand, Israel.” Gideon is clothed with the Spirit, and it was inferred that this was the Spirit confirming His word through Gideon. Is the gospel truly Israel’s salvation? The sign of the fleece will show it is so.

Verse 37 then opened with, “Behold, I placing fleece the wool in the threshing floor.” The test of the gospel is to place a fleece (from a word signifying “to cut off”) in the threshing floor, the place of judgment.

Then Gideon used a less common word, translated as “set,” concerning the fleece. The word comes from a primitive root signifying to place permanently. The fleece, the cutting off, is being forcefully and permanently set out.

Previously, sin was dealt with under the law through the day of atonement. That is signified by the wool –

“‘Come now, and let us reason together,’
Says the LORD,
‘Though your sins are like scarlet,
They shall be as white as snow;
Though they are red like crimson,
They shall be as wool.’” Isaiah 1:18

The idea is whiteness and purity. Sin was cut off through the law. The first test was, “If dew become upon the fleece to her separation, and upon all the earth dryness...” That was the time of the law for Israel. The Law alone covered (*tal*/dew) with life, symbolized by the water pressed out of the fleece. The rest of the world remained apart from God’s redemptive plans.

Gideon, the gospel, knew this. However, he, not the law, is now being asked to lead Israel against the enemy. Therefore, he, through a series of cohortatives, jussives, interjections, anthropomorphisms, and so on, implores to have a more perfect representation of who he is in relation to Israel.

There was the beat of the anvil marking the time of the Law of Moses, but Gideon asks for a second beat, that of the time of the gospel. Maybe the gospel was also effective for those under law and no change is needed? The second test will determine if it is so.

Notice the difference in prepositions for the two propositions:

“If dew become upon the fleece to her separation, and upon all the earth dryness (חרב – the law)...” (verse 37).

“Let there be, I pray, dryness (חרב – the law) unto the fleece to her separation. And upon all the earth, become dew” (verse 39).

Gideon’s words are purposeful. If this is how it is, then the situation will be perfectly evident from a proper response to his plea. The *khorev*, or dryness/law, upon all the earth is man under sin because of the law given to Adam. Israel was also under law, but it was a law that offered atonement for sin, something lacking outside of Israel.

With that requested, “And did Elohim thus in the night, the it.” It only said Elohim, not “the Elohim.” To be in a right standing with God, one must be in a right standing with what God is doing. First was the time of the law, and then there is the grace that follows. The first must cease for the second to be realized. Therefore –

“And is dryness (חרב – the law) unto the fleece, to her separation. And upon all the earth was dew” (verse 40).

What Gideon has asked for as a confirmation is exactly what God provided. The second beat of the anvil is what God has purposed –

“Previously saying, ‘Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and *offerings* for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure *in them*’ (which are offered according to the law), ⁹ then He said, ‘Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.’ He takes away the first that He may establish the second. ¹⁰ By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.” Hebrews 10:8-10

Where Israel under the law has no life, the whole world under the gospel (meaning any who accept it) is covered.

What we have seen today is a spiritual reality that is actually working out in the world, even as we live and move in it. Time is moving forward and it will lead to a real tribulation period where real calamity will come upon the entire earth.

But that physical reality is something that is actually being worked out in the spiritual world. First, the rapture will take place before the tribulation begins. Scripture is clear on that. The world that has rejected Jesus will fall under judgment.

This will include Israel. However, God covenanted with them that He would bring them into the New Covenant as a nation. This means that the law, the basis for the Old Covenant, must end. For it to end, Israel must agree to what the New Covenant offers.

This is available to anyone who accepts it at any time. However, Israel as a nation must also nationally accept it. Gideon, the gospel, is the means of that occurring, both for individuals and for national Israel. The account of Gideon and the fleece has been given for us to see this.

Israel will learn the lesson of the fleece someday. However, sadly, many people who claim to be followers of Christ Jesus – both Jews and Gentiles – have never learned it. Instead, they cling to the law to find their justification before God.

Paul argues against such an attitude in the most vehement manner. When we read the words of Revelation 4:2 – 19:10, we read words of disaster on the earth, but they are self-inflicted wounds being worked out on a global scale. All of it will stem from a rejection of what God has offered in Christ.

There is one gospel and one Jesus. Salvation is found in Him and the message that properly speaks of Him. Be sure that the Jesus you are following is the one the Bible proclaims, for there is not another (2 Corinthians 11:4).

Hold fast to the grace of God in Christ. It is the message that God has provided for the redemption of man. God in Christ has done the work. We can now do the praising for what He has done.

Closing Verse: *“Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? ¹¹ But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.” Acts 15:10, 11*

Next Week: Judges 7:1-8 *We're not yet done. There's more to tell, sakes alive...* (Gideon, Judge of Israel, Part V) (22nd Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Gideon, Judge of Israel, Part IV

Then all the Midianites and Amalekites
The people of the East, so many the word does tell
Gathered together; and they crossed over
And encamped in the Valley of Jezreel

But the Spirit of the LORD
Came upon Gideon
Then he blew the trumpet
And the Abiezrites gathered behind him as one

And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh
Who also gathered behind him
He also sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali
And they came up to meet them

So Gideon said to God, "If You will save Israel by my hand
-----as You have said—
Look, I shall put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor
If there is dew on the fleece only, and it is dry on all the ground
Then I shall know that You will save Israel by my hand
-----as You have said, for shore

And it was so
When he rose early the next morning; his sleep did cease
And squeezed the fleece together
He wrung a bowlful of water of dew out of the fleece

Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me
But let me speak just once more to You
Let me test, I pray, just once more with the fleece

Let it now be dry only on the fleece, but on all the ground
-----let there be dew

And God did so that night, the miracle did abound
It was dry on the fleece only, but there was dew on all the ground

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 7:1-8 (GIDEON, JUDGE OF ISRAEL, PART V)

In 480 BC, the Battle of Thermopylae occurred. It is noteworthy because of the bravery and fighting prowess of the three hundred Spartan hoplites who so valiantly fought in the battle.

Their deeds are legendary, and their bravery was seemingly unmatched in ancient history. But their battle wasn't as remarkable as the one recorded in Judges 7.

What occurs in Judges 7 is carefully detailed for us in Scripture, but to imagine the thoughts of the men who were asked to engage the battle is beyond our ability.

They had a view from the top of a hill that allowed them to look out over the entire army they would face. It would have seemed utterly impossible for three hundred men to last even a few minutes against this massive army, much less prevail over them.

But the Lord called them to the task, and He personally made the selection concerning who would fight and who was excused from the contingent that had originally assembled. Truly, only trusting in the hand of the Lord to prevail explains how anyone would go forward to meet such a vast and terrifying force.

Text Verse: *"The LORD is my helper;
I will not fear.
What can man do to me?" Hebrews 13:6*

In Christ, not being afraid takes on a completely new meaning. Not only can we trust that the Lord will save us in this life according to His will, but we can trust that He will also forever deliver us from death.

It is one thing to be promised, "You won't die in the battle today," and it is an entirely different thing to be told, "If you trust in Me, death has no power over you, forever." Unless the rapture happens, all of us will die, but that is not the end of the story for believers.

Because Jesus prevailed over death for those who trust Him, they too have prevailed over death. What happens to our earthly selves is not consequential in the bigger scheme of things.

Unlike whatever was on the mind of the soldiers under Gideon, we can trust that whatever comes upon us will be a temporary blip in our continued stream of existence. This is the marvelous hope we possess. Cling to it and be confident in it.

Such great truths as eternal life are proclaimed for believers in Jesus in God's superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Who Is Fearful and Afraid (verses 1-3)

The sign of the fleece ended Chapter 6. However, chronologically, the passage here follows after Judges 6:35, prior to the ending of the chapter –

“Then all the Midianites and Amalekites, the people of the East, gathered together; and they crossed over and encamped in the Valley of Jezreel. ³⁴ But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon; then he blew the trumpet, and the Abiezrites gathered behind him. ³⁵ And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, who also gathered behind him. He also sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali; and they came up to meet them.” Judges 6:33-35

Now that Gideon has been apprised of the Lord's intent concerning the law vs. grace in the sign of the fleece, the words of Chapter 7 follow in a logical way, beginning with...

¹ Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him rose early

The order is jumbled by the NKJV, thus tarnishing the emphatic nature of the words. This should read as two separate clauses: *vayashkem yerubaal hu gidon v'kal ha'am asher ito* – “And rose early Jerubbaal, he Gideon, and all the people who with him.”

Here, the name Jerubbaal, Let Baal Strive, is given prominence. It was introduced in verse 6:32 as an honorary title to Gideon, Cutter, because of his actions taken against the altar of the *baal*, upon which rested the image of Asherah.

It is Jerubbaal who is said to have risen early. Along with him were those who were willing to engage in the battle directed by the Lord. After having arisen, they set out for the battle...

¹ (con't) and encamped beside the well of Harod,

Rather: *vayakhanu al ein kharod* – “and encamped above Spring Harod.” The name Ein Kharod means Spring of Trembling or Spring of Fear, coming from *kharad*, to shake or tremble with fear. The name is certainly derived from the events now taking place. This will be seen in verse 3.

Rather than encamping beside the well, the men encamp above it, on a hilltop that overlooks the entire valley below.

Today, this spring is found in Ma’ayan Harod National Park. To see it in a modern video, go to the YouTube channel *Sergio and Rhoda in Israel* and find the video entitled “Gideon’s Cave and the Spring of Harod.”

In it, these two intrepid YouTube trekkers discuss the details of the very battle that is outlined in Judges 7. Also, one can get a sense of what the layout of the land is like.

¹ (con’t) **so that the camp of the Midianites was on the north side of them by the hill of Moreh in the valley.**

Without checking, the translator followed the same error as the KJV. As Jerubbaal is the leader, the words focus on him alone speaking in the first-person singular: *u-makhaneh midyan hayah lo mitsaphon migivath ha’moreh ba’emeq* – “And camp Midian was to him from north from hill the Moreh in the valley.”

The Hill of Moreh was north of Gideon’s location, with the camp of the Midianites lying in the valley.

Midian means Place of Judgment.

As seen in previous sermons, the word *tsaphon*, north, signifies that which is hidden or treasured away because the north receives less light in the northern hemisphere.

The *givah*, hill, carries various connotations in Scripture, but the main connection in typology is that it is etymologically connected to Gabbatha in the New Testament.

Givath ha’Moreh, Hill the Moreh, means Hill of the Teacher. Moreh comes from *yarah*, to throw or shoot. One throws to hit a target. Thus, it is like instruction, where one teaches with a particular goal in mind.

However, the word is identical to the noun *moreh*, the early rain. That is found only in Psalm 84:6 and twice in Joel 2:23, a passage that refers to the end times –

“Be glad then, you children of Zion,
And rejoice in the LORD your God;
For He has given you the former rain [*moreh*] faithfully,
And He will cause the rain to come down for you—
The former rain [*moreh*],
And the latter rain in the first *month*.”

Another cognate word is also used for the early rains, *yoreh*. That is found in several Old Testament passages. Both words, *moreh* and *yoreh*, are derived from the same root, *yarah*. Thus, both carry the idea of instruction.

The name Givath ha'Moreh has a secondary meaning of Hill of the Early Rain.

It cannot go unnoted that James, an epistle directed to the end times Jews following the church age, refers to the rain cycle and directly associates it with the coming of the Lord—

“Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See *how* the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. ⁸ You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.” James 5:7, 8

Finally, the *emeq*, or valley, refers to a deep, broad valley, a depth. With the layout described, the Lord has a word for Gideon...

² And the LORD said to Gideon, “The people who *are* with you *are* too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands,

vayomer Yehovah el gidon rav ha'am asher itakh mititi eth midyan b'yadam – “And said Yehovah unto Gideon, ‘Many the people whom with you for giving Midian in their hand.’”

As will be seen in the next verse, there are 32,000 with Gideon. However, the Midianites are said to be as numerous as locusts (7:12) and comprise a combined force of 135,000 (8:10). Thus, it is greater than four to one in total number.

Gideon must have sarcastically thought, “Yeah, right. I get that.” But the Lord next explains to him why they were too many...

² (con’t) **lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, ‘My own hand has saved me.’**

pen yith’paer alay Yisrael l’mor yadi hovoshiah – “Lest, over me Israel to say, ‘My hand saved to me.’” Of these words, the Pulpit Commentary rightly states –

“It must be remembered that this whole movement was essentially a religious one. It began with prayer (Judges 6:6, 7), it was followed up by repentance (Judges 6:27, 28), and the great purpose of it was to turn the hearts of the nation back to the God of their fathers. The Lord himself, therefore, graciously forwarded this end by making it plain that the deliverance from their oppression was his work, and his only.”

Had the entire force of 32,000 that came with Gideon gone to the battle, they could justify the victory as coming from their own hands and not the providential hand of Yehovah. Not only is this likely, but it is the normal conclusion of those who engage in such a battle.

But the people had cried out to the Lord (Judges 6:6). Therefore, his response was intended to get them to realize that He alone could provide the victory they had failed to secure up until then. In their crying out, God would respond, but only in such a way that His hand, not Israel’s, unmistakably provided for their salvation.

³ **Now therefore, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, ‘Whoever is fearful and afraid,**

v’atah qera na b’azene ha’am l’mor mi yare v’khared – “And now, proclaim, I pray, in ears the people to say, ‘Who fearful and trembling.’” This is where the spring received its name Kharod, coming from *kharad*, to tremble with fear. Here, the adjective form, *khared*, is used.

The Lord first weeds out any who were originally willing to fight but who were now afraid to do so. After seeing the humongous force scattered over the countryside, their initial bravado was seriously lacking. Thus, they trembled at the prospect of the battle that lay ahead. Therefore, the Lord says...

³ (con’t) **let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead.’”**

The first verb is a jussive: *yashov v'yitspor mehar ha'gilad* – “He shall depart and flit from Mount Gilead.” The Lord gives an implied command to have any fearful warriors return home. It is similar to the injunction given through Moses in Deuteronomy –

“The officers shall speak further to the people, and say, ‘What man *is there who* is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return to his house, lest the heart of his brethren faint like his heart.” Deuteronomy 20:8

In the words of this verse in Judges, there is a verb found only here in Scripture: *tsaphar*. Of this word, Strong’s says, “perhaps depart.” The BDB Lexicon says, “dubious.” In other words, its meaning escapes them. However, it is rather apparent when considering its root, a primitive word signifying to skip about.

From there, the word is cognate to *tsippar*, a bird, *ts'phardea*, a frog, as well as other similar words. Hence, it means something like flit, leap, hop, skip, dart, etc. Today, we might say, “He shall turn and skedaddle out of there.” To keep it close to the thought of the bird, which is spelled identically, I translate it as flit.

As always, a *har*, or mount, is a lot of something gathered. It is synonymous with a large but centralized group of people. The Gilead means The Perpetual Fountain.

There is a seemingly insurmountable problem with the words “from Mount Gilead.” Mount Gilead is on the other side of the Jordan. Because of this, some say it is an error in the text. Ellicott, ever ready to help, provides several possibilities –

“This expression has caused great difficulty, but the Hebrew cannot mean “to mount Gilead,” nor yet ‘beyond mount Gilead.’ The only tenable solution of the difficulty is, (1) to alter the text into “mount Gilboa” (Clericus), or from meehar, “from mount,” to maheer, “speedily” (Michaelis); or (2) to suppose that ‘mount Gilead’ was a rallying-cry of the Manassites in general, for Gilead was a son of Abiezer (Numbers 26:30, where Jeezer is merely an error); and hence was derived the name ‘Gilead’ of the trans-Jordanic district which fell to the half-tribe of Manasseh (Joshua 17:5-6). If this be a true conjecture, the phrase ‘let him depart from mount Gilead’ means ‘let him leave the camp of Manasseh.’ One more conjecture is that Gilead is an ancient name for Gilboa (Schwarz).”

As such an obvious blunder in the text would be incomprehensible, Ellicott’s submission that this is a call to leave the camp of Manasseh brilliantly and correctly identifies the

intent. In Judges 6:15, Gideon was identified with the tribe of Manasseh. In Judges 6:35, it said –

“And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, who also gathered behind him.”

Manasseh is the main tribe by which the army is identified. Mount Gilead is being used as a metonym to represent Manasseh. With his directive heard by the people, it next says...

³ (con't) **And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained.**

More than two-thirds of those who heeded the original call could not bear up under the prospects of what lay ahead. Therefore, the Lord graciously instructed them to hightail it out of there. However, more will need to depart to further whittle down the numbers...

*Who is fearful and afraid
Whose heart is failing at the sight
The word of the Lord, you have not obeyed
He asks you to trust, no matter the plight*

*The Lord is our Helper; let us not fear
He is with us through day and night
He is ever-present and always near
He asks you to trust, no matter the plight*

*The forces arrayed against us
Will all be swept away
Through our faith in Jesus
We are again right with God; oh, Glorious Day*

II. As a Dog Laps (verses 4-8)

⁴ **But the LORD said to Gideon, “The people *are* still *too* many;**

vayomer Yehovah el gidon od ha’am rav – “And said Yehovah unto Gideon, ‘Still the people many.’” The fact is that 10,000 brave warriors can do much more without any fearful men than 32,000 most of whom are fearful. That was seen in Moses’ words from Deuteronomy 20:8, “lest the heart of his brethren faint like his heart.”

Cowardice breeds cowards, and bravery breeds heroes. This would be a powerful group of men who would later boast in their prowess. Therefore...

⁴ (con't) **bring them down to the water, and I will test them for you there.**

hored otam el ha'mayim v'etsr'penu lekha sham – “Descend them unto the waters and I will refine them to you there.” The Lord introduces a new word to Scripture, *tsaraph*. It signifies to smelt. Thus, it means to refine, purify, or purge.

The Lord will personally refine those remaining brave warriors into a single, unified, and lethal fighting force, but one too small to accomplish what they are called to do without His guiding hand.

Being fearful or trembly does not necessarily mean one is cautious, responsible, or physically/mentally prepared for a task. Thus, the Lord will refine them to suit His purposes...

⁴ (con't) **Then it will be, *that* of whom I say to you, ‘This one shall go with you,’ the same shall go with you; and of whomever I say to you, ‘This one shall not go with you,’ the same shall not go.”**

The decision was not left for Gideon to make. Rather, the Lord will determine who goes. The constant stream of discourse from the Lord to Gideon implies that the Lord is actively speaking in his ear. Whether this was audible or otherwise, step-by-step instruction is being conveyed, which Gideon understood to be from the Lord. Having heard these words, it next says...

⁵ **So he brought the people down to the water.**

vayored eth ha'am el ha'mayim – “And he descended the people unto the waters.” The army was “above” the spring, as noted in verse 1. Now, they have descended to the waters to be tested. From this vantage point, they could not see the entire valley where Midian was situated...

⁵ (con't) **And the LORD said to Gideon, “Everyone who laps from the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart by himself;**

vayomer Yehovah el gidon kol asher yaloq bilshono min ha'mayim ka'asher yaloq ha'kelev tasig oto l'bad – “And said Yehovah unto Gideon, ‘All who laps in his tongue

from the water according to laps the dog, you shall set to separation.” The Lord introduces another new word, *laqaq*. It is an onomatopoeia, meaning to lap.

If you are fortunate enough to have a dog, or two, or seven, you can readily hear the sound when they come to a bowl to drink, lqlqlqlqlq. Anyone of those who *laqaqs* the water is to be set apart. Also...

⁵ (con’t) **likewise everyone who gets down on his knees to drink.”**

v’kol asher yikra al birkav lishtoth – “And all whom crouches upon his knees to drink.” Those who crouch down to the water, resting on their knees to drink, are to likewise be separated.

There is a ton of conjecture on what is being conveyed here. Josephus and others think those who lap are the fainthearted. Others take the opposite view and say those who kneel are fainthearted or even foolhardy, not paying attention to the possibility of an attack. Rashi stupidly says that those who went to their knees were secret idolators who had “bowed the knee to Baal.”

Actually, none of these gets the point. The fainthearted have already been winnowed out. All have been called by Gideon, who was specifically named Jerubbaal. Thus, they already know that Gideon has taken the side of the Lord.

It may be true that those who got down on their knees were not mentally attentive to any dangers, while those who brought water in their hands to their mouths to lap were being cautious. But even that is conjecture. Plus, with 10,000 men, it hardly mattered because they would be drinking at different times, so there would always be people observing the area.

Rather, the Lord is making a point in the use of His words. Dogs lap, felines lap, and ruminants (cattle, sheep, antelopes, etc.) lap. All are mentioned in Scripture. However, He has specifically identified “the dog.” It is obviously a great choice for those who love dogs, but that is beside the point.

The dog has consistently pictured Gentiles. The typology follows the Gentile church age in chronology. Israel had rejected the gospel while the Gentiles drank it in copiously and carefully. The sense, then, is that those who drink are doing so like Gentiles. Those warriors who lap like the dog are next identified...

⁶ And the number of those who lapped, *putting* their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men;

v'hi mispar ha'malaqim b'yadam el pihem sh'losh meoth ish – “And was number the lappers in their hand unto their mouth three hundred men.” To conclude that these were the most cowardly, bravest, most alert, etc., because of lapping is to insert too much into the text.

In order to get water to lap, they would first have had to either crouch down and then stand back up, remain down on their haunches, kneel down (which it says they did not), or lie down facing the water and pull the water to their mouths with their hands (which actually seems to be the most likely option).

The words do not tell us which was the case. If standing as opposed to kneeling was what defined them, which many claim, then there would be no need to say they lapped like dogs. The words depend on the description in relation to the animal.

Therefore, the only distinction that can be made is that some lapped like the dog and some knelt. Lapping like the dog is what defines them, nothing more. As for the others...

^{6 (con't)} but all the rest of the people got down on their knees to drink water.

v'kol yeter ha'am karu al birkhehem lishtoth mayim – “And all remainder the people crouched upon their knees to drink water.” The meaning is probably that they got to the water, got down on their knees, and plowed their faces directly into the water without using their hands.

⁷ Then the LORD said to Gideon,

vayomer Yehovah el gidon – “And said Yehovah unto Gideon.” Again, it can be seen that the Lord is speaking to Gideon, probably directly rather than by a prophet. It was something that occurred immediately as well. Just as the Lord spoke to Deborah, so He is conveying His word to Gideon. An example of this is found in Isaiah 20 –

“And it happened, before Isaiah had gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying, ⁵ “Return and tell Hezekiah the leader of My people, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: “I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD.” Isaiah 20:4, 5

7 (con't) **"By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand.**

bishlosh meoth ha'ish ha'malaqim ovoshia etkhem v'nathati eth midyan b'yadekha – "In three hundred the man, the lappers, I will save you and give Midian in your hand."

The whole point of the process has been to get to this place. The numbers are now 450 Midianites to one Israelite. Those with the trait of the lapping dog are set apart from the rest. It is these otherwise impossible odds that will reveal the power of the Lord.

Three hundred is a multiple of three and ten. Three signifies Divine Perfection. Expanding on that, Bullinger says –

"The number three, therefore, must be taken as the number of Divine fulness. It signifies and represents the Holy Spirit as taking of the things of Christ and making them real and solid in our experience. It is only by the Spirit that we realise spiritual things. Without Him and His gracious operation, all is surface work: all is what a plane figure is to a solid."

Of the number ten, Bullinger says –

"Completeness of order, marking the entire round of anything, is, therefore, the ever-present signification of the number ten. It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete."

As for the number 450, which is certainly intentional concerning the odds, it is derived from 5, 9, and 10. Ten was just explained.

Five is the number of grace.

Nine is the number of finality or judgment.

With these incredible odds set before Gideon, the Lord next instructs...

7 (con't) **Let all the *other* people go, every man to his place."**

v'kal ha'am yelkhu ish limqomo – "and all the people let go man to his place." The others are not even given the choice of joining. Instead, they are directed to depart.

There was to be no diluting the intentions of the Lord through some brave or reckless souls.

Instead, He has set forth the parameters. Gideon is the one to lead the minuscule force onward to the Lord's victory.

⁸So the people took provisions and their trumpets in their hands. And he sent away all *the rest of* Israel, every man to his tent,

The words are difficult due to the change of person and some unusual verbiage: *vayiqhu eth tsedah ha'am b'yadam v'eth shophrotehem v'eth kal ish Yisrael shilakh ish l'ohalav* – “And they took provision the people in their hand and their shophars. And all man Israel he sent, man to his tent.”

Scholars get upset with the wording and amend it in various ways. Some have even written pages of commentary about the words, as if they are completely indiscernible.

Such is unnecessary. The meaning is, “And they (the 300) took provision (sg.) the people (of all the army) in their hand, and their (all the army) shophars. And all man Israel (other than the 300) he (the Lord through Gideon) sent, man (the 9700) to his tent.”

There was the general provision of the army, which had been brought by all the people. The Lord directed those going to battle to take from that general supply what they needed for what lay ahead.

Even though the original is sparsely and somewhat clumsily worded, it is clear enough that it should not cause one to lose sleep. From there, the rest of the army was told to depart to their tents. As for the others...

⁸ (con't) and retained those three hundred men.

u-bish'losh meoth ha'ish hekheziq – “And three hundred the man strengthened.” The Lord strengthened the three hundred men for the challenge ahead either directly or through Gideon. This statement is probably anticipatory of what it will say in verse 11. Even though the words of verse 11 are all in the singular, Gideon represents the whole –

“But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant, ¹¹ and you shall hear what they say; and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp.” Judges 7:10, 11

With that noted, it next says...

^{8 (fin)} **Now the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.**

v'makhaneh midyan hayah lo mitakhath ba'emeq – “And camp Midian was to him below in the valley.” The camp of Midian is set in relation to Gideon.

The 300 went back up to the top of the hill above the spring, where they were encamped. It is from that location that the valley is clearly seen. The entire army of Midian, resting within that valley, would be visible.

This would explain the reason for needing to be strengthened. Once the 300 had again ascended the hill, seeing the vast army loaded with supplies spread out as far as the eye could see, they might have begun to question the sanity of remaining to engage the battle.

Unlike in the battle of Thermopylae, the army was in an open valley where there was no protective or narrowed place to form a defense. It would be like a single battle tank going onto an open field against 450 battle tanks. Without the Lord, it would be utterly impossible to engage and prevail in such a situation.

As for the contents of the entire battle, there is the rest of this chapter and 21 verses from the next to find out the details, but we are already beginning to see the story come alive in regard to typology.

The Lord is using interesting nuances within His word to tell us not only what really happened in the past but why He directed things to occur as they did. The selection of particular words, actions, phrases, and so forth are all begging us to ask, “Why?”

If He had said to Gideon, “Everyone who laps from the water with his tongue, as a lion laps, you shall set apart by himself,” the story would have taken on a completely different aspect. The same is true if He has used a sheep or an ox as His example.

And instead of saying Mount Gilboa, which is right there in the vicinity of the Spring of Harod, He included the name of a mount that lay a significant distance from the area in a completely different land grant.

Instead of calling the text into question and accusing the copyists of error, they are to be complimented for not changing the text to what would – on the surface – seem to be a much more logical translation.

God is painting stories of other things with the brush of His words on a canvas of time and location to tell us wonderful details about what He is doing in the history of redemption. Through this approach, we can weed out all kinds of theological error and more firmly establish why we believe what we believe.

The adjective used in verse 3, *khared*, trembling, is only used six times in the Bible. Two of them are found in Isaiah 66. Its first use says –

“Thus says the LORD:
‘Heaven *is* My throne,
And earth *is* My footstool.
Where *is* the house that you will build Me?
And where *is* the place of My rest?
²For all those *things* My hand has made,
And all those *things* exist,’
Says the LORD.
‘But on this *one* will I look:
On *him who is* poor and of a contrite spirit,
And who trembles [*khared*] at My word.’” Isaiah 66:1, 2

Instead of doubting the word, calling it into question, dismissing it as a book filled with error or corruption of the text, we should ask why it says what it says. God has painstakingly and meticulously laid it out for us. He has carefully watched over it for thousands of years.

Don’t trifle with the word. Instead, cherish it. We are being told wonderful stories of great things.

Closing Verse: “Hear the word of the LORD,
You who tremble [*khared*] at His word:
‘Your brethren who hated you,
Who cast you out for My name’s sake, said,
“Let the LORD be glorified,
That we may see your joy.”
But they shall be ashamed.’” Isaiah 66:5

Next Week: Judges 7:9-20 *Isn't it fun? Such a story to tell... we'll see new tricks...*
(Gideon, Judge of Israel, Part VI) (23rd Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Gideon, Judge of Israel, Part V

Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon)
And all the people who were with him, a whole load
Rose early and encamped
Beside the well of Harod

So that the camp of the Midianites was on the north side of them
(there they did rally)
By the hill of Moreh in the valley

And the LORD said to Gideon, "The people who are with you
Are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, see?
Lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me
Saying, 'My own hand has saved me

Now therefore, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying
'Whoever is fearful and afraid, let him turn and depart, so I
-----have proclaimed
At once from Mount Gilead
And twenty-two thousand of the people returned
-----and ten thousand remained

But the LORD said to Gideon, "The people are still too many
Bring them down to the water, and I will test them for you there
Then it will be, that of whom I say to you
'This one shall go with you,' the same shall go with you
-----if he dare

And of whomever I say to you, 'No
'This one shall not go with you,' the same shall not go

So he brought the people down to the water
And the LORD said to Gideon, "Everyone who from the water laps
With his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart by himself
Likewise everyone who gets down on his knees to drink
-----all of those chaps.

And the number of those who lapped
Putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men
But all the rest of the people
Got down on their knees to drink water, and so it was then...

The LORD said to Gideon
"By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you
And deliver the Midianites into your hand
Let all the other people go, every man to his place, so you shall do

So the people took provisions and their trumpets in their hands
And he sent away all the rest of Israel, every man to his tent
-----back home to his Naomi or Sally
And retained those three hundred men
Now the camp of Midian was below him in the valley

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 7:9-20 (GIDEON, JUDGE OF ISRAEL, PART VI)

Extra-biblical claims of revelation from God are not necessary for any part of our salvation or a walk with the Lord. They add nothing to what God has detailed in His word, and following such supposed revelations will only distract us from study and contemplation of His word.

There are accounts of such things detailed in Scripture. Today's account will tell us of one such event. At the time, the people of the world did not yet have the fully revealed word of God. This obviously means that God was still revealing it to the world.

Therefore, it is not unexpected that there would be prophets, visions, divinely directed dreams, and the like. These things were used by God to direct His plan of redemption, to reveal coming aspects of what He would do as are later recorded in the word, and to show later generations how such things came about.

Is any of that necessary now? I say no. The word is given and it is fully sufficient to teach us everything we now need to know.

Text Verse: *"For God may speak in one way, or in another,
Yet man does not perceive it.*

*¹⁵ In a dream, in a vision of the night,
When deep sleep falls upon men,
While slumbering on their beds." Job 33:14,15*

In our verses today, there are a few astonishing aspects of the dream recorded here. Such things, once thought through, are like the lightbulb above the head memes. The light comes on and suddenly one can see the logic.

The word, as it is given, is so filled with interesting insights that we can read it innumerable times and still miss obvious truths it is revealing. Keep reading the word! Keep thinking on what it is telling you. It is God's marvelous gift to the people of the world.

This is especially so because in it is revealed God's greatest Gift of all, our Lord Jesus Christ. Everything points to Him and His coming. Let us remember this and seek Him out in every detail. He is there, waiting to be discovered.

Such great things as finding Jesus throughout every story are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. I Have Had a Dream (verses 9-14)

⁹ It happened on the same night that the LORD said to him,

v'hi ba'laylah ha'hu vayomer elav Yehovah – “And was in the night, the it, and say unto him, Yehovah...” This is the same night in which the selection of who would fight in the battle was made –

“Then the LORD said to Gideon, ‘By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. Let all the *other* people go, every man to his place.’ ⁸ So the people took provisions and their trumpets in their hands. And he sent away all *the rest of* Israel, every man to his tent, and retained those three hundred men. Now the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.”

-Judges 7:7, 8

Before the battle is engaged, the Lord will have something for Gideon to do that will ease the minds of the soldiers with him. The odds are so great against them that only absolute trust in the Lord’s guiding hand could mollify their unease. However, the Lord first says...

⁹ (con’t) **“Arise, go down against the camp,**

qum red ba'makhaneh – “Arise! Descend in the camp.” Gideon is told to get up in order to go down. It is night, so the soldiers were probably laying around campfires. Maybe some were slumbering. But, the Lord said the night is the time to engage the battle. This is a command for the entire camp to now descend and get going...

⁹ (con’t) **for I have delivered it into your hand.**

ki n'thativ b'yadekha – “for I have given it in your hand.” The aspect of the verb is perfect. The matter is settled and accomplished in the Lord’s mind. He promises victory over the vast horde scattered across the valley. However, to ensure the men are confident, He has a sign to help them mentally prepare...

¹⁰ But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant,

v'im yare atah la'redeth red atah u-phurah naarkha el ha'makhaneh – “And if fearing – you – to descend, descend – you and Purah your servant – unto the camp.” The Lord knew the heart of Gideon. He was leading three hundred men into battle against one hundred and thirty-five thousand. There would naturally be reticence concerning such an endeavor.

Therefore, He directs Gideon with emphatic and precisely stated words. First, in the previous verse he was told to descend *in* the camp. That command was to go to battle. Here, it says *unto* the camp. It is not a direction for fighting but for another purpose.

Also, the Lord could have said, “Take one of your men and go...” Or, He could have said, “Take a servant and go...” Instead, He expressly identifies by name who Gideon should take, Purah. Purah is his *naar*. The word means a youth, but in this case, it is referring to his attendant, probably his armor bearer.

This is a young person who is not yet a warrior. Such a person would carry the implements of war for the warrior and would follow along after, killing any who were wounded by the hand of his master but were not yet dead.

The name Purah may come from one of two separate but related sources. The first is the verb *parah*, to bear fruit or be fruitful. The other is the noun *porah*, a branch. However, that in turn comes from *paar*, to beautify or glorify. The branch is what beautifies a vine. This is seen, for example, in Ezekiel 31 –

“All the birds of the heavens made their nests in its boughs;
Under its branches [*porah*] all the beasts of the field brought forth their young;
And in its shadow all great nations made their home.

⁷ ‘Thus it was beautiful in greatness and in the length of its branches,
Because its roots reached to abundant waters.

⁸ The cedars in the garden of God could not hide it;
The fir trees were not like its boughs,
And the chestnut trees were not like its branches [*porah*];
No tree in the garden of God was like it in beauty.” Ezekiel 31:6-8

Therefore, the name Purah means Fruitful or Branch. However, if Branch, it carries with it the sense of honor, beauty, glory, etc.

¹¹ and you shall hear what they say; and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp.”

Rather, and more precisely: *v'shamta mah y'daberu v'akhar tekhezaqnah yadekha v'yaradta ba'makhaneh* – “And hear what they speak. And after, shall be strengthened your hand. And go down in the camp.” The meaning is that in hearing what the Lord has spoken, the hand of Gideon will no longer be limp from fear. He will be encouraged and confident to enter into the battle. Again, as in verse 9, it says “*in the camp*,” meaning to attack it.

11 (con't) Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outpost of the armed men who were in the camp.

The words bear an emphasis: *vayered hu u-phurah naaro el qetseh ha'khamushim asher ba'makhaneh* – “And descended, he, and Purah his servant, unto extremity the fiftied who in the camp.” Gideon, the Cutter, is highlighted. He, along with Purah did as directed and went to the outskirts of the *khamushim*.

It is a verb, the meaning of which is highly debated. Outpost, though, is incorrect. It may mean “the arrayed” or something similar. However, other than later vowel pointing, it is spelled identically to the plural of fifty. Therefore, it is likely that it signifies a battle array of units of fifty men. Today we would say, “by platoon” to indicate units of fifty men.

These two descended and came up close to the fifties. There would be two thousand seven hundred fifties in a camp of one hundred and thirty-five thousand. By the Lord's providence, they will come to the extremity where a particular fifty was situated.

12 Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts;

Rather: *u-midyan va'amaleq v'kal b'ne qedem nophlim ba'emeq ka'arbeh la'rov* – “And Midian and Amalek and all sons East lying in the valley according to the locust to the multitude.” The words take us back to the opening of the previous chapter –

“So it was, whenever Israel had sown, Midianites would come up; also Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them. ... For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, coming in as numerous as locusts; both they and their camels were without number; and they would enter the land to destroy it.” Judges 6:3, 5

Midian means Place of Judgment.

Amalek is derived from the word *am*, or people, and *malaq* which means to nip or wring off the head of a bird with or without severing it from the body. Thus, they are The People Who Wring Off. They are those who are disconnected from the body and strive to disconnect the body.

The *b'ne qedem* or “sons East” would be the various people groups including Arab tribes, Ishmaelites, etc.

Saying these were numbered like locusts is a way of saying that just as the locust moves around, making it impossible to count them, so was this hoard of invaders gathered in the valley. There were so many of them that they seemed endless in number. This is set in contrast to the mere three hundred men with Gideon.

¹² (con't) **and their camels were without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude.**

v'ligmalehem ein mispar ka'khol se'al s'phath ha'yam la'rov – “And to their camels not number, according to the sand upon her lip – the sea – to the multitude.” It is a hugely whopping and great superlative seen previously in Joshua 11:4 when Israel met the enemies gathered at the waters of Merom. The idea is almost an infinite number of them.

The word sand, *khol*, comes from the verb *khul*, to whirl or writhe. The idea is that of sand whirling in the wind. Hence, it would be impossible to count the sand as the wind blew over it.

As for the *gamal*, or camel, that comes from the verb *gamal*, to deal fully or adequately with. Thus, it can mean to wean, repay, require, reward, ripen, and so forth. As such, it refers to the treatment, either well or ill, that a person will receive.

Camels were not found in abundance in Canaan. They were brought in by the invaders, demonstrating the enormous amount of provision the marauding invaders possessed and the profusely plump piles of plunder they had taken each year as they stormed over the land. This is set in contrast to the limited supplies of Gideon's men which was carried on foot rather than by camel.

¹³ **And when Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his companion.**

vayavo gidon v'hineh ish m'saper l'reehu khalom – “And came Gideon, and behold, man recounting to his friend dream.” This is what the Jewish sages call the *bath kol*, daughter of a voice. They say there are four ways of receiving a divine word: prophets, dream, the Urim, and the *bath kol*. It is a voice of guidance or the first words one hears after looking out for them. For example –

Then Jonathan said, “Very well, let us cross over to *these* men, and we will show ourselves to them. ⁹ If they say thus to us, ‘Wait until we come to you,’ then we will stand still in our place and not go up to them. ¹⁰ But if they say thus, ‘Come up to us,’ then we will go up. For the LORD has delivered them into our hand, and this *will be* a sign to us.”¹¹ So both of them showed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines. And the Philistines said, “Look, the Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden.” ¹² Then the men of the garrison called to Jonathan and his armorbearer, and said, “Come up to us, and we will show you something.” Jonathan said to his armorbearer, “Come up after me, for the LORD has delivered them into the hand of Israel.” 1 Samuel 14:8-12

This is not a sound interpretation of Scripture. First, there are other means of receiving a divine word, such as the appearance of an angel, a vision, etc. Second, the Lord is instructing Gideon to a specific place to hear a specific word. That word is based on a dream.

Charismatics and the superstitious accept this type of thing as a divine message, “If this, then this.” It is a sloppy way of handling theology. It leads directly to the “Open the Bible, turn to a random page, point, and make your decision” approach to life. As for what Gideon hears...

¹³ (con’t) **He said, “I have had a dream: *To my surprise, a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian;***

vayomer hineh khalom khalamti v'hineh tselol lekhem s'orim mithhapekh b'makhaneh midyan – “And said, ‘Behold dream dreamt. And behold, loaf bread barley turning in camp Midian.” There is a word found only here in Scripture, *tselul* (or *tselil*).

It is highly debated what the word means and many suggestions have been made. It may signify a round (or flattened but round) cake of bread. Strong’s identifies the word as coming from *tsalal*, to sink. As something sinks, it generally wafts downward through the water in a rolling motion. Thus, it may be a flat round cake, or a roll or loaf.

Barley is considered a lesser grain compared to wheat. The bread is thus inconsequential in both size and quality. Therefore, it is emblematic of the camp of Gideon in relation to the camp of Midian, low and contemptible in contrast to exalted and mighty.

Barley is also known as the crop of hairy ears because of its appearance on the stalk. Hence it is named *seorah*, coming from *sear*, hair. Hair in the Bible signifies an awareness, especially an awareness of sin, as in the *saiyr*, or hairy goat sin offering.

The motion of the bread is *haphak*, to turn or turn over. It is the same word in the same construct used to describe the turning sword held by the cherubim at the east of the Garden of Eden.

“So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned [*ha’mithhapekheth*: the turning] every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.” Genesis 3:24

If it is flattened bread, then it is on its side like a wheel turning. If a loaf, it is simply rolling along. Either way, it has come into the camp of Midian, Place of Judgment...

¹³ (con’t) **it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed.”**

The words are chaotic and filled with motion: *vayavo ad ha’ohel vayakehu vayipol vayahaphkhehu l’malah v’naphal ha’ohel* – “And came until the tent and struck it, and falling, and turning it to her upward, and fallen the tent.” Saying “the tent” has several possibilities. It may be the main tent of the highest-ranking person, but that seems dubious and forced.

It could be the dreamer’s own tent, making it personal – it was his own tent, not just an arbitrary tent. Or it may be that the word tent stands for the camp as a whole. It is the camp (sg.) of Midian (sg.), so this is the tent of Midian. That is not out of the question. It even seems likely based on the interpretation of the dream by his friend.

Either way, this is what Gideon needed to hear. Out of one hundred and thirty-five thousand people, in two thousand seven hundred platoons, and probably twenty-five tents per platoon (figuring two people per tent), Gideon walked up to the one tent where this dream had occurred. He also walked up at the time that the man conveyed his dream to his friend.

The probability of coming to the right tent would be approximately 67,500 to 1. Coming at the exact time the conversation was going on would increase the odds further. Sergio figured the probability based on a thirty-minute conversation and it is a bit more than one in a million odds. A five-minute conversation would take it to about one in ten million chance of coming upon the right tent at the right moment. And more, a further verification that this was the Lord's doing is next seen...

¹⁴ Then his companion answered and said, "This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel!"

va'yaan reehu vayomer ein zoth bilti im kherev gidon ben yoash ish Yisrael – "And answered his friend and said, 'Not this except if sword Gideon son Joash, man Israel.'" However those in the camp became aware of Gideon and his men, it was understood that they were a teeny, insignificant force. And yet, this dream clearly indicated that they would come into the camp of Midian and level it.

This again raises the odds previously mentioned. The dream interpreter could have said, "It's nothing. Go back to sleep, dreamer." Also, he was able to correctly interpret the dream as Gideon listened. He directly equated the turning loaf of bread (*zoth bilti*: this except) to the *kherev*, sword, of Gideon.

Everything about the account is provided to assure Gideon that he will, in fact, prevail over Midian, just as the Lord said.

The name Joash means Yehovah Has Bestowed. Israel means He Strives with God. That has bearing on the next words...

¹⁴ (con't) Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp."

natan ha'Elohim b'yado eth midyan v'eth kal ha'makhaneh – "Given the God in his hand Midian and all the camp." As in verse 9, the aspect of the verb is perfect. Just as the Lord said, so this man has confirmed. And more, he uses the term "the God."

The article is expressive and refers to the one true God in relation to man. But more especially, it is in relation to those who are in a right relationship with Him, or it is used to contrast those who are not in a right relationship with Him.

In this case, Gideon, who is of Israel (He Strives with God), is striving in a proper relationship with the God. This man understands that Gideon is chosen by the God, Yehovah, to destroy Midian and all the camp. The words are convincing...

*The Lord alone will gain the victory
We simply trust in what He has done
He has set forth everything splendidly
In the giving of Christ, His only begotten Son*

*Let us trust in this and go forth confidently
Our destiny is secure through what He has done
Innumerable people gathered around the glassy sea
Forgiven and redeemed through the work of the Son*

*Hallelujah to our God!
Behold the great things He has done
Forever and ever we shall applaud
The glory of the Lord's cross, God's only begotten Son*

II. Torches and Trumpets (verses 15-20)

¹⁵ And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped.

v'hi kishmoa gidon eth mispar ha'khalom v'eth shivro vayishtakhu – “And was according to hearing Gideon account the dream and its fracture, and he worshiped.” The word *shavar* signifies a breaking, a fracture, a crushing, etc.

In this case, it is as if the dream was given, but it was closed up. However, the interpreter was able to cause a fracture in the words, thus exposing the meaning. Hence, it signifies a solution or interpretation of the dream.

This, in itself, was as miraculous as the giving of the dream. Gideon, like all of Israel, would have known the words of Joseph to Pharaoh, hearing them year after year as the stories of their forefathers were recounted from generation to generation –

“And they said to him, ‘We each have had a dream, and *there is* no interpreter of it.’ So Joseph said to them, ‘Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell *them* to me, please.’” Genesis 40:8

Every detail of their time while at the camp of Midian was carefully orchestrated by the Lord to fully convince Gideon that victory was assured. Therefore, he took time to worship the Lord in grateful confidence that they would prevail.

15 (con't) He returned to the camp of Israel, and said, "Arise, for the LORD has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand."

vayashav el makhaneh Yisrael vayomer qumu ki nathan Yehovah b'yedkhem eth makhaneh Midyan – "And returned unto camp Israel and said, 'Arise! For given Yehovah in your hand camp Midian.'" As the Lord previously said, and as the interpreter of the dream repeated, so Gideon speaks using the word "give" in the perfect aspect. It is a done deal.

Midian is already destroyed in the Lord's mind and in the mind of the interpreter. Now it is in Gideon's mind as well. Therefore, he instructs the men to arise. It is time to engage the enemy...

16 Then he divided the three hundred men *into* three companies,

This division was to give the illusion of a much larger attacking force, coming at the enemy from various directions. It will later be employed by Saul and David. Three bands of raiders are also mentioned in Job –

"While he *was* still speaking, another also came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three bands, raided the camels and took them away, yes, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!" Job 1:17

Once divided...

16 (con't) and he put a trumpet into every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and torches inside the pitchers.

vayiten shopharoth b'yad kulam v'khadim reqim v'lapidim b'thok ha'kadim – "And gave shophars in hand all them, and pitchers empty, and torches in midst the pitchers." The shophar is used to call troops to or into battle. In this case, it is into battle. When they are arrayed and ready, the shophar is blown and the attack begins.

This would lead the enemy to suppose that the battle was coming from every direction with each shophar mustering an entire force of men. This could mean thirty thousand or

more ready men running into a camp filled with sleeping men. It would bring immediate terror and confusion to the entire camp.

The *kad*, or pitcher, was an earthenware jar often used for carrying water from a well, such as that used by Rebekah in Genesis 24. In this case, the pitchers are empty, and a torch was inserted. The jar was to conceal the light until it was time for it to shine forth.

The word *lapid* describes a torch or lamp. In this case, it is a torch that would not be easily extinguished and which would increase in brightness as it was waved to and fro. The lights would be used by the head of a company to direct those behind him where he was going in the dark. Again, it gives the illusion of many people following leaders into battle.

17 And he said to them, “Look at me and do likewise;

The words are short and to the point: *vayomer alehem mimeni tiru v’ken taasu* – “And said unto them, ‘From me look and thus do.’” He would lead the attack when all the men were set and ready. From wherever he was stationed, the rest would have stealthily encircled the camp, keeping their eyes on Gideon’s position as he approached the camp. Therefore...

17 (con’t) watch, and when I come to the edge of the camp you shall do as I do:

There is a strong, emphatic nature to his words: *v’hineh anokhi ba biqtseh ha’makhaneh v’hayah ka’asher eeseh ken taasun* – “And behold, I come in extremity the camp, and it is according to which I doing, so shall you (certainly) do.”

Moving to the edge of the camp rather than remaining at a distance was to make the Midianites think that an entire attacking force was directly upon them. It would throw them into utter confusion and absolute panic. This is the point of the careful repetition and detailed, emphatic instruction by Gideon. Therefore...

18 When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me,

Again, it is emphatic: *v’taqati ba’shofar anoki v’kal iti* – “And I blast in the shopfar, I, and all who with me.” Gideon would initiate the process and almost simultaneously he would be accompanied by his one hundred. This would initiate the battle.

Those inside the camp would hear it and understand a battle was beginning. Any mentally alert Midianites would direct their eyes and ears in the direction of Gideon. But within just another second or two, confusion would break out in their minds...

18 (con't) then you also blow the trumpets on every side of the whole camp, and say, 'The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!'"

It is again emphatic: *uth'qatem ba'sopharoth gam atem sivoth kal ha'makhaneh v'amartem l'Yehovah u-l'gidon* – “and you blast in the shopbars also – you around all the camp – and say, ‘to Yehovah and to Gideon.’” The inserted words “The sword of” are a part of the call as indicated in verse 20, but they are not a part of this verse.

It is a rallying cry for Gideon's forces to remember the Lord and to acknowledge the leadership of Gideon under the Lord. Calling out the name of the Lord, a name that would be known to the Midianites, as well as the name of Gideon, was to let them know that they were being attacked under the authority of their God and with a capable military leader heading the army.

19 So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outpost of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch,

vayavo gidon u-meah ish asher ito biqtseh ha'makhaneh rosh ha'ashmoreth ha'tikonah – “And Gideon and hundred man who with him in extremity the camp, head the watch, the middle.” The timing is purposely selected to be when the sentinels were least likely to be ready for any alarm.

It is generally believed that there were three designated watches in the night during this time in history. As night went from six to six, it would be about 10pm. If there were four watches, then it could be as late as 12am. Either way, most in the camp would be falling into deep sleep. Waking up suddenly causes the brain to be foggy and unprepared.

19 (con't) just as they had posted the watch;

The words are a verb fest: *akh haqem heqimu eth ha'shomrim* – “surely, arising arisen the watchers.” The meaning is that the new watch had just gotten up. They were just being posted, probably still bleary eyed. The others were mind-numbed from their posting and ready to sleep. Just at this carefully selected moment, it says...

19 (con't) and they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers that were in their hands.

vayitq'u ba'shopharoth v'napots ha'kadim asher beyadam – “And blasting in the shophars, and shattering the pitchers which in their hands.” The verb shattering is structured to indicate that the blasting and the shattering occurred simultaneously.

At one moment, there would be the sound of the battle call, the crash of some unknown but destructive sound, and the sudden flashing of lights very close to the camp. Each detail is given to elicit the maximum terror in the newly posted watchers. Those going off duty would be likewise horrified that the enemy had encircled them while they were on duty.

Those asleep would wake up completely confused, astonished, and terrified. The entire camp would be unprepared for the sudden event that had fallen upon them. Just as Gideon had acted, and as instructed, it then says...

²⁰ Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers—

Vayitqu sh'loshet harashim ba'shopharoth vayishbru ha'kadim – “And blasting three the companies in the shophars, and shattering the pitchers.” The fact that it already said that the three hundred did these things in verse 19 has caused a lot of unnecessary speculation in many different directions.

Verse 19 referred to Gideon and the company with him. This speaks of the other two companies doing it. Gideon had instructed them to follow after him. They have done exactly that. They immediately followed suit, so that it was as if the attack was from all sides at once. The text is simply affirming that all three companies obediently accomplished what they were charged to do.

²⁰ (con't) they held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing

vayakhaziqu b'yad sh'molam ba'lapidim u-b'yad y'minam ha'shopharoth litqoa – “And strengthened in hand left in the torches, and in hand their right the shophars to blowing.” It could have simply said, “They held the torches and blew the trumpets.” However, the text is asking us to consider why the particular hands are specified.

The left side refers to the north, or darker side, in Scripture. The word *semol*, or left, comes from *simlah*, a wrapper or mantle. Hence, the left is the hidden side. It is like saying, “And strengthened in the hidden hand, the torches.” Thus, the focus is on the torches.

The right is the south side in Scripture. It is the side of strength and authority. Understanding this...

^{20 (fin)} —**and they cried, “The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!”**

vayiqreu kherev l’Yehovah u-l’gidon – “And crying, ‘Sword to Yehovah and to Gideon.’” The meaning of “to” is “of.” This is to be inferred from the previous clause. The three hundred men stood completely unarmed as far as their hands were concerned.

One hand held the torch and the other the shophar. They cannot do any killing like that! Therefore, any destruction that occurs is because the Lord directed it to be so and Gideon, the Cutter, is the Lord’s designated leader who organized the non-fighting battle on behalf of the Lord.

Any cutting down of the enemy must be credited solely to the Lord who directed every step and to Gideon who acted on the Lord’s direction.

And this is a truth that carries over to our own spiritual lives as well. Every aspect of what is needed to accomplish the victory has been wrought by the Lord. There can be no boasting in what we have done. Scripture makes this perfectly clear, and as our closing verse will reveal.

The thought is central to what is going on in the redemption of man. The Bible notes that we are saved by grace through faith and that is not of ourselves. Rather, Ephesians 2 says it is the gift of God. A gift is something unearned, and grace is unmerited favor.

Understanding this, and remembering that we are to never mar grace by assuming that we must accomplish works in order to merit salvation, or that if we fail the Lord in some particular way we cannot be saved or we might become unsaved.

That is a chief lie of the devil. In essence it says that we either participate in our own salvation or we accomplish it apart from God’s grace. Rather, let us trust in what God has done. That is what faith is! It is accepting His work and being persuaded that it is sufficient.

Next week, we will go through the final verses and see what the contents of Chapter 7 are pointing to. But from our final verse of the passage today, we can know that acknowledging that the battle is the Lord’s is a key part of what is being conveyed.

For the Christian, that came about by faith. Let us hold fast to that, not getting pulled away from it by cunning deception. The gospel is clear and simple. Let me explain it to you...

Closing Verse: *"Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith." Romans 3:27*

Next Week: Judges 7:21-25 *Fun a ton! It's so swell – and close to heaven...* (Gideon, Judge of Israel, Part VII) (24th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Gideon, Judge of Israel, Part VI

It happened on the same night
That the LORD said to Gideon in a command
"Arise, go down against the camp
For I have delivered it into your hand

But if you are afraid to go down
Go down to the camp with Purah your servant
And you shall hear what they say
And afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down
-----against the camp, so be observant

Then he went down with Purah his servant
Together they did scamp
To the outpost of the armed men
Who were in the camp

Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East
Were in the valley as numerous as locusts. No, the size
-----is not skewed
And their camels were without number
As the sand by the seashore in multitude

And when Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream

-----to his companion
He said, "I have had a dream: To my surprise of this event
A loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian
It came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and
-----collapsed the tent

Then his companion answered and said
"This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon, Israel's champ
The son of Joash, a man of Israel!
Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp

And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling
Of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped. So grand!
He returned to the camp of Israel, and said
"Arise, for the LORD has delivered the camp of Midian
-----into your hand

Then he divided the three hundred men
Into three companies, so he did divide
And he put a trumpet into every man's hand
With empty pitchers, and with torches inside

And he said to them
"Look at me and likewise do
Watch, and when I come to the edge of the camp
You shall do as I do too

When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me
Then you also blow the trumpets on every side, so you shall do
Of the whole camp, and say
'The sword of the LORD and of Gideon too

So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him
Came to the outpost of the camp at the beginning of the
-----middle watch, according to the plans
Just as they had posted the watch; and they blew the trumpets
And broke the pitchers that were in their hands

Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers

They held the torches in their left hands as things had begun
And the trumpets in their right hands for blowing
And they cried, "The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 7:21-25 (GIDEON, JUDGE OF ISRAEL, PART VII)

So far, Judges has detailed an amazing journey through much of redemptive history. It started and has led to when Israel will enter the tribulation period. That is made explicit in Scripture, but it is also carefully detailed in typology.

The reason Israel even exists as a nation is because God covenanted with them. Unlike the other nations of the earth, the Lord specifically stated that Israel will always remain before Him as a people. This is grace.

Israel has consistently violated the covenant the Lord made with them. And yet, because of His faithfulness, He has kept it as a nation. Israel will enter the tribulation period for exactly the same reason: because God has covenanted with them.

Rather than destroying them along with much of the world, He will bring them through the tribulation, purify them, and they will again be His people. His attention and focus will be directly upon them, and He will dwell among them.

It's hard to see how people don't get this, but it completely escapes a large portion of people in the church. And not all of them are dummies. Many have degrees, reading their Bibles for their entire lives, but yet, it escapes them.

Text Verse: *"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,
The leopard shall lie down with the young goat,
The calf and the young lion and the fatling together;
And a little child shall lead them." Isaiah 11:6*

In today's passage, Zeeb is one of the guys who will have his head taken off. Hence, I chose Isaiah 11:6 as our text verse. Please trust that when the Lord promises something to Israel in the Old Testament, it means that the Lord will fulfill those promises to Israel.

The promises are not abrogated through the work of Christ, they are not transferred to the church, and they are not taken away because of Israel's unfaithfulness. All of these are propositions set forth by various unsound doctrines, and yet none of them align with Scripture.

Hold fast to the truth that God is faithful to His word. If He is not for Israel, He will not be for you either. Where is grace in that? Where is hope in that? Where is confidence in that? God's word will never fail.

Such great truths as this are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Oreb and Zeeb (verses 21-25)

In the previous sermon, the narrative left off with Gideon and his three hundred men coming to the outskirts of the camp, blowing their trumpets, and breaking their pitchers. With that, they cried out, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." Now, this most magnificently marvelous action continues as the camp erupts into total chaos...

²¹ And every man stood in his place all around the camp; and the whole army ran and cried out and fled.

The verbs being imperfect give the sense of ongoing action: *vayaamdu ish takhtav saviv lamakhaneh vayarats kal ha'makhaneh vayariu vayanisu* – "And standing man his under around to the camp, and running all the camp, and shouting, and fleeing." The meaning of "his under" is that the place where he stands does not change. The same ground remains under the standing man.

One can see the contrast between the two camps. While Gideon and his men were standing firm, those in the camp were running. While he and his men were blasting the trumpets, those in the camp were shouting. While Gideon's company was shattering pitchers, those in the camp were fleeing.

It is reminiscent of the chaos that took place at the Battle of Jericho. There was the blowing of trumpets and a great shout, the walls falling down, and then the rush of every man running straight ahead. Here, however, there was no rush by Gideon and his men. The chaos alone would bring about the enemy's destruction.

The wording is so exact and purposeful that the contrast is stunning –

vayaamdu / vayarats – and standing / and running
vayitqu / vayariu – and blasting / and shouting
vayishbru / vayanisu – and shattering / and fleeing

Hooray!

²² When the three hundred blew the trumpets, the LORD set every man's sword against his companion throughout the whole camp;

The words return to the narrative in verse 20. This isn't a second blasting of the trumpets, but a second description of the same action: *vayitqu sh'losh meoth ha'shopharoth vayasem Yehovah eth kherev ish b'reehu u-b'kal ha'makhaneh* – "And blasting three hundred in the shophars, and set Yehovah sword: man in his friend and in all the camp."

Setting verses 20 and 22 side by side, the different aspects are more clearly seen –

"And blasting three the companies in the shophars ... And crying, 'Sword to Yehovah and to Gideon."

"And blasting three hundred in the shophars, and set Yehovah sword: man in his friend and in all the camp."

There is the call by Israel, and then there is the response by the Lord.

The scene is one of utter chaos. There was no light and no way to turn on a light. Every soldier's instinct was to fight his way out solely for the sake of self-preservation. Thus, everyone simply plunged his sword into whoever was nearest. Anyone who wasn't killed took off and headed for the hills, or rather...

²² (con't) and the army fled to Beth Acacia, toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel Meholah, by Tabbath.

Much more precisely: *va'yanas ha'makhaneh ad beith ha'shittah tserathah ad sephat avel m'kholah al tabath* – "And fled the camp until Beith Ha'Shittah Zererath-ward, until lip Abel Meholah upon Tabbath." Those who could flee put their tails between their legs and took off. The movement of the flight became united and the camp rushed toward these named places.

Beith Ha'Shittah means House the Acacias. The *shittah*, or acacia, comes from *shotet*, a scourge because of the scourging thorns.

Tsererah (Tsererath), or Zererah, is found only here in Scripture. It is debated where the root comes from. Three possibilities are *tsar*, a hard pebble or flint, or an unused root

meaning to pierce or puncture, or a word meaning bound. Abarim says, "...to a Hebrew audience it would probably have sounded like Bound. The word צררת [*tsarar*] occurs with that precise meaning in Exodus 12:34."

Abel Meholah means Meadow of Dancing or Stream of Dancing.

Tabbath means either Extension, Renowned, or Perpetual.

²³ And the men of Israel gathered together from Naphtali, Asher, and all Manasseh, and pursued the Midianites.

Rather: *vayitsaaq ish Yisrael min naphtali u-min asher u-min kal m'nasheh vayirdphu akhare midyan* – "And cried man Israel from Naphtali, and from Asher, and from all Manasseh. And pursued after Midian." The meaning is that now that the advantage has been gained, a general cry of alarm went out for the men of these tribes to come and assist in the battle.

The people responded, and Israel chased Midian. It is the same groups, minus Zebulun, who were called in Judges 6 –

"And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, who also gathered behind him. He also sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali; and they came up to meet them." Judges 6:35

Therefore, it may be that these men had been dismissed from the battle but had simply not left yet, waiting to watch what happened. It said they returned to their tents in verse 7:8, so that is likely.

As for Zebulun, their tribal inheritance was not far away and so they may have headed home due to its close proximity. Even if Zebulun had people represented, it may simply be that their name, Glorious Dwelling Place, does not fit the typology and so they are omitted from the narrative.

Naphtali means My Wrestlings.

Asher means Happy or Blessed.

Manasseh means To Forget and From a Debt.

²⁴ Then Gideon sent messengers throughout all the mountains of Ephraim,

u-malakhim shalakh gidon b'kal har ephrayim – “And messengers sent Gideon in all Mount Ephraim.” Until this point, there was no call for Ephraim to join in the battle. However, with the enemy fleeing, there was a need for them to be cut off as they fled. Saying Mount Ephraim either indicates the mountains of Ephraim in general, or the name Mount Ephraim stands for the tribe.

The name Ephraim means Twice Fruitful and Ashes.

As for the call, the messengers were...

²⁴ (con't) saying, “Come down against the Midianites, and seize from them the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan.”

lemor r'du liqrath midyan v'likhdu lahem eth ha'mayim ad beith barah v'eth ha'yarden – “to say, ‘Descend to meet Midian and seize to them the waters until Beth Barah and the Jordan.’” The meaning of “the waters” is unsure. Ellicott thinks it is “the watershed of the hills of Ephraim into the Jordan.” Some think it is a wadi that flows into the Jordan. It could mean that it is saying something like “the Jordan as far as Beth Barah.”

No matter what, Beth Barah is only mentioned twice in Scripture, both times in this verse. Some believe it is the same as Bethabara found in John 1:28. Abarim states the following about it –

“To a Hebrew audience, the name Beth-barah would have meant something like House of Cleanness or House Of Food or even House Of Covenant Making.

Still, for a meaning of the name Beth-barah, both NOBSE Study Bible Name List and Jones' Dictionary of Old Testament Proper Names read Place Of The Ford. BDB Theological Dictionary offers its signature prudent question mark, and the equation with the imaginary name בית עברה, which BDB translates with Place Of Ford.”

The Jordan means The Descender.

²⁴ (con't) Then all the men of Ephraim gathered together and seized the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan.

The words confirm Ephraim's response to the call: *vayitsaeq kal ish ephrayim vayilkdu eth ha'yamim ad beith barah va'eth ha'yarden* – "And cried all man Ephraim, and seized the waters until Beth Barah and the Jordan."

²⁵ And they captured two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb.

vayilkdu shene sare midyan eth orev v'eth zaeu – "And seized two princes Midian, Oreb and Zeev." As there is no article before princes, it signifies there are other leaders in Midian. They will be identified in Chapter 8. But these two are singled out here in the narrative as they face their demise.

Oreb signifies a raven (*orev*), coming from the same root as *erev*, meaning evening. The connection to darkness is obvious. That comes from *arav*, to become dark, and that is identical to *arav* to give or take in pledge. Oreb means Raven. The main idea associated with ravens in Scripture, apart from their obvious dark color, is that of eating.

Zeeb means Wolf, coming from an unused root meaning to be yellow. As for the wolf in Scripture, it is a devourer and a scatterer, at least at this time. During the millennium, such will no longer be the case (Isaiah 11:6 & 65:25).

²⁵ (con't) They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they killed at the winepress of Zeeb.

vayahargu eth orev b'tsur orev v'eth zaeu har'gu b'yeqev zaeu – "And killed Oreb in Rock Oreb, and Zeeb killed in Wine-vat Zeeb." The names are derived from the event. There doesn't seem to be any need to say that these guys were seized, taken somewhere else, and killed. Rather, by saying they were killed in the rock and in the wine vat, it appears that they were hiding in those places, they were seized, and they were killed. Lastly, we read...

²⁵ (fin) They pursued Midian and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side of the Jordan.

v'yirdphu el midyan v'rosh orev u-zaeu heviru el gidon meever layarden – "And pursued unto Midian and head Oreb and Zeeb brought unto Gideon from side to the Jordan." This would explain why they cut their heads off. The men found them, executed them, and continued to pursue the enemy unto the land of Midian, which is across the Jordan, starting down around the area of the Dead Sea.

Carrying heads would be much less cumbersome than dead bodies. The heads would be sufficient to confirm they had died in battle. Once they had completed their campaign, they then returned from that side of the Jordan to where Gideon was.

*Who is fearful and afraid
Whose heart is failing at the sight
The word of the Lord has not been obeyed
He asks you to trust, no matter what the plight*

*Let us trust in this and go forth confidently
That our destiny is secure through what He has done
Innumerable people gathered around the glassy sea
Forgiven and redeemed through the work of the Son*

*The forces arrayed against us
Will all be swept away
Through our faith in Jesus
We are again right with God; oh, Glorious Day*

II. Pictures of Christ

Judges 7 continues the pattern of showing the inferiority of the law and its inability to save. Rather, it is a detriment to a right and proper relationship with God. Obviously, the law was given to Israel as a means of establishing a relationship between the Lord and His people.

However, that was only so far as it pointed to their need for the coming of their Messiah. Ultimately, the law never brought Israel into a proper relationship with the Lord. Rather, it only highlights sin in fallen man.

The account in Judges 7, once again typologically points to the great work of Jesus Christ, fulfilling the law and bringing about restoration through His completed work.

Verse 1 began by naming Jerubbaal, Let Baal Strive. It is Jesus who strove against the law and prevailed. By stating the name in this manner at the outset, it gives prominence to this point. It is from that starting point that the narrative then continues. It immediately identified Jerubbaal as Gideon, Cutter.

Gideon comes from *gada*, to cut off. As was previously seen, just as Deborah anticipated the New Testament, coming from *diathéké*, a covenant or testament, which is a feminine noun, Gideon anticipates the *euaggelion*, or Gospel, meaning the Good News.

As noted, Jesus is the one who strove with the law. Jesus is also the ultimate meaning behind the gospel –

“I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you ... that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.” 1 Corinthians 15:1, 3, and 4

He, meaning His work which defines Him as the Messiah, is the gospel. Jerubbaal (Gideon) and those with him then encamped above the Spring Harod, Trembling. Their location meant that the camp of Midian (Place of Judgment) was north of them by “hill the Moreh.”

The north, *tsaphon*, is the hidden side because the north receives less light in the northern hemisphere during the fall and winter. As we have seen, the hill (*givah*) finds its typological fulfillment in Gabbatha, being etymologically connected to it.

It is where Jesus placed Himself under the rule of Rome, submitting to their authority, which led to His cross. Hill the Moreh has a dual meaning, Hill the Teacher and Hill the Early Rain. Christ is the Teacher of God’s law as well as the Fulfiller of it. The significance is that the law is hidden in Him so that He has authority in the place of judgment.

Along with this is Hill of the Early Rain. As was seen in Part V, James ties the coming of the early and latter rains to the coming of the Lord. Thus, this passage is anticipating events yet ahead in the redemptive narrative when the Lord returns to judge the world.

Verse 2 mentions that there were too many men that had come for battle. Thus, the number needed to be paired down lest Israel assume that they had won the battle. Therefore, those who were fearful and trembling were told to depart.

The word translated as trembling was the source of naming it Spring Harod. Those who were trembly were told while using a jussive (a sort of indirect command), “He shall depart and flit from Mount Gilead.” Mount Gilead (*har gilad*) signifies a large but centralized group of people (*har*) of The Perpetual Fountain.

Gilead has consistently represented the eternal presence of the Spirit. This is perfectly reflected in the words of Hebrews 10 concerning those who are not of faith and who turn back –

“For yet a little while,
And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.
³⁸ Now the just shall live by faith;
But if *anyone* draws back,
My soul has no pleasure in him.” Hebrews 10:37, 38

Remembering that Hebrews is an epistle particularly directed to the end times Jews, after the church age, the symbolism is perfectly clear. The use of the jussive is as an indirect command: “If you are not of faith, you shall depart and flit from the Perpetual Fountain.”

The next words of Hebrews 10 give a sense of their state. The author is speaking to believers but then contrasts it with unbelievers –

“But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.” Hebrews 10:39

Interestingly, the number who are not of faith are said to be twenty-two thousand, roughly two-thirds of the number of men prepared for battle. Without being dogmatic, it certainly appears that this is pointing to the Jews who will perish (without the Perpetual Fountain) during the tribulation period –

“‘And it shall come to pass in all the land,’
Says the LORD,
‘*That* two-thirds in it shall be cut off *and* die,
But *one*-third shall be left in it:
⁹ I will bring the *one*-third through the fire,
Will refine them as silver is refined,
And test them as gold is tested.
They will call on My name,
And I will answer them.
I will say, “This *is* My people”;
And each one will say, ‘The LORD *is* my God.’” Zechariah 13:8, 9

Of those that remained (verses 3 & 4), the Lord noted that there were still too many for the battle. Thus, they were to go down to the water and be refined. It is the same word, *tsaraph*, just used to describe those who are refined in Zechariah 13:9.

Verse 5 brought in the interesting words about lapping like a dog. Unlike every other commentary on this verse, I explained that the focus is not on how the lapping is conducted but on which animal did the lapping, the dog. The dog consistently anticipates Gentiles in Scripture.

Those who are like the Gentiles during the church age will lap up the water (the word, Christ, the Spirit, etc.), meaning by faith, they are those who will engage in the battle. The others who crouched were to be excluded.

The excluded ones anticipate those who haven't departed, but they are not those who are fully committed. Unlike the Gentiles and those like them, these may be further refined, but they will not engage in the battle.

As a side note: If you have restrained from owning a dog to this point, you must by now see every reason to go adopt one, or ten.

Verses 6 & 7 noted that three hundred men lapped water and that they would save Gideon and prevail over Midian. Three hundred is a multiple of 3 and 10. Ten signifies that nothing is wanting and the whole cycle is complete. Three signifies Divine Perfection. But more, as noted, Bullinger says of 3 –

“The number three, therefore, must be taken as the number of Divine fulness. It signifies and represents the Holy Spirit as taking of the things of Christ and making them real and solid in our experience. It is only by the Spirit that we realise spiritual things. Without Him and His gracious operation, all is surface work: all is what a plane figure is to a solid.”

The numbers perfectly fit with what one would expect in the final spiritual battle being played out during the tribulation period. Further, the Greek letter Tau, a cross, represents the number 300. It is a clear New Testament note that Christ's cross, which is the basis of the gospel, is what is being pictured here.

From the cross comes salvation and prevailing over the Place of Judgment. The gospel (Gideon) and the three hundred (the cross/Christ's work) will win the battle.

Remember that the odds between the two sides were four hundred fifty to one. The number is derived from 5, 9, and 10. Five is the number of grace. Nine is the number of finality or judgment. Ten signifies that nothing is wanting and the whole cycle is complete. It is a perfect match to what will transpire.

Verses 9 & 10 noted the victory was won, but if Gideon wasn't convinced, he should go down with Purah his servant. Purah means either Fruitful or Branch, but in the sense of Honor, Beauty, Glory, etc.

Actually, either definition can reflect what the New Testament says about the gospel. It is both Fruitful (Romans 7:4, etc.) and Glorious (2 Corinthians 4:4, etc.). The close etymological connection between the words is probably purposeful. It asks us to consider both the fruitfulness and glory of the gospel's effect in the end times.

Once Gideon and his troops were near the camp, it made a note about Midian, Amalek, and the people of the east lying in the valley. Midian, Place of Judgment, is the main force. It speaks of the tribulation period that Israel will someday endure.

Amalek, the People Who Wring Off, are those disconnected from the body (meaning the body among whom God is present) and who strive to disconnect the body.

The *b'ne qedem*, or "sons East," signifies those who continue to cling to the law, annulled in the past through Christ's work, simply because they cannot let go of it. Being as numerous as locusts means that they seemed endless in number. This is then set in contrast to the cross and the gospel. There is an actual battle ahead for Israel, but there is a spiritual battle that must be won for them to prevail as well.

Also, the number of camels was noted as being an incredible number, even beyond counting. The word comes from the verb *gamal*, to deal fully or adequately with. Thus, it can mean to wean, repay, require, reward, ripen, and so forth. It speaks of the treatment the world will receive due to its rejection of Christ.

Verse 13 detailed the dream of the man in the camp of Midian. A round loaf or cake of barley bread turned through the camp of Midian, destroying it. As noted, barley is the lesser, or more inconsequential, grain. It is also the grain of hairy ears. Hair signifies an awareness, especially that of sin.

The gospel is considered inconsequential to those who do not accept it. It is also that which properly identifies and deals with the awareness of sin. The law only highlights sin, but apart from Christ, it cannot deal with it.

The connection of the word *haphak*, turn, between the turning of the barley bread and the turning of the sword (*kherev*, the law) in Genesis 3:24 was noted, and it is not without significance. The law is what keeps man from returning to fellowship with God. The gospel is what terminates the law and allows man to return to that marvelous state—

“So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword [*ha’kherev*: the sword / the law] which turned [*ha’mithhapeketh*: the turning] every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.”
-Genesis 3:24

Verse 14 directly equated the turning barley bread (*zoth bilti*: this except) to the *kherev*, sword, of Gideon. Again, it is a perfect representation of Christ’s fulfillment of the law, which establishes the gospel (Gideon).

Think of Genesis 3:24! Think of Christ’s work! Consider the marvel of what is being pictured! Think of those who reject the gospel. They will be destroyed through their rejection of Jesus. It is all about Jesus!

Verse 15, a marvelous verse, includes anyone who is dissecting the typology of this passage right in its words. “And was according to hearing Gideon account the dream and its fracture, and he worshiped.”

The word *shavar* signifies a breaking, a fracture, a crushing, etc. In this case, the dream was given, but its meaning was closed up. We have been included in the telling of the dream. However, the other man was able to cause a fracture in the words, thus exposing the meaning. Hence, it signifies a solution or interpretation of the dream.

But, as we have seen, the dream has more than the surface meaning. Therefore, we are included in the fracture of the dream. Someday, Israel will pay heed, and they too will understand what is being said.

Verse 16 noted the shophars, pitchers, and torches. The shophar is for the call to battle. The pitchers, normally used for water, were to conceal the torches. The torches were to

reveal the light. The three could not be more exactly described than what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4. Listen and think of this passage from Judges –

“But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴ whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. ⁵ For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord [the blowing of the shopphars], and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus’ sake. ⁶ For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ [the torches]. ⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels [the pitchers], that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.” 2 Corinthians 4:3-7

In Gideon (the gospel) and his three hundred (the cross/Christ’s work) deploying these three things, the enemy will find its destruction. At the time they are employed, it says in verse 19 that it was “head the watch, the middle.”

It would have been at the time that Midian was least prepared for such a battle. This clearly speaks of the world during the tribulation period. The division into three companies, which was stated several times, refers to the Divine Perfection of the event and the Divine Fulness of the Spirit in causing the work of Christ to be realized, as noted by Bullinger earlier.

As for the employment of the shopphars and torches, it was specific, “And strengthened in hand left in the torches, and in hand their right the shopphars to blowing.” It could have simply said, “They held the torches and blew the trumpets.” But it didn’t in order to specifically reveal typology.

The left side refers to the north, or darker side, in Scripture. The word *semol*, or left, comes from *simlah*, a wrapper or mantle. Hence, the left is the hidden side. It is like saying, “And strengthened in the hidden hand, the torches.” Thus, the focus is on the torches.

The left hand pictures Christ in His humanity covering His deity. The light of the gospel is seen in the Person of Christ. As Paul noted earlier, “to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6).

The right is the position of power. The blasting of the shopphar, the heralding of the gospel, is what is seen. With that also came the cry, “Sword to Yehovah and to Gideon.”

The meaning of “to” is “of.” The call is of Lord’s sword, meaning the fulfillment of the law by Christ and the gospel. The two are united as one, just as 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4 proclaims.

Verse 21, which opened our verses today, showed the contrast between the army of Gideon and that of Midian: and standing / and running, and blasting / and shouting, and shattering / and fleeing.

Despite the seeming odds, with the Lord behind the gospel, the world cannot prevail but will find absolute defeat, even to the point where it will destroy itself. This is seen in Yehovah’s setting a sword (*kherev*: the law] between a man and his friend within the camp. Without Jesus, the law can only bring death.

As for the names of the locations that were fled to, each of them is either used only once or this is the first time it is seen in Scripture. Therefore, it is probable that they were named based on these events.

Thus, in an attempt to explain the typology, I submit House of Acacias (meaning House of Scourges) describes the effects rendered upon the enemy. Toward Zererah (Bound) signifies the coming state of those who reject the gospel. At the final judgment, they will be bound forever in the Lake of Fire.

The border of Meadow (or Stream) of Dancing signifies the state of those victorious in the battle. Dances are used to describe joy, most often after a battle. Being by Tabbath (Perpetual) is the eternal state where either side will find itself.

Verse 23 mentioned the crying out and pursuing of Israel (He Strives with God) by Naphtali (My Wrestlings and signifying the work of Christ to secure salvation), Asher (Blessed because of the work of Christ), and Manasseh (To Forget/From a Debt signifying Christ who forgets sins, having paid the sin debt).

These went forth pursuing Midian, Place of Judgment, having been declared not guilty because of Christ. As we saw, Zebulun was notably missing. Those of Israel who survive the tribulation will enter into the millennium. They will not be translated directly to heaven.

Verse 24 detailed the call of Ephraim (Twice Fruitful/Ashes). It speaks of the continued salvation of both Jews and Gentiles during the tribulation because of the afflictions of

Christ. They pursued Midian until Beth Barah (House of Covenant) and the Jordan (the Descender).

Whether this is referring to the negative effects of Midian rejecting Christ or the positive effects of Israel accepting Christ, the result is the same. There is one New Covenant and one Jesus. Those who are in Him will be saved, and those who reject Him will be lost. As it is Israel seizing the waters, I would go with the latter.

It speaks of the coming destruction of all who reject Jesus. That would follow with the words of verse 25. The two princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb, were captured and killed. Being two, they provide a contrast and yet a confirmation. Oreb, Raven, ultimately comes from *arav*, to take in pledge. Zeev, Wolf, signifies those who devour.

It speaks of those who have tried to obtain the pledge of the Spirit without Christ and those who devour the flock. They contrast, and yet they confirm the totality of those who are separated from God. These were able to overcome such through their faith in Christ, just as Revelation says will come about.

Being killed at the rock of Oreb is set in contrast to having life in the Rock of Christ. One is a false hope. The other is the true Hope. Being killed at the winepress of Zeeb also provides a contrast. There is the overflowing vat given by the Lord (Proverbs 3:10) or the vat of punishment for rejecting Him (Joel 3:13).

The final words of the chapter noted the heads being carried back to Gideon on the other side of the Jordan. It is a note of the victory over these two as seen elsewhere in Scripture. The enemy is defeated, and the battle is complete.

Judges 7 is not the end of Gideon's time as the judge of Israel. Chapter 8 is long and detailed. But Judges 7 is an integral part of what is typologically anticipated in the future. In studying and understanding typology, many errors in theology, such as Israel's covenant relationship with God, are cleared up.

The Lord's promises to Israel are absolutely sure to come about. This includes being brought into the New Covenant and enjoying all the blessings and privileges promised to them in the prophets. That time is ahead, but probably not far ahead.

The world is primed for self-destruction. But what good is knowing this if the word cannot be trusted? If God's word is not eternal and decided once and for all time, there is absolutely no point in trusting Him or bothering with His word.

What a sad state to be in. "Jesus saved me! Hooray! But He might take it back. Therefore, my salvation is up to me." That is where Israel is right now. They don't trust the Lord and they don't trust His word. Thus, they are stuck in a place where there is no faith, no hope, and no confidence except in themselves.

Let us learn the lesson of Scripture by understanding the lesson of Israel. God has been, and He will be, faithful to His unfaithful people. That includes you. Look to Israel and be confident that He will (not maybe!) carry you through to a good end. Thank God for His faithfulness in the giving of His Son. Yes, thank God for Jesus Christ our Lord.

Closing Verse: *"The wolf and the lamb shall feed together,
The lion shall eat straw like the ox,
And dust shall be the serpent's food.
They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,"
Says the LORD."* Isaiah 65:25

Next Week: Judges 8:1-12 *More battling to be done, so the word does tell, but the outcome will be great...* (Gideon, Judge of Israel, Part VIII) (25th Judges sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

(Gideon, Judge of Israel, Part VII)

And every man all around the camp in his place stood
And the whole army ran and cried out and fled. Sayonara
-----for good.

When the three hundred blew the trumpets
The LORD set every man's sword against his companion
-----throughout the whole camp, felicity was shot
And the army fled to Beth Acacia, toward Zererah
As far as the border of Abel Meholah, by Tabbath

And the men of Israel gathered together, not just to see the sights
From Naphtali, Asher, and all Manasseh, and pursued
-----the Midianites

Then Gideon sent messengers
Throughout all the mountains of Ephraim, saying
“Come down against the Midianites, and seize from them
-----the watering places
As far as Beth Barah and the Jordan, so he was conveying

Then all the men of Ephraim gathered together and seized
The watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan
----- doing as Gideon pleased

And they captured two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb
They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they killed at
-----Zeeb’s winepress
They pursued Midian and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb
To Gideon on the other side of the Jordan, to show off their success

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 8:1-12 (GIDEON, JUDGE OF ISRAEL, PART VIII)

The reason for the battle that took place in Judges 6 was to take the burden off Israel after their time of oppression under Midian. Leading up to the battle, the children of Israel had done evil in the eyes of Yehovah. Therefore, the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years (Judges 6:1).

The people of Israel were, therefore, hidden in caves and strongholds (Judges 6:2) because Midian would come against Israel and plunder them, leaving nothing in their wake (Judges 6:3-5).

The reason for all of their affliction was the evil they were doing in the eyes of the Lord. As was seen, this is a prophetic type of what is to come upon Israel during the tribulation period. It was only when their power was totally shattered that they finally cried out to the Lord (Judges 6:6).

The Lord sent a messenger to rebuke and remind them of their past, which they had completely forgotten. Instead, they ignored the voice of the Lord (Judges 6:7-10). Finally, Gideon was selected as the judge, and the process of delivering Israel began.

Text Verse: *“For yet a very little while and the indignation will cease, as will My anger in their destruction.”* ²⁶ *And the LORD of hosts will stir up a scourge for him like the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb; as His rod was on the sea, so will He lift it up in the manner of Egypt.”* Isaiah 10:25, 26

As today’s verses indicate, the arrogance of Ephraim is seen. The point of the Lord choosing Gideon was because it was the Lord who was to obtain the glory for the victory in battle, not Israel. That was explicitly stated by the Lord in Judges 7:2.

To select Ephraim to gain the victory over the foes, the greater of the two tribes would stand as the head of the battle. Even if it was only three hundred men led by someone from Ephraim, it would have been more notable for them than three hundred from Manasseh, much less the weakest clan of Manasseh (Judges 6:15).

Therefore, the Lord gaining the glory would be, at least in part, diminished. When we read the Bible, we must look at everything that is going on and continually ask ourselves,

“Why have things been orchestrated as they are? What is the Lord doing, and why is He doing it in a particular way?”

In contemplating such things, we can more clearly understand how jealously He protects His glory. The Lord, having done what He did through Jesus, only makes sense if Jesus is Yehovah incarnate. The Lord Himself, through the work of Jesus Christ, is what is being highlighted in Scripture.

Our participation, whether as part of Israel or part of the church, is for us to see the work of the Lord, to rejoice in it, and to glorify Him for it. Let the glory of the Lord always be considered as you walk before Him in this life you have been given.

This marvelous truth is to be considered as we read His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Vintage of Abiezer (verses 1-3)

The words of Chapter 7 ended with –

“Then Gideon sent messengers throughout all the mountains of Ephraim, saying, “Come down against the Midianites, and seize from them the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan.” Then all the men of Ephraim gathered together and seized the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan. ²⁵ And they captured two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they killed at the winepress of Zeeb. They pursued Midian and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side of the Jordan.” Judges 7:24, 25

Remembering that, Chapter 8 begins with seemingly contradictory words...

¹ Now the men of Ephraim said to him, “Why have you done this to us

vayomeru elav ish ephrayim mah ha’davar ha’zeh asitha lanu – “And said unto him man Ephraim, ‘What the word, the this, done to us?’” From the outset there is an obvious sense of anger in the words. Ephraim is bent out of shape at their treatment at the hand of Gideon. The specific reason is next stated by them...

^{1 (con’t)} by not calling us when you went to fight with the Midianites?”

l'bilti q'roth lanu ki halakhta l'hilakhem b'midyan – “To except calling to us when went to fight in Midian.” It said at the end of Chapter 7 that Gideon sent messengers throughout Mount Ephraim to engage in the battle against Midian. However, this isn't what they are arguing about.

Rather, they got the leftovers of the battle, as Midian was already fleeing away. They were called to be a mop-up crew to ensure total defeat of those in retreat. They weren't called to participate in the larger battle where the glory of victory was gained. Therefore...

¹ (con't) **And they reprimanded him sharply.**

The words are highly emphatic: *v'rivun ito b'khazeqah* – “And quarreled (surely) with him in vehemence.” The attitude of Ephraim has its roots in the past. A good summary of where their arrogance is derived from is given by the Pulpit Commentary –

“It is possible that the transfer of the birthright from Manasseh to Ephraim (Genesis 48:13-19) may have produced some estrangement between the tribes. It is also possible that Ephraim, in view of their great tribal power, and the distinction conferred upon them by the judgeship of Joshua the son of Nun (Numbers 13:8), and the possession of his grave (Joshua 24:30), may have grown haughty and domineering, and perhaps more disposed to rest upon their former glories than to embark in fresh undertakings. Anyhow Gideon did not consult them, nor ask their aid, in the first instance. Now that the war had been so successful, the men of Ephraim were much displeased at not having been consulted.”

Remember that Gideon is from Manasseh. Therefore, the tribe with the greater blessing, Ephraim, is upbraiding the leader who has come from the less-favored tribe, Manasseh.

Ephraim's position among the tribes, their size, their history of being preeminent in blessing and battle, etc., all came together, resulting in a haughty feeling that they deserved more share in the glory of the battle than they had received.

As for the names, Ephraim means Twice Fruitful and Ashes. Midian means Place of Judgment.

Concerning Ephraim's chiding of Gideon, this same hauteur will cost them greatly in Chapter 12. For now, instead of fighting over the matter, Gideon yields to their protestations by acknowledging Ephraim's greatness...

² So he said to them, "What have I done now in comparison with you?"

vayomer alehem meh asithi atah kakhem – "And said, 'What done now like you?' In order to mollify the fit of pique that had welled up in Ephraim, Gideon subordinates himself, and thus his tribe, to his younger brother by asking a question in a comparative manner. The actual comparison comes in the next words...

² (con't) *Is not the gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?*

halo tov ol'loth ephrayim mibsir aviezer – "Not grape-gleanings Ephraim from vintage Abiezer?" Here is a new word, *oleloth*. It is insufficiently translated by many as gleanings or gleanings. Rather, it is a particular type of gleanings, that of grapes. Being a noun in the plural construct, it should be rendered grape-gleanings. To get the sense of the word, Isaiah 17 provides clarity –

"Yet gleanings grapes [*oleloth*] will be left in it,
Like the shaking of an olive tree,
Two *or* three olives at the top of the uppermost bough,
Four *or* five in its most fruitful branches,"
Says the LORD God of Israel." Isaiah 17:6

The word is derived from *alal*, to effect thoroughly. As such, it can indicate maltreatment of another, mocking, etc. In the case of such gleanings, a person goes through the grapes at harvest time. In order to get the most out of his harvest, he will cut all that he can as he goes over the grapes. The reason for this is stated in the law –

"When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean [*alal*] it afterward; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. ²² And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this thing." Deuteronomy 24:21, 22

By law, there was not to be a second passing through (a gleanings) of the grapes. To do so would deprive those who were in need and who relied on these gleanings to merely survive.

Gideon is saying that the gleaning of Ephraim, this second passing through the meager remaining grapes, is greater than the vintage, or first cutting of the grapes, of Manasseh.

This may be a general statement of Gideon, like “You are so much greater than us that what we harvest each year is a pittance compared to what the poorest in your clan are left to eat.” If this is his intent, he will explain how in his coming words.

However, this is more likely a comparison to the battle itself, as in, “We may have initiated the battle, but what we did was incomparable to what you accomplished in the battle.”

The name Abiezer means Father of Help. As for what Gideon is conveying, his next words speak of the battle and the great achievement wrought by Ephraim...

³ God has delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb.

b’yedkhem nathan elohim eth sare midyan eth orev v’zaev – “In your hand gave God princes Midian, Oreb and Zeeb.” This explains the great accomplishment that outshone the deeds of Gideon, who cannot take credit for having dispersed the Midianite camp.

Rather, he simply did as instructed and the Lord brought about the victory. Gideon is humbly placing the deeds of Ephraim ahead of his effort, subordinating his clan below Ephraim who received the greater blessing from Jacob.

Oreb means Raven. Zeeb means Wolf. Continuing, he says...

³ (con’t) And what was I able to do in comparison with you?”

u-mah yakhol’ti asoth kakhem – “And what was I able to do like you?” In essence, his words say – “Gideon led the original charge of the battle against Midian (the first passing through of the vineyard), but you (YOU!) captured and beheaded the two princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb (the gleaning of the grapes). You then pursued the battle even as far as Midian itself. What did I do in comparison to you?” With that, the hoped-for response is realized...

³ (con’t) Then their anger toward him subsided when he said that.

Rather: *az raphtah rukham mealav b'dabero ha'davar ha'zeh* – “Then relaxed their spirit from upon him in his speaking the word, the this.” The word *ruakh* means wind, spirit, and breath. They all are united in thought.

There is the spirit which expresses the state of the emotion. There is the breath which is the spirit animated into substance. And there is the wind which is the motion of the breath as it passes through the nostrils of the men. One can think of someone fuming and the heavy breathing that results.

Any of the three words would suffice in the translation, but the spirit is the basis of the other two. Gideon, through his statement, was able to soothe the indignation of Ephraim. The substance of these first three verses is well reflected in the words of Proverbs 15:1 –

“A soft answer turns away wrath,
But a harsh word stirs up anger.

²The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly,
But the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness.”

The whole thought is summed up well by John Lange –

“The vain tribe, which only smarted at the thought that an insignificant member of Manasseh should reap greater glory than Ephraim, is quieted when this person himself disclaims the glory. Vanity that prides itself on seeming merits, is always contracted. The Ephraimites do not understand the modesty of Gideon, which, in denying, as it were, his own real merits, necessarily pours the contempt of irony on their pretended deserts. But Gideon’s object is gained. They allow themselves to be pacified, and go home to bask themselves in the sunshine of their achievements. Gideon, for his part, teaches that victory alone does not suffice to save a people; but that he is the real hero who is truly humble, and for the sake of peace overcomes himself. To conquer, he must know how to bend.”

*Who is fearful and unwilling to help?
When the Lord has already provided the victory
They will cry in anguish, from yelp to yelp
When Gideon punishes those who are contradictory*

*Pain and shame lie ahead for those of Succoth
When Gideon teaches them with thorns and flails*

*No more will they boastfully gloat
Instead, they will be remembered for their epic fails*

*And for the men of Penuel
For them, bad times lie ahead
A tough lesson is coming, and things won't be swell
When the men wind up nothing but dead*

II. Seeking Succor from Succoth (verses 4-9)

⁴ When Gideon came to the Jordan,

The whole verse is one of motion: *vayavo gidon ha'yardenah* – “And came, Gideon, the Jordan-ward.” The Jordan means The Descender. Gideon means Cutter. Gideon is coming toward and arriving at the Descender...

⁴ (con't) he and the three hundred men who *were* with him crossed over, exhausted but still in pursuit.

The action and intensity continue: *over hu u-shlosh meoth ha'ish asher ito ayephim v'rodphim* – “crossing over, he and three hundred the man who with him, wearied and pursuing.” The Latin Vulgate completely botches the thought –

“he crossed him with the three hundred men who were with him, and who fled because of weariness and could not pursue him.”

It doesn't at all say they couldn't pursue. Rather, they were completely exhausted, and yet they continued the pursuit. They began their pursuit in the dead of night and just kept going.

The word used to describe them, *ayeph*, signifies languid. It thus is to be wearied or faint. It is the same word used to describe Esau when he sold his birthright –

“Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he *was* weary [*ayeph*]. ³⁰ And Esau said to Jacob, “Please feed me with that same red *stew*, for I *am* weary [*ayeph*].” Therefore his name was called Edom.” Genesis 25:29, 30

It is because of their wearied state that the next words are detailed...

⁵ Then he said to the men of Succoth, “Please give loaves of bread to the people who follow me,

The translation is correct, but the Hebrew is more expressive: *vayomer l’anshe sukoth tenu na kik’roth lekhem la’am asher b’raglay* – Literally: “And said to men Succoth, ‘Give, pray, circles bread to the people who in my feet.’” Gideon is looking to revitalize his men with bread. This is all he has asked for, and it would be a common courtesy to oblige, especially for fellow Israelites in their state.

Succoth means Tabernacles. Gideon next explains his request...

^{5 (con’t)} for they are exhausted, and I am pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian.”

He emphatically states what is going on: *ki ayephim hem v’anokhi rodeph akhare zevakh v’tsalmuna malkhe midyan* – “For wearied, they, and I, I pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings Midian.” Gideon doesn’t go beyond the request for bread, such as enlisting fighting men, asking for intel on troop size or direction, or any other such thing. He simply notes the men are wearied as they pursue the enemies of Israel.

Zebah is the same as *zebakh*, a sacrifice. It means Sacrifice. The NAS Concordance says Zalmunna comes from the same as *tselem*, an image. The *na* at the end would then refer to *nuah*, to move, waver, tremble, quiver, etc. It gives the sense of motion.

Others say it is derived from *tsele* and *mana* – shade and to withhold. Therefore, the name may mean Moving Image or something like Denied Shade, Deprived of Shade, or Shade Has Been Denied. Without explanation, Ellicott says Shadow of an Exile.

As for the word *tselem*, image, it is the word used in Genesis 1 when God created man –

“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image [*b’tselmenu*], according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” ²⁷ So God created man in His *own* image [*b’tsalmo*]; in the image [*b’tselem*] of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

-Genesis 1:26, 27

This word is also used as a prophetic type of Christ when Bezalel was selected to build the tabernacle in Exodus –

“Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ²‘See, I have called by name Bezalel [*b’tselel*] the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. ³ And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all *manner of* workmanship, ⁴ to design artistic works, to work in gold, in silver, in bronze, ⁵ in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all *manner of* workmanship.’” Exodus 31:1-5

Bezalel was selected by the Lord to oversee the construction of the tabernacle that anticipated, in every detail, the “last Adam,” the very “image [*tselem*] of the invisible God” [Colossians 1:15 – as seen in the Modern Hebrew New Testament].

As for Gideon, with his simple request stated, a surprising response is provided...

⁶ And the leaders of Succoth said, “Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand,

Rather: *vayomer sare sukoth ha’kaph zebakh v’tsalmuna atah b’yadekha* – “And said princes Succoth, ‘The palm Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand?’” First, the verb “said” is singular. Therefore, either one person speaks for them or, more likely, they speak with a united voice.

Next, of the forty-plus translations I referred to, the only two that accurately translated the word as palm were a couple of Catholic Bibles. Though similar in meaning, the hand signifies power and/or authority. The palm (and sole) signifies possession and/or the state of something.

The men of Succoth are saying that the state of these two kings, because of the authority they possess, is not in Gideon’s hand (under his authority). As such, they question why it is...

^{6 (con’t)} that we should give bread to your army?”

There may be a dual meaning here that forms a pun: *ki niten litsvaakha lakhem* – “for giving to your army bread.” Without the vowel points, the word *lakhem*, or bread, is identical in spelling to *lakhem*, war.

Therefore, they could be making a play on the thought. “Why should we give your army bread so that you can wage war.” If Gideon’s army is defeated, there will be retribution upon those who aided the warriors.

It is, however, an inexcusable excuse, peevish and cowardly. First, how on earth would a retreating army even know that their pursuers stopped and received bread? And more, these are fellow Israelites. If Gideon doesn't succeed, Succoth will continue to be oppressed by Midian anyway.

It is Israel who cried out to the Lord for relief. He has provided the chance of obtaining it through Gideon, and yet they are unwilling to assist. Therefore...

⁷ So Gideon said, “For this cause, when the LORD has delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand,

vayomer gidon lakhen b'theth Yehovah eth zebakh v'eth tsalmuna b'yadi – “And said, Gideon, ‘Therefore, in giving, Yehovah, Zebah and Zalmunna in my hand...” Gideon asserts, with all assurance, that the battle is won. Rather than wasting his time and energy with what he intends to do to these princes, he defers their punishment. But it is coming...

^{7 (con't)} then I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers!”

Though nobody translates it this way, this is the most probable meaning: *v'dashti eth b'sarkhem eth qotse ha'midbar v'eth ha'barqanim* – “And thresh your flesh with thorns the wilderness and with the flails.” Here is a word found only in this passage, now and in verse 16, *barqanim*.

It is so obscure that the Greek translation punts and simply says, “I tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness, and the Barkenim.”

The word comes from the noun *baraq*, lightning. That then comes from the verb *baraq* to flash, but in the sense of casting forth. It isn't the light that is the flash, but the action. Most translations say briars. To justify this, Strong's says, “perhaps as burning brightly.” In other words, when lit, thorns burn brightly.

That makes no sense. The only other suggestion is threshing sledges. To justify that, BDB says, “furnished with sharp (glittering) stones.” Neither of these satisfies.

However, the CG translation (fortunately for your understanding) does what the others fail to do. Rather than what is intended, the other options focus on the idea of the light aspect of lightning, not the action.

However, the CG translation insightfully uses the casting forth aspect of a flail. It is a rod connected to another rod by loops so that when the rod is cast forward by the arm, the smaller rod, the flail, picks up immense speed and thwacks down on the grain, threshing it. To confirm this most astute translation, we turn to Isaiah –

“For the black cummin is not threshed with a threshing sledge,
Nor is a cartwheel rolled over the cummin;
But the black cummin is beaten out with a stick,
And the cummin with a rod.” Isaiah 28:27

The rod, in this case, would include a flail. In using this implement, the person will increase his productivity without wearing himself out in the process. For best happy, and for more shrewd commentaries on obscure or mistranslated words, be sure to continue attending the Superior Word.

As for the promised pending punishment, it is delayed until the enemy is eliminated. It will make what comes upon these princes all the more poignantly painful. The narrative continues...

⁸Then he went up from there to Penuel and spoke to them in the same way.

vayaal misham penuel vaydaber alehem kazoth – “And ascended from there, Penuel, and spoke unto them according to this.” Penuel is translated as Face of God, but this must be more exactly explained. The word comes from *panah* (to turn) and *el* (God). The word *paneh* (or pl: *panim*) comes from this and signifies face(s).

The idea of Penuel is of action – He Turns to God, or emphatically, Turn to God! It speaks in the sense of a relationship.

^{8 (con’t)} And the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered.

vayaanu oto anshe penuel kaasher anu anshe sukoth – “And answered him, men Penuel, according to which answered men Succoth.” In other words, they completely rejected his appeal for bread, ignoring any sense of familial relationship with him and opting to stay in the good graces of Midian. Therefore...

⁹So he also spoke to the men of Penuel, saying, “When I come back in peace, I will tear down this tower!”

vayomer gam l'anshe penuel l'mor b'shuvi b'shalom etots eth ha'migdal hazeh – “And said, also to men Penuel, saying, ‘In returning in peace, breaking down the tower, the this.’” It may be that these men were in the tower when Gideon arrived, securing themselves there from the fleeing Midianites.

When Gideon arrived, he called out to them for bread, but they refused, thinking that they were secure in their tower and didn't need Gideon's assistance. Therefore, Gideon promised to return and destroy the object of their confidence. With that, the narrative turns to the objects of Gideon's attention...

*Another surprise awaits Midian
Another defeat awaits her kings
This is the Lord's power working through Gideon
And for it, Israel's heart sings*

*Who can doubt that the Lord led the battle
Victory despite such overwhelming odds
The shout of war and swords as they rattle
So much for Midian's false trust in their gods*

*Through the Lord is victory and life
He is the One who guided every step of Gideon
Until was ended the time of strife
Until was defeated the vast army of Midian*

III. He Took the Two Kings of Midian (verses 10-12)

¹⁰ Now Zebah and Zalmunna were at Karkor, and their armies with them, about fifteen thousand,

Rather: *v'zebakh v'tsalmuna ba'qarqor u'makhanehem imam ka'khamesheth asar eleph* – “And Zebah and Zalmunna in the Karkor, and their camps with them according to five ten thousand.” The name Karkor is variously defined as Foundation, Pounded Down, Even Ground, etc.

The word is identical in spelling to *qarqar* which is found in Numbers 24:17 where it signifies to shatter. As such, some define it as Destruction instead of Pounded Down.

There is another interpretation, though. As Karkor is not mentioned elsewhere, some suggest that it signifies rest. Not a place, but as what happens in the location. This is based on what it says in the next verse.

As for the number, it is a multiple of fifteen and ten (multiplied). Of fifteen, Bullinger says –

“...being a multiple of five, partakes of the significance of that number, also of the number three with which it is combined, 3×5 . Five is, as we have seen, the number of grace, and three is the number of divine perfection. Fifteen, therefore, specially refers to acts wrought by the energy of Divine grace. Deity is seen in it, for the two Hebrew letters which express it are y, Yod (10), and h, Hey (5). These spell the ineffable Name of hy, Jah, who is the fountain of all grace. The number fifteen is thus made up, by addition, $10 + 5$; but as the Jews would not, by the constant use of these two letters, profane the sacred name, two other letters were arbitrarily used for this number, and a different and artificial combination was thus formed—+ (Teth) = 9, and w (Vau) = 6. The number $9 + 6$ would thus represent the number fifteen, but without any significance. Fifteen being $8 + 7$ as well as 3×5 , it may also include a reference to resurrection, as being a special mark of the energy of Divine grace issuing in glory.”

Ten: “Completeness of order, marking the entire round of anything, is, therefore, the ever-present signification of the number ten. It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete.”

There, in this location, their camps totaled fifteen thousand. They were...

¹⁰ (con't) **all who were left of all the army of the people of the East;**

kol ha'notarim mikol makhaneh b'ne qedem – “All the remainings from all camp sons East.” As seen several times, the *b'ne qedem* or “sons East” are the various people groups gathered together as one camp.

It seems like a sizable army, but when it says “the remainings,” it brings the matter to its true light...

¹⁰ (con't) **for one hundred and twenty thousand men who drew the sword had fallen.**

v'ha'nophlim meah v'esrim eleph ish sholeph kharev – “And the fallers hundred and twenty thousand man drawing sword.” The meaning is that only one-ninth of the army had survived to this point.

As for the number, it is derived from one hundred and twenty multiplied by tens. Bullinger says one hundred and twenty –

“...is made up of three forties (3x40=120). Applied to time therefore it signifies a divinely appointed period of probation.”

The odds are still heavily against Gideon, but he has the initiative. Therefore, he continues onward against the oppressors of Israel...

¹¹ Then Gideon went up by the road of those who dwell in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah;

vayaal gidon derek ha'sh'khune ba'ohalim miqedem l'novakh v'yagbehah – “And ascended Gideon way the dwellers in tents from east to Nobah and Jogbehah.” The point is that they circled around to the east of these cities in an area where tent dwellers lived.

As such, it would be totally unexpected that war would come from a place where people were peacefully tending flocks. It was also the direction in which Midian was fleeing.

Nobah, or Novakh, is seen for the third and last time in Scripture. It means To Bark or Barking. It was located in the territory of Manasseh. Jogbehah is seen for the second and last time. It means Lofty or Exalted. It was in the territory of Gad.

Because of the surprising direction of Gideon's attack, the camp of Midian was completely unprepared...

^{11 (cont)} and he attacked the army while the camp felt secure.

vayak eth ha'makhaneh v'ha'makhaneh haya betakh – “And struck the camp, and the camp was confidence.” The word *betakh* is a noun signifying security or confidence. The men were confident, assuming that they had escaped far enough from near the Hill of Moreh, the original place of attack. Thus, they stopped and rested to lick their wounds.

They could rest and ponder how things could have gone so poorly, and yet, they would be comfortable enough to set their swords down and prepare for their return home. It is at such a time that Gideon and his men struck the camp.

¹² When Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued them;

vayanusu zebakh v'tsalmuna vayirdoph akharehem – “And fled Zebah and Zalmuna. And pursued after them.” Because of another engagement with the enemy in such an unexpected manner and place, the kings of Midian simply got up and fled. However...

^{12 (fin)} and he took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and routed the whole army.

It doesn't say that they killed all of the camp. They may have been routed, but that isn't what is conveyed: *vayilkod eth shene malkhe midyan eth zebakh va'eth tsalmuna v'khal ha'makhaneh hekherid* – “And seized two kings Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and all the camp terrified.”

What it seems to mean is that Gideon struck the camp, and the kings fled, so Gideon and his men simply left the battle to seize them. The rest of the Midianites were so terrified that they didn't even bother to come after Gideon and his army, despite the huge numerical superiority.

They had been defeated, their leaders were goners, and they refrained from everything but shaking in their sandals and cowering in their tents.

With that, the verses for today are ended. Despite the odds, Gideon knew that with any number, when the Lord is involved, victory is guaranteed. And more, even without proper provision to sustain him and his men, he was willing to expend himself in pursuit of the enemy.

However, the Lord provided for them. They were able to continue and even prevail. This will be true for us if the Lord is behind what we are engaged in. This doesn't mean that we should run off willy-nilly, assuming that what we intend to do will be a success.

Gideon had the word of the Lord to assure him of what he was to do. We have the word of the Lord as well. We don't want to ever go beyond what is written, but we can have confidence in what we are doing if it is in accord with His word.

Let us trust in this and not falter in our determination to do what is right and what is expected of us. In the end, through life or death, we will be carried through to the promised end set before us in the word. So why worry in the meantime?

Until your time arrives, take heed to yourselves and to the doctrine you possess. Continue in them, and you will do well. Have the confidence of Gideon that you will prevail. The Lord is with you, so you will.

Closing Verse: *“For You have broken the yoke of his burden
And the staff of his shoulder,
The rod of his oppressor,
As in the day of Midian.” Isaiah 9:4*

Next Week: Judges 8:13-21 *You wanna have fun, just listen for a spell, so get in line...*
(Gideon, Judge of Israel, Part IX) (26th Judges sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Gideon, Judge of Israel, Part VIII

Now the men of Ephraim said to him
Why have you done this to us by not calling us
When you went to fight with the Midianites?
And they reprimanded him sharply, putting up a fuss

So he said to them, “What have I done now
In comparison with you?
Is not the gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim
Better than the vintage of Abiezer? Isn’t it true?

God has delivered into your hands
The princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb, how about that?
And what was I able to do in comparison with you?
Then their anger toward him subsided when he said that

When Gideon came to the Jordan, he and the three hundred men
Who were with him crossed over, exhausted but still in pursuit

Then he said to the men of Succoth
“Please give loaves of bread to the people who follow me
-----our hunger is acute

For they are exhausted, and I am pursuing
Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian, this is what I am doing

And the leaders of Succoth said
Speaking a bit too smarmy
“Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand
That we should give bread to your army?

So Gideon said, “For this cause
When the LORD has delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand
Then I will tear your flesh
With the thorns of the wilderness and with briers
-----so I have planned!

Then he went up from there to Penuel
And spoke to them in the same way
And the men of Penuel answered him
As the men of Succoth had answered that day

So he also spoke to the men of Penuel, saying
“When I come back in peace, I will tear down this tower!
-----So to you I am relaying

Now Zebah and Zalmunna were at Karkor
And their armies with them, about fifteen thousand men
All who were left of all the army of the people of the East
For one hundred and twenty thousand men who drew the sword
-----had fallen

Then Gideon went up by the road
Not taking a sightseeing tour
Of those who dwell in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah
And he attacked the army while the camp felt secure

When Zebah and Zalmunna fled

He pursued them, intending them harm
And he took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna
And routed the whole army

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 8:13-21

(GIDEON, JUDGE OF ISRAEL, PART IX)

It has been pointed out in previous sermons that what will happen during the tribulation period in a literal sense, meaning the destruction and carnage on the planet, is only part of the story. At the same time, there is a spiritual battle that will be waged.

The timeline set by Paul in his epistles reveals the sequence of events that will take place. The rapture will occur, the antichrist will be revealed, and after that, a peace deal will be signed that will initiate the seven years of tribulation.

The timeline is clearly and unambiguously set in 2 Thessalonians 2. It was alluded to in Judges 6:1-10 in the opening narrative leading to Gideon as the judge of Israel. But the contents of Judges aren't focused on the literal carnage of the world to come. Rather, they are focused on the spiritual battle that Israel will face.

Why would that be the case? The reason is that the church age is complete. The promises in the Old Testament concerning the millennium may include Gentiles who come to faith during the tribulation period, but it is Israel to whom the promises belong.

Everything else that occurs during the tribulation period is to bring Israel to this understanding. That will lead to their acceptance of the gospel and national salvation.

Text Verse: *"I will plant them in their land,
And no longer shall they be pulled up
From the land I have given them,"
Says the LORD your God." Amos 9:15*

Israel is already back in the land. They have been planted, and they shall never again be pulled up. But their nation today is one of wickedness and unfaithfulness to the Lord. That, like the wickedness throughout the earth, must be dealt with before the time of harmony promised in the prophets comes.

What occurs outside of Israel, especially in what happens in the world in relation to Israel, is what is needed to bring them to the point of their anticipated conversion. Once that momentous event occurs, the Lord can personally intervene and bring about the end of the tribulation.

This is seen in Revelation 19, but it is also hinted at in Matthew 24. There, Jesus notes that there will be such great tribulation on the earth that if the days were not cut short, “no flesh would be saved.” However, He then says, “but for the elect’s sake, those days will be shortened.”

The spiritual battle that occurs during this time of tribulation is what Judges continues to deal with. It’s all to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. My Brothers, the Sons of My Mother (verses 13-21)

¹³ Then Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle, from the Ascent of Heres.

To start the verses today we come to a very complicated set of words that are widely rendered: *vayashav gidon ben yoash min ha’milkhamah milmaaleh hekhrreres* – “And returned Gideon, son Joash, from the battle, from to ascent the sun (or, Ascent the Sun).”

Some translations say: before the sun was up; at the going up of the sun; from the cliff of the sun; by way of Heres pass; down from the battle of Ares; etc. This is referring to what was presented in the previous sermon from last week –

“Now Zebah and Zalmunna *were* at Karkor, and their armies with them, about fifteen thousand, all who were left of all the army of the people of the East; for one hundred and twenty thousand men who drew the sword had fallen. ¹¹ Then Gideon went up by the road of those who dwell in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah; and he attacked the army while the camp felt secure. ¹² When Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued them; and he took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and routed the whole army.”

Gideon went around the army and came at the camp in an unexpected manner. During the battle, the two kings fled. The natural way for them to flee would be east, the direction they had originally come from. Gideon pursued them and took them. Now, after capturing the kings, it says, “from to ascent the sun.” The meaning is that he turned back (from) the point (to) which he had been in pursuit of them.

He was heading in the direction of the sun's ascent (east). Eventually, he captured the kings. Now, to return to his land, he turned back from this direction. This appears to be a purposeful way of saying "east" without using that descriptor.

It is also notable that the full name, Gideon son of Joash, is used. The last time it was seen was in Judges 7:14 at the time of the dream –

"Then his companion answered and said, 'This *is* nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp.'"

Since then, the name Gideon has been stated nine times. Now, his full name is again stated as a confirmation that the task of defeating the enemy has been completed. Joash means Yehovah Has Bestowed.

¹⁴ And he caught a young man of the men of Succoth and interrogated him;

vayilkad naar meanshe sukkoth vayishalehu – "And took youth from men Sukkoth and asked him." The words seem unnecessarily detailed, but they are needed to set the framework for the next clause. That this is a *naar*, or youth, may seem surprising based on the next words...

¹⁴ (con't) and he wrote down for him the leaders of Succoth and its elders, seventy-seven men.

vayiktov elav eth sare sukoth v'et zegeneha shivim v'shivah ish – "and wrote unto him princes Sukkoth and her elders, seventy and seven man." It is unknown if this youth being able to write was some unusual exception, or if it was a common trait. Either way, he was able to write, and he was intelligent enough to know the names of the princes of the city as well as its elders.

This was a means of ensuring that none of the leadership would escape justice for refusing to assist Gideon's men with the simple provision of bread. Because of their pusillanimous refusal to help...

¹⁵ Then he came to the men of Succoth and said, "Here are Zebah and Zalmunna, about whom you ridiculed me,

va'yavo el anshe sukkoth vayomer hineh zevakh v'tsalmuna asher kheraptem oti – “And came unto men Sukkoth, and said, ‘Behold! Zebah and Zalmunna, whom you reproached me.’” Presenting the kings would have been a rather shocking display. Gideon could have simply killed the two kings and left them to rot.

He could have taken their heads off and brought them back. But that would leave the question open as to how they died. However, with the two kings standing right there, this was an absolute confirmation that there was total victory over Midian. The kings had been spared for this very purpose. And more, he turns these leaders’ words back on their own heads...

¹⁵ (con’t) **saying, ‘Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand,**

lemor ha’kaph zevakh v’tsalmuna atah b’yadkha – “to say, ‘The palm Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand.’” In verse 6, using a singular verb indicating unanimity of speech, the leaders of Sukkoth said, “The palm Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand?” Gideon reminds them of their words, repeating them back to the men. It is a letter for letter response. And he continues...

¹⁵ (con’t) **that we should give bread to your weary men?’”**

ki niten laanashekha hay’ephim lahem – “for giving to your men, the wearied, bread.” Gideon does a masterful changeup to their words –

“for giving to your army bread.”

“for giving to your men, the wearied, bread.”

Gideon had first said to them, “For wearied, they, and I, I pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings Midian.” The leaders had responded, essentially saying, “Why would we give your puny army bread when you are pursuing a massive force of Midianites?”

Here, he uses the same word for wearied, noting that they were, in fact, wearied. And yet, they prevailed over the massive force of Midian and the palm (the authority they possessed) of Zebah and Zalmunna was now in his hand (under his authority). As this was so, it is certain that a little city couldn’t stand against him...

¹⁶ **And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth.**

vayiqakh eth ziqne ha'ir v'eth qotse ha'midbar v'eth ha'barqanim vayoda bahem eth anshe sukoth – “And took elders the city, and thorns the wilderness and the flails. And knowing in them men Sukkoth.” This is just what he promised to do to them – “And thresh your flesh with thorns the wilderness and with the flails.”

The meaning is that using briars and flails, he threshed the flesh of the elders. By this, the men of Sukkoth as a whole were instructed in what the punishment for cowardice was. In this verse is the second and last use of *barqanim*, flails, in Scripture.

What this seems to mean is that they completely covered the elders with thorns of the wilderness and then repeatedly hit them with the flails, thus threshing their flesh in the process. It would have been an exceedingly painful lesson – stingy hot and ouchy.

As a side note, some commentators think there is an error in the text. Instead of the word *yada*, to know, they think it should read threshed. The two are very close in spelling if structured in a particular way –

וידע – and knowing

וידש – and threshed

Some manuscripts agree with this, but the change is unnecessary. The elders were punished and the rest of the men of the city learned the penalty for being cowards. Gideon next moves on to another spineless group...

¹⁷ Then he tore down the tower of Penuel and killed the men of the city.

v'eth Migdal penuel natats vayaharog eth anshe ha'ir – “And tower Penuel tore down. And killed men the city.” In verse 9, Gideon promised to come back and tear down the tower of Penuel. Nothing was said of killing the men of the city. And so it may have been that in tearing down the tower, the men were killed. They fled there for refuge and in its collapse, those inside were crushed with it.

The location of the city was strategically important enough that later, in the time of King Jeroboam, it was built again (1 Kings 12:25). Next, with his promise to the lily-livered inhabitants fulfilled, Gideon will turn his hand of justice upon those who had so severely afflicted Israel...

¹⁸ And he said to Zebah and Zalmunna, “What kind of men *were they* whom you killed at Tabor?”

The words are curious: *vayomer el zevakh v'el tsalmuna ephoh ha'anashim asher haragtem b'thavor* – “And said unto Zebah and unto Zalmunna, “Where-here the men whom you killed in Tabor?”” First, there is no antecedent to what is said. Neither Tabor nor the killing of these men has been mentioned during the account of Gideon. The last time Tabor was noted was in the battle of Judges 4 where it was called Mount Tabor.

Second, Gideon uses a rare word, *ephoh*. It comes from *ay*, where, and *poh*, here. Thus, it literally means where-here. It is always translated elsewhere as “where.” However, he may be using it as a general interrogative concerning a particular aspect of the men. If so, a similar combination in English might be “whaddabout.”

If it means only “where,” then it may be a taunt to the kings. “Where the men you killed in Tabor?” Something similar would then be the taunting of the Rabshakeh who stood at the walls of Jerusalem –

“Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, ‘The LORD will deliver us.’ Has any one of the gods of the nations delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria? ¹⁹ Where *are* the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where *are* the gods of Sepharvaim? Indeed, have they delivered Samaria from my hand? ²⁰ Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?” Isaiah 36:18-20

Tabor comes from *barar*, to purify. It means Purity or Purified.

¹⁸ (con’t) **So they answered, “As you *are*, so *were* they; each one resembled the son of a king.”**

vayomru kamokha kh'mohem ekhad k'toar b'ne ha'melekh – “And said according to you, according to them: one according to form, sons the king.” Without hearing their intonation, it’s hard to be dogmatic concerning their intent.

If Gideon was taunting them in the previous clause, which seems likely, then they are either trying to pacify him through flattery, acknowledging his princely state, or they are returning a taunt as in, “They were all like the king’s sons, but now they’re all dead.”

Either way, it is of note that they use the term “the king” when there was no king in Israel. One would think they would say “a king.” Next, Gideon’s response seals their fate...

¹⁹ Then he said, “They *were* my brothers, the sons of my mother. As the LORD lives, if you had let them live, I would not kill you.”

The words are filled with life and force: *vayomar akhai b’ne imi hem khai Yehovah lu hakhayitem otham lo haragti etkhem* – “And said, ‘My brothers, sons my mother, them! Life Yehovah! Would you lived them, not I killed you.”

Not only were they sons of his father, but they were sons of the same mother. Thus, they had the closest bond of all between them. As Gideon is the nearest blood relative, from a legal sense it was his duty to execute these kings. However, he defers to his son to accomplish the deed. Thus, it would be a demeaning act added to their demise...

²⁰ And he said to Jether his firstborn, “Rise, kill them!”

Gideon speaks with imperatives: *vayomer l’yether b’koro qum harog otham* – “And said to Jether, his firstborn, ‘Arise! Kill them!’” Deferring to his young son to accomplish the task would be considered a disgraceful death for these kings almost comparable to having a woman kill them.

It would also be instructional for the son as well as a mark of prestige that he could carry with him later in life, being the one who finished off these great kings.

As for the name Jether, it comes from *yathar*, to remain, make plenteous, preserve, etc. It can mean Preeminence, Excellence, Abundance, Remnant, Preserved, etc.

^{20 (con’t)} But the youth would not draw his sword; for he was afraid, because he *was* still a youth.

v’lo shalaph ha’naar kharbo ki yare ki odenu naar – “And no drew the youth his sword. For afraid. For he still youth.” Despite being granted the honor of the kill, he was still young and fearful about such an act. Thus, he would have to learn through sight rather than action.

²¹ So Zebah and Zalmunna said, “Rise yourself, and kill us; for as a man *is*, so is his strength.”

The word “said” is singular and the kings use their own imperatives: *vayomer zevakh v’tsalmuna qum atah uphga banu ki kaish g’vurato* – “And said Zebah and Zalmunna, ‘Arise, you, and impinge in us. For according to the man, his strength.’”

These two know they are goners. If Gideon pressed the boy, insisting that he kill them, it wouldn't simply be a disgrace. It is painfully evident that Jether had never done such a thing. Therefore, it would also be evidently painful for them that he had learned to kill through them. Therefore, they taunt Gideon into dispatching them to the pit. Therefore...

^{21 (con't)} **So Gideon arose and killed Zebah and Zalmunna,**

Hooray! *vayaqum gidon vayaharog eth zevakh v'eth tsalmuna* – “And rises, Gideon, and kills Zebah and Zalmunna.” With a little taunting to spur him on, Gideon determines not to press the child but to give the men what they asked for. Once the job was finished, it says...

^{21 (fin)} **and took the crescent ornaments that were on their camels' necks.**

vayiqakh eth ha'saharonim b'tsaveri g'malehem – “And takes the round-ornaments which in necks their camels.” Here is a new and rare word, *saharon*. It is a round ornament, coming from the noun *sahar*, roundness. The word crescent has to be inferred, something that may or may not be the case.

Some tie it to the Arabic moon-god Sahar, but that still would signify roundness. Because many translations say crescent, and because it can be tied to the moon, an attempt to align this with the Islamic crescent is made. The decorations on camels' necks both go all the way around the neck and, at times, hang like crescents.

The reason for taking the ornaments is to be found in verse 26 where it is noted that these are gold, ornaments fitting for the donkeys of kings.

*Let us rejoice in God, we are no longer defiled
We have come to the One who purifies us
We were objects of His wrath, but upon us, He has now smiled
He is our Lord, He is our God, He is Jesus!*

*We missed Him on the first time around
Since then, we have remained defiled
Upon us, His wrath grew hot; it did abound
But finally, upon us, He has smiled*

Our circumcision is not just in the flesh, but in the heart

*We have accepted the gospel, entering new life
Today, we have made a glorious new start
We have reconciliation after many years of strife*

II. Pictures of Christ

Judges 8 began with Ephraim angrily arguing with Gideon for not having been consulted concerning the battle against Midian. Ephraim (Twice Fruitful/Ashes), as has been seen, refers to the effect of the work of Christ among both Jews and Gentiles.

However, Gideon (the Gospel) had not called them for the initial battle against Midian (Place of Judgment, signifying the tribulation). This was upsetting to them.

To appease them (verse 2), he reminded them that their gleaning of grapes (the harvest of judgment) was better than the vintage of Abiezer (Father of Help). In validation of this, he referred to the fact that God gave into their hand Oreb and Zeeb (verse 3).

Remember in Chapter 7 there was a reference to those who tried to obtain the pledge of the Spirit without Christ and those who devour the flock. These were able to overcome through their faith in Christ, just as Revelation says will happen.

Gideon essentially said to them, “I, the Gospel, led the original charge of the battle against Midian (the first passing through of the vineyard), but you (YOU!) captured and beheaded the two princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb (the gleaning of the grapes). You then pursued the battle even as far as Midian itself. What did I do in comparison to you?”

It is a way of saying that just because the gospel goes forth, it doesn’t necessarily save everyone who hears it. Rather, only those who appropriate it by faith are saved.

The Father of Help, the giving of the Spirit accompanied by the gospel, is only effective for people when it is combined with their faith. It is a confirmation of the doctrine known as synergism. God does His part, but He does not force salvation on man. Rather, man must do his part by accepting Jesus and His work by faith.

With that, Ephraim was content and “relaxed their spirit.” This introductory account was given to clear up several points of theology that people still do not properly grasp.

Verse 4 noted that Gideon and the three hundred with him came to the Jordan, the Descender. As was seen, three hundred is a multiple of 3 and 10. Three signifies Divine Perfection. Ten signifies that nothing is wanting and the whole cycle is complete. But more, as noted, Bullinger says of 3 –

“The number three, therefore, must be taken as the number of Divine fulness. It signifies and represents the Holy Spirit as taking of the things of Christ and making them real and solid in our experience. It is only by the Spirit that we realise spiritual things. Without Him and His gracious operation, all is surface work: all is what a plane figure is to a solid.”

The numbers perfectly fit with what one would expect in the final spiritual battle being played out during the tribulation period. Further, as has been seen, the Greek letter Tau, a cross, represents the number 300. It is a clear note that Christ’s cross, which is the basis of the gospel, is what is being pictured here.

From it comes salvation and prevailing over the Place of Judgment. The gospel (Gideon) and the three hundred (the cross/Christ’s work) cross the Descender (Christ) and arrive at Succoth, Tabernacles. This would reflect the state of Israel (on the other side of the Jordan) not yet converted as a nation.

Succoth reflects their state as individuals. The tent refers to the human in his physical body. That is explicitly stated by both Paul and Peter. Peter says –

“For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. ¹³ Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding *you*, ¹⁴ knowing that shortly I *must* put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me.

¹⁵ Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.” 2 Peter 1:12-15

At Succoth (verse 5), Gideon asks for circles of bread. The elders and leaders deny his request. They are not willing to accept the gospel’s power to deliver them from Midian, the tribulation, by assisting in its propagation. This, in spite of Gideon’s claim that he is pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna – Sacrifice and Moving Image.

The names are referring to the law. Sacrifice is the Levitical sacrificial system set up for atonement. Moving Image is an exact description of the rites of the tabernacle/temple

under the law. The Modern Hebrew New Testament confirms the use of the words below –

“For the law, having a shadow [*tse/*] of the good things to come, *and* not the very image [*tselem*] of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.” Hebrews 10:1

“And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.” Hebrews 10:11-13

These two, Zebah and Zalmunna are called “kings of Midian.” That is exactly what they will be in Israel. The reestablished law will be ruled during the tribulation by the sacrificial and temple system.

Remember that the word image, *tselem*, means that the tabernacle and temple were only shadows of the coming Christ, who is the very “image [*tselem*] of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15 – confirmed by the Modern Hebrew New Testament). Israel rejected His coming, they removed themselves from fellowship with the Lord, were exiled, and will suffer through the tribulation.

The leaders of Succoth, picturing the leaders of those in Israel dwelling in their human tents, turn Gideon (the gospel) down – “The palm (possession of) Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand (under your authority)?” They refused the message of Christ and failed to assist in the presentation of the gospel.

Because of their refusal, Gideon says (verse 7) that they will be punished, carefully describing what the punishment would be. He then (verse 8) ascended to Penuel (Turn to God!) and they answer similarly. There is a refusal to turn to God through the gospel, even while Midian (the tribulation) continues to exist.

With that (verse 9), Gideon promises that when he comes back in peace, he will tear down their tower. The tower, Migdal, comes from *gadal*, a verb that gives the sense of advancing, growing, boasting, magnifying, etc.

Israel will continue boasting in their state under the law, stubbornly refusing to acknowledge the gospel as long as their tower, the temple and its rites, are there for them to revel in.

Verse 10 noted that Zebah and Zalmunna were at Karkor, Destruction, with their army of fifteen thousand of the *b'ne qedem*, or sons East. They anticipate those who continue to cling to the law, annulled in the past through Christ's work, simply because they cannot let go of it. A full description of such is carefully detailed in Hebrews.

The name Karkor (*qarqor*), where Midian is encamped, gives an ominous foreboding of their demise. The name is identical to the word used in Numbers 24:17 –

“I see Him, but not now;
I behold Him, but not near;
A Star shall come out of Jacob;
A Scepter shall rise out of Israel,
And batter the brow of Moab,
And destroy [*qarqar*] all the sons of tumult.”

The number of Midianites, fifteen thousand, is a multiple of fifteen and ten. Fifteen was explained by Bullinger as “acts wrought by the energy of Divine grace.”

Ten signifies, “Completeness of order, marking the entire round of anything ... [it] implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete.” It would be hard to find a better description of Israel's future meeting with God in Christ when the gospel finally prevails.

Still in verse 10, it noted that these fifteen thousand were all that was left out of the original one hundred and twenty thousand men who drew the sword. This is a multiple of one hundred and twenty and tens. Bullinger says one hundred and twenty –

“...is made up of three forties ($3 \times 40 = 120$). Applied to time therefore it signifies a divinely appointed period of probation.”

In Daniel 9, Israel was given a divinely appointed period of probation under the law. The final seven years of that appointed time encompasses the tribulation period. When that entire round is complete, the time will be ended.

It is at this time that Gideon (the gospel) “went up by the road of those who dwell in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah.” The east speaks of aforetime, the past. Nobah (barking) and Jogbehah (Lofty), speak of the state of the people.

Dogs bark. It is equating Israel to Gentiles. Those under law exalt themselves. Israel is being shown its true state before the Lord while under the law. However, the gospel will prevail in the battle. As it said of Gideon, “And struck the camp, and the camp was confidence.”

There is Israel, sitting in confidence smug and barking as they enter the tribulation, represented by these Midianites (Place of Judgment). But Jesus and Paul both show that the Antichrist is coming and the temple will be defiled by his presence. Israel’s confidence will be shattered and they will almost be brought to an end.

Verse 12 says at that time Zebah and Zalmunna fled. It is exactly described by Daniel –

“Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;
But in the middle of the week
He shall bring an end to sacrifice [Zebah] and offering.
And on the wing [Zalmunna] of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,
Even until the consummation, which is determined,
Is poured out on the desolate.” Daniel 9:27

Jesus explains the “wing” metaphor –

“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), ¹⁶ “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.” Matthew 24:15, 16

The gospel will not prevail until Israel realizes they have put their eggs in the wrong basket. That won’t happen until after the Antichrist has done his evil work. Sacrifice and temple worship will flee (be brought to an end) and be captured.

With that understood, verse 13 says that Gideon (Cutter, the gospel) the son of Joash (Yehovah has Bestowed) returned from battle from ascent to the sun. As noted, the wording appears to be a purposeful way of avoiding saying the words “from the east.”

In other words, that would have marred the typology. Therefore, a different way of describing the same thing was employed. The gospel is from earlier times in Israel’s history, but it will only be understood by Israel in the future.

Using the full name, Gideon son of Joash, at this time signifies the victory of the gospel that was introduced at the beginning of the narrative. The wording, when considered, is rather incredible.

Verse 14 told of taking the young man of Succoth and inquiring of him. In turn, he wrote down the names of the seventy-seven leaders and elders of Succoth. Seventy-seven is a multiple of eleven (disorder, disorganization, imperfection, and disintegration) and seven (spiritual perfection).

They represent the chaotic state of Israel before coming to Christ mixed with the spiritually perfect completion of their state. In other words, it marks the spiritual fullness of Israel's rebellion against the gospel. The time has come for the rule of the law to end. As seen earlier, being in Succoth, Tabernacles, signifies their state in humanity.

Gideon presented the ending of Sacrifice and Temple worship to them. They wouldn't give the gospel a moment of consideration through all the times of wearied toil under the law. Therefore, he inflicts upon them their promised punishment, threshing them with thorns and flails.

It is not unlike what happened to Jesus. In Matthew 27:29, a crown of thorns was placed on his head. Only after that, in Matthew 27:30 did they strike him on the head with a reed. Thus, his flesh was threshed in a similar way, meaning with thorns and rods.

It next says (verse 17) that he tore down the tower of Penuel and killed the men of the city. The place of confident boasting, representing the law, is to be torn down and those who adamantly adhere to it will be killed. Jesus alludes to this in Luke –

“But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We will not have this *man* to reign over us.’” ... “But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay *them* before me.” Luke 19:14 & 27

After this (verse 18), Gideon mockingly addresses Zebah and Zalmunna about the men who they killed at Tabor (Purified – from *barar*, to purify). It speaks of those who came to God through Christ during the tribulation period. Daniel 12, referring to this time, says–

“Many shall be purified [*barar*], made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.” Daniel 12:10

Their mocking, but surprising, response to him was, “one according to form, sons the king.” As there was no king in Israel at the time, the words are certainly given prophetically concerning those who will accept the gospel in the future. They are all likened to sons of the King. It refers to the sonship of those in Christ.

To confirm this, Gideon’s (the gospel’s) response was, “My brothers, sons my mother, them!” Each person saved by the gospel is a brother within the framework of the gospel. Their one mother is defined in Galatians 4:26, “but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.”

Those under law are in bondage and at enmity with God; those in Christ are free and sons of the King and brothers within the gospel. Because the law caused the death of these brothers, the law must be ended.

The introduction of Jether (verse 21) is brilliant. The firstborn of the gospel refers to the Jews who accepted the gospel first. The name has various meanings, such as Preeminence, Excellence, Abundance, Remnant, Preserved, etc. Each is a reflection of their state.

What does it say about the firstborn? He did not draw his sword, for he was afraid. It is the godly fear of one who possesses the grace of God mixed with a refusal to rely on the law (the *kherev*, sword), to slay the enemy. That task is left to Gideon, the gospel, to accomplish. Israel will learn that for each Jew who is saved, it is Christ’s work alone, reflected in the gospel, that prevails over the law.

Therefore, Gideon dispatched the law, the sacrifice and temple worship pictured by Zebah (Sacrifice) and Zalmunna (Moving Image). Finally, the passage ended with Gideon removing the round-ornaments off of their camel’s necks.

As seen in Chapter 7, camel comes from the verb *gamal*, to deal fully or adequately with. Thus, it can mean to wean, repay, require, reward, ripen, and so forth. The time of the law, clearly outlined in Daniel 9, is fully ripened and its end has come. It has been fully *cameled*.

Therefore, its ornamentation is stripped from its neck (*tsavar*), a word that comes from *tsur*, to confine, bind, besiege, etc. The binding of the law for Israel will be ended with the acceptance of the gospel.

Thus, with Israel's acceptance, the battle is complete. The law is ended and its burden is removed. Remember, Gideon anticipates the gospel message –

“I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you ... that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.” From 1 Corinthians 15:1, 3, and 4

He, meaning His work which defines Him as the Messiah, is the gospel. The story of Gideon's battle in Judges 8 is a marvelous tapestry detailing how it will, someday, change the status of Israel from being an enemy of the Lord to again being His people in the fullest sense of the word.

As noted at the beginning of the sermon, what is going to be played out in the world in literal events as described in Revelation are all a part of the underlying spiritual message of Israel's reconciliation with God through Jesus.

The message is inclusive of Gentiles who will be saved, but the overarching goal of the tribulation is to bring about the promises of wholeness and fellowship with God that the Old Testament promises to Israel as a nation during the millennium.

It is an incredible witness to the faithfulness of God to uphold His word, even beyond any measure that we can hope to understand. It is so hard to grasp, that a large portion of those in the church simply reject the notion of God having any future purpose for Israel at all.

Likewise, a large portion of the church continues to believe that even if Jesus saved them, they still must perform works in order to keep their salvation. Most simply do not understand what the word grace means, and they cannot trust that God is eternally faithful to the commitments He makes.

Don't be like these faithless souls. Your rewards are wholly tied up in one word – faith. Whatever you do in faith will be rewarded. Anything you do apart from faith is sin, and it will be a loss of rewards to you. The word is written. Have faith that everything it proclaims will come to pass, just as it is written.

Closing Verse: *“Make their nobles like Oreb and like Zeeb,
Yes, all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna,*

¹² *Who said, “Let us take for ourselves*

The pastures of God for a possession.” Psalm 83:11, 12

Next Week: Judges 8:22-35 *It's great and so fun, what a story to tell, better than a royal bloodline...* (Gideon, Judge of Israel, Part X) (27th Judges sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Gideon, Judge of Israel, Part IX

Then Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle
From the Ascent of Heres where the swords did rattle

And he caught a young man of the men of Succoth
And interrogated him right there and then
And he wrote down for him the leaders of Succoth and its elders
Seventy-seven men

Then he came to the men of Succoth and said
"Here are Zebah and Zalmunna, about whom you ridiculed me
-----back then
Saying, 'Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand
That we should give bread to your weary men?

And he took the elders of the city
And thorns of the wilderness and briers (this wasn't
-----going to be pretty)
And with them he taught the men of Succoth
Then he tore down the tower of Penuel and killed
-----the men of the city

And he said to Zebah and Zalmunna
"What kind of men were they whom you killed at Tabor?
So they answered, "As you are, so were they
Each one resembled the son of a king, good for tales of lore

Then he said, "They were my brothers
The sons of my mother. Yes, it's true
As the LORD lives, if you had let them live
I would not kill you

And he said to Jether his firstborn
"Rise, kill them! The order was not uncouth
But the youth would not draw his sword
For he was afraid, because he was still a youth

So Zebah and Zalmunna said, "Rise yourself, and kill us
For as a man is, so is his strength, got it, Tex?
So Gideon arose and killed Zebah and Zalmunna
And took the crescent ornaments that were on their camels' necks

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 8:22-35

(GIDEON, JUDGE OF ISRAEL, PART X)

The words of Gideon in these verses are also reflective of the great moral character of a person in American history. Gideon knew that ruling as a king was not appropriate and that the Lord alone should rule over Israel. That is a great mark of the man. He had the chance to grab and hold power, not only for himself but for his descendants after him. And yet, he turned it down.

George Washington was such a man. An excerpt from the Heritage Foundation article “The Man Who Would Not Be King” by Matthew Spalding, Ph.D. is quoted –

“As our first president, he set the precedents that define what it means to be a constitutional executive: strong and energetic, aware of the limits of authority but guarding the prerogatives of office. The vast powers of the presidency, as one Convention delegate wrote, would not have been made as great had not many of the members cast their eyes towards General Washington as president; and shaped their ideas of the powers to be given to a president by their opinions of his virtue.

“And the key ingredient in all of these things was moral character, something that Washington took very seriously and which gave to his decision-making a deeply prudential quality and to his authority an unmatched magnanimity. ‘His integrity was pure, his justice the most inflexible I have ever known, no motives of interest or consanguinity, of friendship or hatred, being able to bias his decision,’ Jefferson later observed. ‘He was, indeed, in every sense of the words, a wise, a good, and a great man.’

“It is no coincidence, then, that Washington's most important legacy comes during moments of temptation, when the lure of power was before him. Twice during the Revolution, in 1776 and again in 1777 when Congress was forced to abandon Philadelphia in the face of advancing British troops, Gen. Washington was granted virtually unlimited powers to maintain the war effort and preserve civil society, powers not unlike those assumed in an earlier era by Roman dictators. He shouldered the responsibility but gave the authority back as soon as possible.

“After the war, there were calls for Washington to claim formal political power. Indeed, seven months after the victory at Yorktown, one of his officers suggested what many thought only reasonable in the context of the 18th century: that America should

establish a monarchy and that Washington should become king. A shocked Washington immediately rejected the offer out of hand as both inappropriate and dishonorable, and demanded the topic never be raised again.”

How unlike so many today who can think of nothing but grabbing and holding onto power at any cost.

Text Verse: *“Blessed are the meek,
For they shall inherit the earth.” Matthew 5:5*

Throughout the Bible, the idea of meekness and humility in man is seen to be pleasing to the Lord. The arrogant, the proud, the haughty, the boasters, and other such people are seen as offensive to Him.

This truly reveals the greatness of God in His moral character. A god of our own making will inevitably be completely different than from how God is revealed in the Bible.

This is so foreign to our human understanding of greatness, that when Jesus came in absolute humility and submission to the will of His father, and even to those He created, the world at large rejected Him outright.

Gideon started out humble, acknowledging his insignificance, and even after doing great things, he remained humble. This is the message of the gospel as well.

It is the greatest message in the world because it is the saving message of Jesus. Nothing can be added to it without tainting it. It is simple, filled with humility in what it says about Jesus dying for our sins, and it expects a humble response that recognizes faith alone, apart from any personal merit.

Seeing the life of Gideon as a reflection of the gospel is a marvelous part of God’s superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Thus Midian Was Subdued (verses 22-28)

²² Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, “Rule over us, both you and your son, and your grandson also;

vayomru ish Yisrael el gidon m'shal banu gam atah gam binkha gam ben b'nekha – “And said man Israel unto Gideon, ‘Rule in us, also you, also your son, also son your son.” With the victory over Midian secured, the men of Israel have excitedly agreed among themselves that they desire Gideon to rule over them.

Most commentators claim that they are calling for a kingship that would begin with Gideon and extend to his progeny after him. But this is not necessarily the case. The word used is *mashal*, to rule, not *malakh*, to reign.

Solomon reigned (*malakh* – as in 1 Kings 1:35) over Israel, but he ruled (*mashal*) “over all kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt” (1 Kings 4:21). The word *mashal*, rule, is never used concerning Saul, the first king of Israel. Rather, each time it is said that he reigned (*malakh*).

There is minimal overlap between the two words because they signify two different things. Having said that, the word *malakh* is used seven times in Judges 9 concerning Gideon’s son Abimelech. These are the only uses of the word in all of Judges when referring to a person of Israel.

As for Gideon, his name means Cutter. He has thus far pictured the gospel. Now, the men of Israel have asked him to rule, saying...

²² (con’t) **for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian.”**

ki hovoshatnu miyad midyan – “for you have saved us from hand Midian.” The people ascribed the salvation to Gideon when it was the Lord who selected Gideon, encouraged him in his state of weakness, and instructed him in what to do, when to do it, and how to accomplish the task.

Midian means Place of Judgment. It has thus far been typical of the tribulation period. Gideon, the gospel, was the instrument by which the Lord gained the victory for Israel in the tribulation. As for the men now in Judges, it next says...

²³ **But Gideon said to them, “I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the LORD shall rule over you.”**

vayomer alehem gidon lo emshol ani bakhem v’lo yimshol b’ni bakhem Yehovah yimshol bakhem – “And said unto them Gideon, ‘No ruling, I, in you; and no ruling my son, in

you. Yehovah ruling in you.’” Of all of the achievements of his time as judge, this statement is the pinnacle of them all.

Gideon has deferred to the Lord, who provided the victory, to continue to be the ruler over Israel. He is turning down what almost any other person would have jumped at, knowing that such a rule by him was undeserved and would compromise the relationship that had existed between the Lord and His people.

Despite this honorable position, the very next words will lead to a blemish arising on the time of his leadership...

²⁴ Then Gideon said to them, “I would like to make a request of you,

The words contain a cohortative: *vayomer alehem gidon eshalah mikem sh’elah* – “And said unto them, Gideon, ‘I will ask from you an asking.’” It is like a personal imperative. Gideon has something he greatly desires. His words then carry the weight of “I have something I would really like you to do for me.”

It appears that this verse begins a short insert that will end in verse 27. At that time, the narrative will resume. With that thought, the insert continues with...

²⁴ (con’t) that each of you would give me the earrings from his plunder.”

It is incorrect: *utnu li ish nezem shlalo* – “Giving to me, man, earring his spoil.” He asks for each man to give an earring (sg.) from his plunder.

As for the word *nezem*, it simply signifies a ring. It may be an earring or a nose ring. The reason for the request is explained by the narrator...

²⁴ (con’t) For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.

ki nizme zahav lahem ki yishmelim hem – “For earrings gold to them, for Ishmaelites, they.” This explains why the translation is earring rather than nose ring. The earring was an identifying mark of the Ishmaelites. It is the fact that they are gold, however, that drives the request. As will be seen, he is using an earring from each man as a multiplier.

Ishmael means God Hears. Instead of calling them Midianites, who descend from Abraham by his wife Keturah, they are here called Ishmaelites who descend from

Abraham by his concubine Hagar. The interchanging of the names is necessary for typology, but it has already been seen that the terms indicate a mixture of people –

“So Judah said to his brothers, ‘What profit *is there* if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? ²⁷ Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he *is* our brother *and* our flesh.’ And his brothers listened. ²⁸ Then Midianite traders passed by; so *the brothers* pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty *shekels* of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.’” Genesis 37:26-28

As for the request, just as collecting insurance fees is a little leading to a lot, Gideon knows no one will turn down his simple request. Therefore, he will accumulate a great amount of wealth...

²⁵ **So they answered, “We will gladly give *them*.”**

The response is excited and very willing: *vayomru naton niten* – “And said, giving, will give.” The men were more than happy to oblige. Gideon had led them, there were innumerable enemies defeated, and each man’s spoil would have been great. Therefore, a single gold earring was an insignificant offering for their heroic leader.

²⁵ (con’t) **And they spread out a garment, and each man threw into it the earrings from his plunder.**

Rather: *vayipr’su eth ha’simlah vayashliku shamah ish nezem shlalo* – “And spread the garment, and cast there, man, earring his plunder.” The definite article before garment would normally speak of a particular garment, but none is specified. Probably for this reason, the Greek translation says that Gideon spread out his garment.

From there, it again refers to the earring in the singular. The sense, then, is that each man cast only one earring into the plunder. Despite this, the amount really added up...

²⁶ **Now the weight of the gold earrings that he requested was one thousand seven hundred *shekels* of gold,**

v’hi mishqal nizme ha’zahav asher shaal eleph ushba meoth zahav – “And was weight earrings the gold which asked thousand and seven hundreds gold.” This is a large amount of gold, signifying the great number of those slain. It is reckoned by scholars as around 50-75 pounds of gold.

The general thought is that each weighed about one-half a shekel and, thus there were about 3400 dead. This is incorrect. As noted, the Hebrew says, “earring his plunder.” Thus, if each man gave one earring and each collected many, then the extent of the slaughter is more strikingly realized.

As for the number, it is a multiple of 17 and 10s. Bullinger is careful to describe seventeen, saying –

Seventeen stands out very prominently as a significant number. It is not a multiple of any other number, and therefore it has no factors. Hence it is called one of the prime (or indivisible) numbers. What is more, it is the seventh in the list of the prime numbers. The series runs 1, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, etc. Thirteen, it will be noted, is also a prime number, and is therefore important; but it is the sixth of the series: hence it partakes of the significance of the number 6, and is indeed an intensified expression of it.

In like manner seventeen being the seventh of the series, it partakes of and intensifies the significance of the number seven. Indeed, it is the combination or sum of two perfect numbers—seven and ten—seven being the number of spiritual perfection, and ten of ordinal perfection.

Contrasted together the significance of these two numbers is clear; and when united in the number seventeen we have a union of their respective meanings, viz., spiritual perfection, plus ordinal perfection, or the perfection of spiritual order.

Of the number ten, Bullinger also says, “Completeness of order, marking the entire round of anything, is, therefore, the ever-present signification of the number ten. It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete.”

As for Gideon’s booty, it next says...

^{26 (con’t)} **besides the crescent ornaments, pendants, and purple robes which were on the kings of Midian, and besides the chains that were around their camels’ necks.**

l’bad min ha’saharonim v’hantipoth u-bigde ha’argaman se’al malkhe midyan u-l’bad min ha’anaqoth asher b’tsavare g’malehem – “to exception from the round-ornaments, and the drop-ornaments, and garment the purple upon kings Midian, and to exception from the necklaces which in necks their camels.”

There are two new words. The first is *netiphah*, a word coming from *nataph*, to drop or drip but also to prophecy via inspiration. Thus, it would signify a drop-ornament, meaning an eardrop or a pendant. The second is *anaq*, a necklace.

The round-ornaments were first noted in Judges 8:21. They were either round or crescent-shaped ornaments that adorned the camels' necks. The eardrops or pendants would have been worn by the men in addition to the gold earrings already noted.

The purple garments might be those of the kings and princes who were over the various tribes. Finally, the necklaces of the camels may have been to hold the round ornaments, or there may have been other chains beside them. All in all, the amount of spoil obtained by Gideon was exceptional. Next, it says...

27 Then Gideon made it into an ephod and set it up in his city, Ophrah.

vayaas oto gidon l'ephod vayatseg oto b'iro b'aphrah – “And made it, Gideon, to ephod. And placed it in his city, in Ophrah.” The “it” appears to be referring to the gold from the earrings apart from all of the items.

Depending on what commentary you read, the opinions on this act range from scathing indictment of apostasy to an acceptable dedication to the Lord, or even some sort of noble acknowledgment of the Lord's provision.

The idea of this being intended as an object of idolatry is nuts. Gideon just said, “I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the LORD shall rule over you.” That was immediately followed by his request for the earrings. And those, along with the other items, are said to be made into an ephod.

It is obvious from the immediate sequence of events that he intended that this was to be a symbolic reminder that the Lord is the Ruler over Israel. The ephod was the garment worn by the high priest as described in Exodus 28.

It is the part of the priestly garment that covers the chest in front and the upper back. It may be the part of the garments described in Revelation 1 in John's vision of the Lord Jesus –

“Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and in the midst of the seven lampstands *One* like the

Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.” Revelation 1:12, 13

This ephod is thus Gideon’s acknowledgment of the Lord’s dual role as ruler and priestly leader of the people. That is a concept not really grasped nor fully considered in Israel until a prophecy by Zechariah concerning the coming Messiah –

“Then speak to him, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, saying:
‘Behold, the Man whose name *is* the BRANCH!
From His place He shall branch out,
And He shall build the temple of the LORD;
¹³ Yes, He shall build the temple of the LORD.
He shall bear the glory,
And shall sit and rule [*mashal*] on His throne;
So He shall be a priest [consider the ephod] on His throne,
And the counsel of peace shall be between them both.’” Zechariah 6:12, 13

Ophrah means Of the Dust.

²⁷ (con’t) **And all Israel played the harlot with it there.**

v’yiznu kal Yisrael akharav sham – “And prostituted all Israel after it there.” Israel’s actions cannot be equated to Gideon’s intent though some try to link them. For example, the Lord directed Moses to make the serpent on the pole. It then saved the people who looked to it for healing.

However, despite the original intent, we later read this concerning the actions of King Hezekiah –

“He removed the high places and broke the *sacred* pillars, cut down the wooden image and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan.”
-2 Kings 18:4

Because of the people’s actions, however...

²⁷ (con’t) **It became a snare to Gideon and to his house.**

v'hi l'gidon u-l'beitho l'moqesh – “And was to Gideon, and to his house, to snare.” The *moqesh*, or snare, is translated as *skandalon* in the Greek text. That is later used in the New Testament to indicate an offense or a stumbling block, such as –

“And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense [*skandalon*: stumbling block] of the cross has ceased. ¹² I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!”

-Galatians 5:11, 12

The ephod, even if made with proper intentions, became a point of tripping up Gideon and his house.

²⁸ Thus Midian was subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted their heads no more.

vayikana midyan liphne b'ne Yisrael v'lo yasphu la'seth rosham – “And subdued Midian to faces sons Israel, and no added to lift their heads.” These words appear to be a closing bookend to the words of verse 23 which preceded the short inserted passage –

v.23 But Gideon said to them, “I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you.”

v.28 Thus Midian was subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted their heads no more.

Never again in Scripture is Midian said to come against Israel. However, in Isaiah, it notes that in the future the Midianites will return to Israel in multitudes. It is a time prophesied by Isaiah to come, not unsurprisingly, after the tribulation period –

“The multitude of camels shall cover your *land*,
The dromedaries of Midian and Ephah;
All those from Sheba shall come;
They shall bring gold and incense,
And they shall proclaim the praises of the LORD” Isaiah 60:6

With that, it next says...

²⁸ (con't) **And the country was quiet for forty years**

vatishqot ha'arets arbaim shanah – “And rested the land forty years.” It is letter for letter the same as the corresponding words found in Judges 3:11 at the time of Othniel and Judges 5:31 at the time of Deborah.

Forty is defined by Bullinger as “a period of probation, trial, and chastisement—(not judgment, like the number 9, which stands in connection with the punishment of enemies, but the chastisement of sons, and of a covenant people).”

And more, because “it relates to enlarged dominion, or to renewed or extended rule, then it does so in virtue of its factors 4 and 10.”

Four, “is the number of things that have a beginning, of things that are made, of material things, and matter itself. It is the number of material completeness. Hence it is the world number, and especially the ‘city’ number.”

Ten has already been described. With that, the next words tell us that these forty years were...

28 (con't) in the days of Gideon.

bime gidon – “in days Gideon.” The entire remaining duration of Gideon’s life was free from any conflict, from within or without.

*The Lord is your Creator and your God
To Him alone are your thanks and praises due
Throughout your life and every step you trod
The Lord alone shall rule over you*

*To place your hope and faith in man
Is a sad place of trust. It will never do
And if having confidence in yourself is your plan
Your thinking is certainly askew*

*Look to the Lord alone and accept His saving grace
In that, you can be confident in eternal happiness
Only in Him can you behold God’s face
Anything else will leave you in an eternal mess*

II. Israel Again Played the Harlot (verses 29-35)

²⁹ Then Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house.

Maybe a little more poetically: *vayelekh yerubbaal ben yoash vayeshev b'beitho* – “And walked, Jerubbaal son Joash, and sat in his house.” To walk in Scripture signifies the conduct of one’s life. To sit means to dwell, but it implies in a peaceful and content manner. Sitting also implies one who judges.

For example, Deborah sat under the palm to judge in Judges 4. Likewise, the Angel of the Lord sat under the terebinth tree in Ophrah to render a judgment in Judges 6.

Gideon, who is Jerubbaal, conducted himself to his house where he dwelt henceforth, judging Israel. Jerubbaal means Let Baal Strive. Joash means Yehovah Has Bestowed. Of him, it next says...

³⁰ Gideon had seventy sons who were his own offspring, for he had many wives.

u-l'gidon hayu shivim banim yotsei y'rekho ki nashim raboth hayu lo – “And to Gideon were seventy sons coming out his loin, for wives many were to him.” These words, and those of the next verse, are given to anticipate the coming chapter.

It should be noted that this doesn’t mean that all of his sons were born after he settled into his house. For example, his son Jether, the firstborn, was already noted. Thus, this is only a record of the seventy legitimate sons born to him. Bullinger says –

“Seventy is another combination of two of the perfect numbers, seven and ten. ... Hence 7 x 10 signifies perfect spiritual order carried out with all spiritual power and significance. Both spirit and order are greatly emphasized.”

³¹ And his concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son,

The words bear emphasis: *u-pilagsho asher bishkhem yaldah lo gam hi ben* – “And his concubine who in Shechem bore to him, also she, son.” The words of this verse are important in understanding what is coming. It just noted that Gideon had lots of legitimate sons from his legal wives.

However, here, it notes that his concubine in Shechem bore him a son. But it does so with an additional emphasis. This son is thus being introduced as a main figure into the coming narrative.

Shechem means Shoulder. However, that comes from *shakam* signifying to incline, as in inclining the shoulder to a burden. Hence, it is normally translated as to rise or start early. Abarim defines Shechem as “[Having a Sense of] Responsibility.” Of him, it next says...

³¹ (con’t) **whose name he called Abimelech.**

The translation is not correct, and it gives a completely wrong sense of what is going on: *vayasem eth shemo avimelekh* – “And he set his name: Abimelech.” There is no change in subject. Thus, it is not Gideon who gave this name.

Further, in the Bible, the way a person is given a name at birth is to say something like, “And he called [*qara*] his name Isaac.” To set a name means to give another name, like we do with a nickname.

My children and all their friends call me Skipper. But when I was born, my parents named me Emlen. On that same day, my maternal grandmother, thankfully and for a particular reason, called me Charlie. Thus, she set my name as Charlie. I set my name as Skipper for my children. Because of this, everyone but the government and the bank ignores the name my parents gave me.

As there is no change in subject, it is Abimelech who has set his name as such. Whatever his given name, it is irrelevant to the coming narrative. Abimelech means My Father is King, Father of a King, Father is King, Father Reigns, etc. It can even mean Desired Counsel. Exactly which of these is to be determined from the surrounding context.

³² **Now Gideon the son of Joash died at a good old age,**

Literally: *vayamath gidon ben yoash b’sebah tovah* – “And died, Gideon, son of Joash, in gray-hair good.” This exact expression, when referring to the death of an individual, is only used when referring to Abraham and David.

³² (con’t) **and was buried in the tomb of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.**

vayiqaver b’qever yoash aviv b’apherah avi ha ezri – “And buried in grave Joash his father, in Ophrah father the Ezrite.” This is the last time that *avi ha’ezri*, or Father the Ezrite is seen in Scripture. It means Father the Helper.

³³ So it was, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals,

v'hi ka'asher meth gidon vayashuvu b'ne Yisrael vayiznu akhare ha'b'alim – “And was according to which died Gideon, and turned sons Israel, and prostituted after the Baals.” The obvious meaning is that Israel did not do so during the life of Gideon. And yet, as soon as he died (according to which), the inner impulses of disobedience immediately took over again. As such...

³³ (con't) and made Baal-Berith their god.

It is the same word just used to set Abimelech's name: *vayasimu la'hem baal berith lelohim* – “And set to them Baal Berith to their god.” In place of Yehovah, they have set Baal Berith as their god. The name means Master of the Covenant(s). The word Covenant is singular, but Jones' Dictionary concludes that this construction is better rendered plural.

As a side note, the words can be translated as “They made a covenant with Baal to be their god.”

³⁴ Thus the children of Israel did not remember the LORD their God,

v'lo zekru b'ne Yisrael eth Yehovah elohehem – “And no remembered sons Israel Yehovah their God.” These words are far too often repeated in Scripture: Israel disobeys the Lord. The Lord sends corrective measures to punish them and turn them back to Him. Israel cries out to the Lord for deliverance. The Lord delivers them. And finally, once again, Israel turns from the Lord, completely forgetting the great deliverance He brought about. As it next says...

³⁴ (con't) who had delivered them from the hands of all their enemies on every side;

Rather: *ha'matsil otam miyad kal oyvehem misaviv* – “the Deliverer them from hand all their enemies around.” The verb, being used as a noun, shows that it was the Lord who accomplished the feat. Even if it was done through Gideon, it was by His power, His Spirit, and His choosing and determination that it came about. Further...

³⁵ nor did they show kindness to the house of Jerubbaal (Gideon)

v'lo asu khesed im beith yerubbaal gidon – “And no made mercy with house Jerubbaal, Gideon.” The word *khesed* signifies mercy, favor, kindness, lovingkindness, etc. In this case, mercy probably captures the spirit of the word because of the next clause.

Jerubbaal's house will be treated shamefully by the people. No mercy will be extended to his many sons. This will not at all be...

^{35 (fin)} **in accordance with the good he had done for Israel.**

k'kal ha'tovah asher asah im Yisrael – “According to all the goodness which he made with Israel.” Gideon had worked in goodness with Israel. Israel had worked without mercy with his house. The two thoughts set as a complete contrast –

And no made mercy with house Jerubbaal, Gideon.
According to all the goodness which he made with Israel.

Remember how the verses of this passage started out –

“Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, ‘Rule over us, both you and your son, and your grandson also.’” Gideon refused this and told them that the Lord would rule over them. In forgetting the Lord, they have turned away and also failed to remember the Lord's instrument of deliverance.

Likewise, in neglecting the Lord, we neglect the word, the simple gospel, which was the instrument the Lord used to bring us back to Himself in the first place.

*Gideon the son of Joash was finally laid to rest
But that is not the end of his story
Because of the Lord, he will be raised and blessed
Someday to walk with Him in eternal glory*

*This is the hope of the saints throughout time
That the Lord has come to restore us to God
The gospel message, ever so sublime
Is the good news to which we can applaud*

*Thank You, O God, for having sent Jesus
To bring us back to You through His shed blood
Such glorious things You have done for us*

When we are submerged 'neath the crimson flood

III. An Explanation of the Typology

The passage today has several different things going on in it, and thus it is complicated. The first thing presented is the conclusion to the narrative that ended with the slaying of Zebah and Zalmunna in the previous sermon. That includes these verses –

“Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, ‘Rule over us, both you and your son, and your grandson also; for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian.’

²³ But Gideon said to them, ‘I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the LORD shall rule over you.’” ...

“Thus Midian was subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted their heads no more. And the country was quiet for forty years in the days of Gideon.”

-Judges 8:22-23 & 28

This presents an acknowledgment that after the tribulation period, during the millennium, the Lord alone will be the ruler over Israel. For example, it says in Isaiah 40 –

“Behold, the Lord GOD shall come with a strong *hand*,
And His arm shall rule [*masha/*] for Him;
Behold, His reward *is* with Him,
And His work before Him.” Isaiah 40:10

The thought of the reward being with Jesus is repeated in the last chapter of the Bible –

“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to give to every one according to his work. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the* Beginning and *the* End, the First and the Last.” Revelation 22:12, 13

Until Israel goes through the tribulation period, the Lord is not their sole ruler, but once the gospel (Gideon) delivers Israel from the tribulation, the Lord will be in His rightful position of rule from that time on.

Between those verses, however, there was the difficult insert concerning the ephod. Simply stated, these verses demonstrate that any addition to the gospel (Gideon) taints the gospel.

Personally reaching back to the victory over the law as a source of inspiration, even if it is intended to glorify the Lord or represent His gospel, taints the gospel, which is something that is procured by faith alone.

Each of the verses points to man's effort or boasting. Thus, the final words of that section say, "And was to Gideon, and to his house, to snare." One cannot add to the gospel without tainting it. With any attempt to do so, it becomes a snare.

Gideon set up the ephod in Ophrah, Of the Dust. This means that those born during the tribulation period will still be fallen. They will need to believe and accept the untainted gospel that Christ alone atones for their sin, as has always been the case in previous dispensations. Anything else is a snare that is to be avoided.

The note of the victory over Midian and the forty years of rest during the days of Gideon is given to express the wholeness of the victory of Christ over His enemies. As long as the gospel is adhered to, there will be complete rest, and there will never again be a need for the Place of Judgment (Midian).

Verse 29 then said, "And Jerubbaal, son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house." It is a final note confirming that the Lord will sit, as promised, in the house of the Lord during the millennium.

Jerubbaal, Let Baal Strive, speaks of Jesus. The law failed to strive against Jesus. Thus, He prevailed over it. The name Joash, Yehovah Has Bestowed, is included to clearly present that Christ is the One upon whom the Lord has bestowed all that is necessary to save man.

With that stated came the final verses concerning Gideon's life after the battle. They are given as a foreshadowing of what lies ahead concerning Abimelech and the conduct of Israel during his time.

They are a necessary set of words to close out the literal history of Gideon and Israel. The next chapter, which is literal history, will then be used to reveal more typology.

As for Gideon, what a marvelous joy to see how God used him to reveal wonderful and amazing insights into the future of Israel's history. At some point, hopefully soon, the rapture will occur. After that, Israel will enter into a seemingly hopeless seven years of true misery.

But during that time, they will go to the word, test it for what it proclaims concerning Jesus, and their nightmare will be ended. They will, as a nation, sit at the head of the nations for a thousand years.

However, that will only come about through humility and obedience to the gospel, accepting that Christ is their Lord and that He alone has paid their penalty for sin.

It will happen. The book is written, and it reveals to us what we need to know about what is coming. And more, it does it in such a way that we can have absolute confidence that it is reliable and true. If you are unsure about the word, test it with an open mind.

Every bit of time and effort you put into challenging it will be rewarded with greater confidence in what it says. In the end, you will find Jesus. And in finding Jesus, you will find peace, hope, and restoration.

Closing Verse: *“And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon...”*
-Hebrews 11:32

Next Week: Judges 9:1-15 *What the heck. We’ll list the sermons, do ‘em and off we’ll check ‘em, until they are done...* (Abimelech, King of Shechem, Part I) (28th Judges sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Gideon, Judge of Israel, Part X

Then the men of Israel said to Gideon
“Rule over us, both you and your son
And your grandson also
For you have delivered us from the hand of Midian

But Gideon said to them
“I will not rule over you
Nor shall my son rule over you
The LORD shall rule over you, so He shall do

Then Gideon said to them, “I would like to make a request of you

That each of you would give me the earrings from his plunder
For they had golden earrings
Because they were Ishmaelites: cool, like Quigley Down Under

So they answered, "We will gladly give them
And they spread out a garment (maybe from Boy Wonder)
And each man threw into it
The earrings from his plunder

Now the weight of the gold earrings that he requested
Was one thousand seven hundred shekels of gold-
-----that's a lot of sheks
Besides the crescent ornaments, pendants, and purple robes which
-----were on the kings of Midian
And besides the chains that were around their camels' necks

Then Gideon made it into an ephod
And set it up in his city, Ophrah – quite a distance from Laos
And all Israel played the harlot with it there
It became a snare to Gideon and to his house

Thus Midian was subdued before the children of Israel
So that they lifted their heads no more
And the country was quiet
For forty years in the days of Gideon; a time of no war

Then Jerubbaal the son of Joash went
And dwelt in his own house, so say the archives
Gideon had seventy sons who were his own offspring
For he had many wives

And his concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son
Whose name he called Abimelech. Yes, that's rights
Now Gideon the son of Joash died at a good old age
And was buried in the tomb of Joash his father, in Ophrah
-----of the Abiezrites

So it was, as soon as Gideon was dead
That the children of Israel, every Tom and Todd

Again played the harlot with the Baals
And made Baal-Berith their god

Thus the children of Israel
Did not remember the LORD their God, they did backslide
Who had delivered them from the hands
Of all their enemies on every side

Nor did they show kindness to the house of Jerubbaal (Gideon)
In accordance with the good he had for Israel done

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 9:1-15 (ABIMELECH KING OF SHECHEM, PART I)

The words of the passage today include a parable by Jotham to the people of Shechem. He uses metaphor to convey his thoughts, comparing trees to people. Unlike today, growing up in the seventies brought interesting music to our ears.

Starting in the mid to late 60s, bands began to introduce complicated tapestries of music mixed with stories. Albums like “Tommy” and “Quadrophenia” by the Who made thematic presentations that covered entire albums.

One band, Rush, employed this style. One of their albums, “Hemispheres,” debuted in 1978 containing only four songs. Two of these songs divided into separate sections, often played separately, but one of the stand-alone songs was called “The Trees.”

The song is similar enough to what Jotham proclaims here in Judges that I immediately wondered if Rush got their inspiration for it from this passage. There is nothing to substantiate this, but it seems logical to me that Neil Peart, who wrote the lyrics, may have had some memory of Jotham’s words and formed the song from that.

I bring this up because years ago when I started to preach, I said to myself that if I ever did a sermon on Judges 9, their song would be a part of my analysis of Jotham’s parable. Well, here we are, and there you go.

Text Verse: *“But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God;
I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever.*

*⁹ I will praise You forever,
Because You have done it;
And in the presence of Your saints
I will wait on Your name, for it is good.” Psalm 52:8, 9*

John Lange says the following regarding Jotham’s parable –

“The parable belongs to the most remarkable productions of Israelitish life, not only on account of its political significance, but also for what may be called its literary character. Fable and so-called apologue are of oriental, non-Israelitish, as also non-Grecian, origin. They spring from a pantheism in which trees and animals furnished symbols for expressing the popular ideas. Although rooted in the religious vivification of nature,

their employment was nevertheless brought to maturity by the pressure of social necessities. ... They furnished the people with individual consolation against general misery. In their original appearance among the Greeks also, they fail not to exhibit this character. In the same way, Jotham speaks to the tyrants of Shechem in this popular language, which all understand. He does not speak like a prophet, for he is none, and Baal has stopped the ears of his auditors. He does not even speak of the power and mighty deeds of Jehovah, from whom his own name is derived. He speaks of “Elohim” and his retributions—of the Deity in the general sense in which the heathen also acknowledge him. He speaks altogether in their language, popularly, with popular wisdom.”

I disagree with his thoughts on such words being non-Israelitish and non-Grecian in origin. Rather, such parables are a part of the universal conscience instilled in us by God. Cultures all around the world use such thoughts, even if the form is different.

It is true that many of these cultures are pantheistic. But that is not the intent here. However, Lange is right that Jotham doesn't refer to Yehovah at all. Rather, he uses the general term for God (or gods), *elohim*. And not only that, but he does it without any preceding article to indicate a right relationship with Him.

Rather, he uses a general term that could as easily be translated as gods as it can be God. In fact, some scholars and translations use the general “gods.” The entire passage is devoid of a close and personal connection to the Lord with the exception of the name Jotham.

Let's get into it! Great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Seventy Sons of Jerubbaal (verses 1-6)

The narrative of the life of Gideon ended in the previous chapter. Only one of his many sons was named. It is the Bible's standard way of introducing a new figure into the narrative. The account closed out, saying –

“Then Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house. ³⁰ Gideon had seventy sons who were his own offspring, for he had many wives. ³¹ And his concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son, whose name he called

Abimelech. ³² Now Gideon the son of Joash died at a good old age, and was buried in the tomb of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

³³ So it was, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals, and made Baal-Berith their god. ³⁴ Thus the children of Israel did not remember the LORD their God, who had delivered them from the hands of all their enemies on every side; ³⁵ nor did they show kindness to the house of Jerubbaal (Gideon) in accordance with the good he had done for Israel.”

-Judges 8:29-35

¹ Then Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem,

vayelekh avimelekh ben yerubaal shekhemah – “And went Abimelech son Jerubbaal Shechem-ward.” The narrative picks up immediately with the one named son of those closing words. The only other named son to this point was Jether who was recorded in Judges 8:20.

Abimelech means My Father is King, Father of a King, Father is King, Father Reigns, etc. It can even mean Desired Counsel. The exact one of these is to be determined from the surrounding context.

Jerubbaal means Let Baal Strive. The name is used nine times in this chapter while the name Gideon is never used. It reminds us of the act that established his judgeship in the first place –

“But Joash said to all who stood against him, ‘Would you plead for Baal? Would you save him? Let the one who would plead for him be put to death by morning! If he *is* a god, let him plead for himself, because his altar has been torn down!’ ³² Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, ‘Let Baal plead against him, because he has torn down his altar.’” Judges 6:31, 32

Shechem is in the tribal inheritance of Ephraim. Of the name Shechem, Cambridge says, “The town lies on the watershed (1870 ft.) between the Mediterranean and the Jordan basins, hence perhaps its name, *shoulder*.”

Shechem means Shoulder. However, that comes from *shakam* signifying to incline, as inclining the shoulder to a burden. Hence, it is normally translated as to rise or start early. Abarim defines Shechem as “[Having a Sense of] Responsibility.”

Of Abimelech, it next says he went...

¹ (con't) **to his mother's brothers,**

el akhe imo – “unto brothers his mother.” This means that Abimelech went into the inheritance of Ephraim to his relatives of that tribe. He was related to them through his mother even though his father, Gideon, was of Manasseh. Next...

¹ (con't) **and spoke with them and with all the family of the house of his mother's father, saying,**

vaydaber alehem v'el kal mishpath beith avi imo l'mor – “and spoke unto them and unto all family house father his mother, to say...” It is good to remember that his name, Abimelech, was not given by his father. Rather, the text read *vayasem eth shemo avimelekh* – “And he set his name: Abimelech.”

As there was no change in subject after stating that he was the concubine's son, this indicates that it was not Gideon who gave this name. Rather, Abimelech set this name upon himself. Therefore, he claimed a title as much as giving himself a name.

As such, it indicates he is planning a conspiracy or conspiring to assume authority and is doing so with his family members of a different tribe (Ephraim) than that of all of his brothers of Manasseh. However, the record already said –

“Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, ‘Rule over us, both you and your son, and your grandson also; for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian.’

²³ But Gideon said to them, ‘I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the LORD shall rule over you.’” Judges 8:22, 23

There was no line of succession given. But Abimelech, disregarding this, is obviously claiming that he will, in fact, succeed Gideon. It would explain why he has set a new name upon himself. As such, he says...

² **“Please speak in the hearing of all the men of Shechem:**

Rather: *daberu na b'azne khal baale sh'khem* – “Speak, I pray, in ears all masters Shechem.” Using the word *baal*, master, lord, husband, etc., is intentional. It is a term that will be used sixteen times in this chapter. Abimelech is talking to his mother's brothers and is asking for the leaders of each household to determine a matter...

² (con't) **'Which is better for you, that all seventy of the sons of Jerubbaal reign over you, or that one reign over you?'**

Following the blunder of the KJV, the NKJV continues to obscure the intent of the passage: *mah tov lakhem hamshol bakhem shivim ish kol bene yerubbaal im m'shol bakhem ish ekhad* – "What good to you: 'Ruling in you seventy man all sons Jerubbaal, if ruling in you man one?'"

The word used is *mashal*, to rule, not *malakh*, to reign. As noted previously, Solomon reigned (*malakh* – as in 1 Kings 1:35) over Israel, but he ruled (*mashal*) "over all kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt" (1 Kings 4:21).

The word *mashal*, rule, is never used concerning Saul, the first king of Israel. Rather, each time it is said that he reigned (*malakh*). There is minimal overlap between the two words because they signify two different things.

The word *mashal*, rule, is used twice in this chapter, and both are in this verse. The word *malakh* is used seven times. These are the only uses of the word in all of Judges when referring to a person of Israel.

Abimelech sets before his brothers a false proposition. Gideon had already said that the Lord would rule over Israel. Nothing was said about any of his sons ruling, not seventy, not one. However, it can be inferred that the ephod that Gideon made and set up in Ophrah conferred upon the house a sense of authority it was never intended to grant.

Thus, it became the snare by which this plot would be brought to fruition. As it said –

"Then Gideon made it into an ephod and set it up in his city, Ophrah. And all Israel played the harlot with it there. It became a snare to Gideon and to his house."

-Judges 8:27

Also note that Abimelech calls his father Jerubbaal, not Gideon. Gideon is the one who contended with Baal, the same as the name, Baal, used in this account. It provides a reason for calling the men of this town *baale* (masters) rather than *anshe* (men). Abimelech is setting the tone of the coming events through his careful selection of words: rule, masters/men, seventy/one, etc.

Of the number seventy, Bullinger says it “is another combination of two of the perfect numbers, seven and ten. ... As compared with the sum of two numbers, the product exhibits the significance of each in an intensified form. Hence 7 x 10 signifies perfect spiritual order carried out with all spiritual power and significance. Both spirit and order are greatly emphasised.” Next, he says...

² (con’t) **Remember that I *am* your own flesh and bone.”**

There is an emphasis in the words: *uzkhartem ki atsmekhem uvsarkhem ani* – “And remember for your bone and your flesh, I.” Abimelech sets a contrast between the seventy sons of Jerubbaal and himself. “They are of Manasseh while I am of Ephraim. They are not your kin while I am your bone and your flesh. Which is better to rule over you?” The words are deceptive and manipulative. However...

³ **And his mother’s brothers spoke all these words concerning him in the hearing of all the men of Shechem;**

vaydaberu akhe imo alav b’azne kal baale sh’khem – “And spoke, brothers his mother, upon him, in hearing all masters Shechem.” The clause carefully repeats the words of Abimelech. As he requested, so they performed.

There is no indication either way whether they knew that Gideon had said the Lord would rule over them. Despite this, the next words indicate that they were swayed to accept his false claim concerning the matter...

³ (con’t) **and their heart was inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, “He is our brother.”**

They repeat the emphasis spoken to them: *vayet libam akare avimelekh ki amru akhinu hu* – “And stretched their heart after Abimelech, for said, ‘Our brother, he.’” The word heart, being singular, shows that the masters of Shechem were united in intent and purpose. There was no dissension among them.

They saw an opportunity for a member of their own tribe to rule as king, and that would mean their city, from which he hailed, would be the king’s seat. As such...

⁴ **So they gave him seventy *shekels* of silver from the temple of Baal-Berith,**

vayitnu lo shivim keseph mibeith baal berith – “And gave to him seventy silver from temple Baal-Berith.” Judges 8:33 said –

“So it was, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals, and made Baal-Berith their god.”

Although it doesn't say how long after Gideon's death these events took place, it could not have been long. Abimelech is attempting to seize a power and authority that doesn't even exist.

Unless the sons of Gideon openly made a pact of continued rule among themselves, of which the text says nothing, then Israel would have quickly known that there was currently no leader. And yet, Abimelech was able to secure money from the house of Baal-Berith that didn't exist until, or only became operational again, after Gideon's death.

Or it could be that the name Baal-Berith is derived from what occurs in this account along with what has already happened at this same location. In Genesis 18, the Lord made a vow to Abram in this location –

“Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites *were* then in the land. ⁷ Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, ‘To your descendants I will give this land.’ And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.”

-Genesis 18:6, 7

Likewise, Jacob also built an altar here –

“Then Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which *is* in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan Aram; and he pitched his tent before the city. ¹⁹ And he bought the parcel of land, where he had pitched his tent, from the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred pieces of money. ²⁰ Then he erected an altar there and called it El Elohe Israel.” Genesis 33:18-20

Also, in Joshua 24, it said –

“So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made for them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. Then Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God. And he took a large stone, and set it up there under the oak

that *was* by the sanctuary of the LORD. ²⁷ And Joshua said to all the people, 'Behold, this stone shall be a witness to us, for it has heard all the words of the LORD which He spoke to us. It shall therefore be a witness to you, lest you deny your God.'" Joshua 24:25-27

The name Baal-Berith means Master of the Covenant(s). The word Covenant is singular, but Jones' Dictionary concludes that this construction is better-rendered plural. Thus, the name Baal-Berith, if rightly translated in the plural, might indicate the covenants that took place at this location, inclusive of the one coming in the next verses.

If so, and this seems likely, then Matthew Poole appears to be correct in saying –

"This place they chose, to signify that they still owned God, and their covenant with him; and did not worship Baal in opposition to God, but in conjunction with him, or in subordination to him."

⁴ (con't) **with which Abimelech hired worthless and reckless men; and they followed him.**

Literally: *vayiskor bahem avimelekh anashim reqim uphkhozim vayelkhu akharav* – "And hired in them, Abimelech, men empties and bubblings." Abimelech hired men who were completely useless to society.

The first word used to describe them is *req*, an adjective meaning empty, and coming from *ruq*, to pour out, and thus empty. The second word is new and rare, *phakhaz*. It is a verb coming from a primitive root meaning to bubble up or froth as in boiling water. Thus, it signifies to bubble.

Both words, being plural signify empties and bubblings. Thus, men who are of no substance at all. John Gill calls them men of light heads and empty brains. That is certainly a good description of them.

⁵ **Then he went to his father's house at Ophrah and killed his brothers, the seventy sons of Jerubbaal, on one stone.**

It is all singular: *vayavo beith abiv aphratah vayaharog eth ekhav bene yerubaal shivim ish al even ekhath* – "And goes in house his father Ophrah-ward and kill his brothers, sons Jerubbaal, seventy man upon stone one." Despite having worthless men with him, the entire bloody account is accredited to Abimelech alone. And it may be that he personally accomplished the actual execution while the others only assisted.

Either way, the seventy were all killed on one stone. The idea being conveyed is that the payment of silver was one piece per son of Jerubbaal. Silver in the Bible refers to redemption. The word *even*, or stone, is derived from the root of *banah*, to build. The name Ophrah means Of the Dust.

⁵ (con't) **But Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left, because he hid himself.**

vayivather yotham ben yerubaal ha'qatan ki nekhba – “And remained Jotham son Jerubbaal, the youngest, for hidden.” The same word used to describe him, *ha'qaton*, the youngest, was used to describe Othniel, the younger brother of Caleb.

It is likely he was the youngest son of Gideon, but even if not, it is a descriptor indicating that he was at least a younger son of his. His name comes from Yehovah and *tam* meaning complete, perfect, undefiled, upright, etc. Thus, his name means Yehovah is Upright, Yehovah is Perfect, or something similar. After this bloody attack...

⁶ **And all the men of Shechem gathered together, all of Beth Millo,**

vayeasphu khal baale sh'khem v'kal beith milo – “And gathered all masters Shechem and all Beth Millo.” The same people from Shechem who agreed to appoint Abimelech to rule over them are brought together to enact that agreement. It also now includes “all Beth Millo.”

The name comes from *beith*, house, and *male*, to fill. Thus, it means House of Filling or House of Fulness. However, the idea of filling can indicate an outcome. When a woman's days of carrying are filled, they are completed (Genesis 25:24). When a man's hand is filled, it means he is consecrated to a task (Exodus 28:41). When a person fills another's words, he confirms them (1 Kings 1:14).

Therefore, the meaning may extend to House of Consecration, Affirmation, Completion, etc. As such, the name appears to be derived from the event, saying something like, “And gathered all masters Shechem and all House of Consecration.” It thus speaks of all the people who came to the ordination of their king...

⁶ (con't) **and they went and made Abimelech king**

vayamlikhu eth avimelekh l'melekh– “And kinged Abimelech to king.” Right off the bat, whether legal or illegal, Abimelech is the first noted king in Israel.

It is a kingship ordained by man, not by the Lord, but the terms are specific. He reigns (*malakh*) rather than rules (*mashal*) as a king (*melekh*). Other than Jabin, the foreign king of Judges 4, the term will be used only concerning Abimelech in Judges.

^{6 (con't)} **beside the terebinth tree at the pillar that *was* in Shechem.**

The words are difficult and widely translated: *im elon mutsav asher bishkhem* – “with oak, standing, which in Shechem.” The word “with” means that this was the designated place for the matter to take place. At that location was the oak, a symbol of strength.

The next word, *natsav*, is a verb signifying to stand. The form is causative. Something was caused to stand. It therefore appears to be referring to the events of Joshua 24:27 seen earlier –

“And he took a large stone, and set it up there under the oak that *was* by the sanctuary of the LORD.”

As such, one can see the reason why the temple is called Baal-Berith, Master of the Covenants. It would also explain why Shechem here is called Beth Millo, House of Consecration. It is a remembrance of the events that took place in the past, including at the time of Joshua.

*Listen to the trees, and they will tell you
Hear what they have to say
What is it a tree will or will not do?
And why has God created them in each way?*

*Some trees provide shade while others bear fruit
Some have wood for burning on a cold night
Each is made, a particular purpose to suit
Some give a painful rash, others wondrous delight*

*Hear what the trees have to say
Each created by the wisdom of God
They attend to our needs by night and by day
And so, His creative efforts we shall gladly laud*

II. The Trees (verses 7-15)

⁷ Now when they told Jotham, he went and stood on top of Mount Gerizim, and lifted his voice and cried out. And he said to them:

vayagidu l'yotham va'yelekh vayaamod b'rosh har g'rizim vayisa qolo vayiqra vayomer lahem – “And told to Jotham, and went, and stood in head Mount Gerizim, and lifted his voice, and called, and said to them.” In hearing that they have made Abimelech king, Jotham takes action to rebuke the people.

Mount Gerazim is the mount of blessings called out according to the word of Moses from Deuteronomy 27. That was accomplished by Joshua in Joshua 8. As for calling out from the head of the mount, it is rather high, and he would not be heard by the people in Shechem from there.

However, there is no reason to assume he cared about that. If only a few people of Shechem harvesting on the mount or nearby heard, the point would be made. He is simply uttering a parable, intending it to be a prophecy and a curse over the masters of Shechem. Thus, it hardly mattered whether they all heard him or not.

Gerizim comes from the word *garaz* – to cut, cut up, or cut off. Being a plural word, the meaning is something like Cutters Down. It may refer to those who harvest, due to the fertility of the mountain. This is the last time it will be mentioned in Scripture.

A mountain, *har*, is a lot of something gathered. It is synonymous with a large but centralized group of people. As for his words, Jotham begins his discourse to the people of Shechem, saying...

**⁷ (con't) “Listen to me, you men of Shechem,
That God may listen to you!**

shimu elay baale sh'khem v'yishma alekhem elohim – “Listen unto me masters Shechem, and listens unto you God.” It cannot go without notice that the word Elohim is used eight times in this chapter. Six of those refer to the true God and two to a false god. However, the Lord (YHVH) is never mentioned.

The meaning of his words could be that if they will hearken to what he says and turn from their treachery in allying with Abimelech, God will listen to their petitions for mercy. Or it could be that he wants them to hear his words of cursing upon them just as he wants God to hear their words of proclaiming a king in Shechem.

Whatever the intent is, the substance of his parable begins with...

⁸ **“The trees once went forth to anoint a king over them.**

halokh halkhu ha’etsem limshoakh alehem melekh – “Going, have gone the trees to anoint over them king.” The words introduce the thought that will be continued throughout the parable. Of the entirety of it, Adam Clarke says, “This is the oldest, and without exception the best fable or apologue in the world.”

Cambridge notes, “Part of a fable of this kind, taking the form of a dispute between the trees, has been discovered in the library of Ashurbanipal.” His reign was around 631 BC in Iraq.

The intent of Jotham’s words is to introduce a sense of morality that is obviously lacking in the minds of the masters of Shechem. He wants them to consider what they have done and to realize that the path they have chosen will only lead to disaster.

As for the words, “to anoint over them king,” this tells us that even though a king had not yet been appointed over Israel, the process of anointing such a leader was not unknown to the people. With the thought of the trees, meaning the people, looking to anoint a king over them, Jotham continues...

⁸ (con’t) **And they said to the olive tree,
‘Reign over us!’**

vayomru lazayith m’lokha alenu – “And said, to the olive, ‘Reign, you, over us!’” Some try to shove Gideon into the symbolism here, referring to his refusal to reign over the people. This may be, but because three different fruit trees are given the opportunity to reign, this seems unlikely.

Also, there is no need to make the parable into a list of specifics. If one tree is Gideon then who would the next two trees represent? Rather, Jotham is making a point about the event that took place. The only specific items to be compared are Abimelech and the thorn bush. As for the olive, it is the most noteworthy tree that surrounded Jotham.

Its fruit was, and remains, highly prized. Olives are used for eating, oil, soaps, and more. The oil is used for lighting lamps and cooking food, among other uses. The wood is prized for its beauty and can be burned for warmth. Jotham recognizes this as the finest of the trees...

**⁹ But the olive tree said to them,
'Should I cease giving my oil,
With which they honor God and men,
And go to sway over trees?'**

vayomer lahem ha'zayith hekhodalti eth dishni asher bi y'khabdu elohim va'anashim v'halakhti lanua al ha'etsim – "And said to them the olive, 'I cease my oil which in me they honor God and men, and go to wave over the trees?'"

The olive is incredulous. How could he step down from his exalted position to rule over the other trees? Through him and his oil, God is glorified, as in the burning of the priestly lamps, additions to sacrifices and offerings, etc. And through him, man is honored such as in the anointing of priests, kings, guests, and so forth.

As for the olive itself, it is a symbol of religious privilege. For example, it reflects the Spirit working through those who are included in this privilege. The olives receive their fatness from the roots. The branches receive this fatness and produce olives which are then used to put forth light before the Lord. Next...

**¹⁰ "Then the trees said to the fig tree,
'You come *and* reign over us!'**

vayomru ha'etsim lat'enah lekhi at malkhi alenu – "And said the trees to the fig, 'Come, you, reign over us!'" The fig is yummy, tasty, delectable, piquant, and delicious. It provides shade and it is useful for sewing coverings to hide oneself, although not very well☺. Though maybe not as majestic as the olive, it is a remarkable specimen of God's favor upon man.

As for the biblical significance of the fig, it does not refer to Israel the nation. That is a misinterpretation that has been passed on for eons. Rather, the fig speaks of the spiritual connection between God and man. When this was lost in the garden, they attempted, by their own works, to restore that connection through the use of fig leaves covering the disconnect, the shame of sin.

When Jesus cursed the fig, it was a parable concerning the place He was coming from and going to, the temple, which is the place where the spiritual connection with God was effected for the people. In His words, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again" (Mark 11:14), He was indicating that the temple that served the law would never again be the source of connection to God. Instead, it would only come through Him.

**¹¹ But the fig tree said to them,
'Should I cease my sweetness and my good fruit,
And go to sway over trees?'**

vatomer lahem hatenah hekhodalti mathqi v'eth t'nuvathi ha'tovah v'halkhti lanua al ha'etsim – “And said to them, the fig, ‘I cease my sweetness and my produce, the good, and go to wave over the trees?’”

The fig is hugely, even whoppingly, succulent, sweet, and satisfying. It knows this and is as incredulous as the olive. “Why should I give up on what is so marvelous to do something of less importance? Let the other trees go elsewhere for a leader!” Therefore...

**¹² “Then the trees said to the vine,
'You come *and* reign over us!’**

vayomru ha'etsim lagephen lekhi at malokhi alenu – “And said the trees to the vine, ‘Come, you, and reign over us!’ The vine bears grapes for eating and for drinking. From it comes wine that “makes glad the heart of man” (Psalm 104:15).

Without going into all of the amazing details of grapes, vineyards, and wine, suffice it to say that vineyards represent the cultural side of humanity. There are various vineyards that represent various cultures. Vineyards produce grapes, or cultural expressions, and these are mixed together through a mashing process to produce wine.

In the Bible, wine symbolizes the merging together of these expressions into a result. The thing that ought to happen can happen, symbolized by wine. It is as if an act of reasoning is occurring, and an intended result is realized.

Solomon uses wine in Proverbs 9 as a result of the workings of Wisdom. It is as if we are “seeing wisdom as wine drawn from the grapes of observations and deductions” (Abarim). Wine then represents our reasoning and that which will change our minds. A perfect example of this is found in Jesus’ words of Matthew 9 –

“Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.” Matthew 9:17

Jesus was speaking of the law and grace. The new wine is the new dispensation of grace to come. The old wine was the dispensation of the law. If one were to introduce the new concept into the old, it would not work because the two are incompatible. Only if one put the new wine into the new wineskin and received the new wine would the mind be changed.

Likewise, in His first miracle, Jesus changed water into wine. He did it with water in jars used for purification. This was what was used to wash with. It wasn't intended to be drunk. But in one stroke, He changed the water to wine, and thus the function of the jar and the applicability of its contents.

Understanding this, the vine itself is the basic expression of a thing. Jerusalem is equated to an outcast vine in Ezekiel 15. It was only good to be burned. The expression of Judah was supposed to reveal God, but it was worthless and revealed nothing of value.

Jesus, however, says He is the true vine in John 15. He is the true expression of God. His branches, His people, come forth from Him as an expression of Himself to bear fruit in that state in which they exist.

**¹³ But the vine said to them,
'Should I cease my new wine,
Which cheers *both* God and men,
And go to sway over trees?'**

vatomer lahem ha'gephen hekhodalti eth tiroshi ha'sameakh elohim va'anashim v'halakhti lanua al ha'etsim – "And said to them, the vine, 'I cease my sweet-wine, the rejoicer God and men, and go to wave over the trees?'" Another note of incredulity! The vine serves a marvelous purpose that can't be set aside to do something so base and pointless as to lead the trees. Thus...

**¹⁴ "Then all the trees said to the bramble,
'You come *and* reign over us!'**

vayomru khal ha'etsim el ha'atad lekh atah malakh alenu – "And said all the trees unto the buckthorn, 'Come, you, reign over us.'" The *atad*, or buckthorn, is painful but otherwise mostly useless. Gesenius identifies it as the southern buckthorn or "Christ's thorn."

Outside of being used as the name of a place in Genesis 50, the only other use of this word is in Psalm 58 –

“Before your pots can feel *the burning* thorns [*atad*],
He shall take them away as with a whirlwind,
As in His living and burning wrath.” Psalm 58:9

This perfectly pointless and poignantly painful tree responds...

¹⁵ **And the bramble said to the trees,
‘If in truth you anoint me as king over you,
Then come *and* take shelter in my shade;**

vayomer ha’atad el ha’etsim im b’emeth atem moshkhim othi l’melekh alekhem bou khasu b’tsili – “And said, the buckthorn unto the trees, ‘If in truth you anoint me to king over you, come shelter in my shade.’” Of this, John Lange gives the sense –

“There lies in this the sharpest censure for the trees. The thorn-bush itself can scarcely believe that its election as king is honestly meant (בְּאַמְתָּ). Equally striking is it, that Jotham makes the thorn-bush speak of the trees as wishing to ‘anoint’ him. Anoint with what? With oil. But the ‘oil tree’ has already refused to be king over such subjects! The idea is: they anoint with oil, the symbol of peace, while they have murder and the opposite of peace in their hearts.—The thorn-bush declares his readiness to give them all he has. They are at liberty to shelter themselves in his shadow. But he gives no protection against the sun, and his branches are full of thorns.”

Their chosen king is worthless, he will be painful, and he is already suspicious of those who have appointed him over them. It is a recipe for disaster. He even says as much to them...

^{15 (fin)} **But if not, let fire come out of the bramble
And devour the cedars of Lebanon!’**

v’im ayin tetse esh min ha’atad v’tokhal eth arze ha’l’vanon – “And if not, go out fire from the bramble and devour cedars the Lebanon.” The cedar, or *erez*, ultimately comes from a word signifying firm or strong.

The cedars of Lebanon are referred to many times in Scripture. They denote strength and firmness. When equated to a person or a nation, it refers to one that is great and

mighty. In Ezekiel 17, Zedekiah, king of Judah, is equated to a sprig taken from a cedar of Lebanon. Assyria is equated to a cedar in Lebanon in Ezekiel 31.

Jotham's words mean that this vile buckthorn, Abimelech, would ignite a fire as rapidly burning thorns will do, and it would consume even the mightiest and most esteemed who chose him as king.

As for Lebanon, it is used as a picture of works under the law. It comes from the verb *lavan*, to be white. That is identical to the noun *lavan*, or brick, because bricks turn white when fired. That word carries the connotation of works because bricks imply the work of man as opposed to stone which is created by God.

With this verse complete, we must end for the day. The rest of the verses will come next week. Adam Clarke sums up the parable of Jotham, saying –

“The condensed moral of the whole fable is this: Weak, worthless, and wicked men, will ever be foremost to thrust themselves into power; and, in the end, to bring ruin upon themselves, and on the unhappy people over whom they preside.”

He is correct in this. It is seen in our nation today. The most perverted and worthless man imaginable is rushing our nation to the brink of disaster in every possible way he can conjure up. But this has been seen throughout history. A mere corporal, a vile and senseless man, brought the nation of Germany to the brink of total destruction.

It is important for us to choose leaders well, but we shouldn't trust them to bring us anything other than temporary peace and prosperity. In the end, the only One we can truly put our hope in is Jesus. Anything or anyone else will lead us to a sad state of futility. Let us hold fast to our Lord who alone is worthy of our hope, love, and devotion.

Closing Verse: *“It is better to trust in the LORD
Than to put confidence in man.” Psalm 118:8*

Next Week: Judges 9:16-21 *Detailing every speck, As we trek ‘em. Yes, so we do...*
(Abimelech, King of Shechem, Part II) (29th Judges sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Abimelech King of Shechem, Part I

Then Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal
Went to Shechem, to his mother's brothers
And spoke with them and with all the family
Of the house of his mother's father, sharing his druthers

Saying, "Please speak in the hearing of all the men of Shechem
'Which is better for you, that all seventy (them or me alone)
Of the sons of Jerubbaal reign over you, or that one
-----reign over you?
Remember that I am your own flesh and bone

And his mother's brothers spoke all these words
Concerning him in the hearing of all Shechem's men
And their heart was inclined to follow Abimelech
For they said, "He is our brother, that's settles it then

So they gave him seventy shekels of silver
From the temple of Baal-Berith
With which Abimelech hired worthless and reckless men
And they followed him down the street

Then he went to his father's house at Ophrah
-----and killed his brothers
The seventy sons of Jerubbaal, on one stone
But Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left
Because he hid himself, hiding all alone

And all the men of Shechem gathered together
All of Beth Millo, and they went (GPS could trek 'em)
And made Abimelech king beside the terebinth tree
At the pillar that was in Shechem

Now when they told Jotham
He went and stood, but not just lingering about
On top of Mount Gerizim
And lifted his voice and cried out

And he said to them:

"Listen to me, you men of Shechem

That God may listen to you!

Check out my words, yes be sure to check 'em

"Going, have gone the trees to anoint over them king."

"And said, to the olive, 'Reign, you, over us!'"

"And said to them the olive,

'I cease my oil which in me they honor God and men, and go to wave over the trees?'"

"And said the trees to the fig,

'Come, you, reign over us!'"

"And said to them, the fig,

'I cease my sweetness and my produce, the good, and go to wave over the trees?'"

"And said the trees to the vine,

'Come, you, and reign over us!

"And said to them, the vine,

'I cease my sweet-wine, the rejoicer God and men, and go to wave over the trees?'"

"And said all the trees unto the buckthorn,

'Come, you, reign over us.'"

"And said, the buckthorn unto the trees,

'If in truth you anoint me to king over you, come shelter in my shade.'"

"And if not, go out fire from the bramble and devour cedars the Lebanon."

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word

Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You

May we carefully heed each thing we have heard

Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone

We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise

Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown

Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 9:16-21 (ABIMELECH, KING OF SHECHEM, PART II)

In the Hebrew text, Judges 9 begins with the word *vayelek*, “And went.” However, rather than translating it this way, some translate the prefix as now, then, one day, or just skip the conjunction altogether.

The Hebrew prefix *vav* can be variously interpreted and translated depending on the context, but simply saying “and” is always preferred by me. By saying “then” as the conjunction to open Chapter 9 (like the NKJV), a presupposition is inserted into the text that may not be correct.

In other words, by translating the *vav* as “then,” the reader is led to assume that what is presented follows after the events of Judges 8. But this is not necessarily so. After studying a particular passage, it is not uncommon to find that translating the *vav* as but, then, now, furthermore, however, etc. is incorrect.

This is too bad because the reader now has a faulty idea concerning what is going on in the narrative. In the case of Judges 9, the contents do not follow chronologically after Chapter 8. Rather, they are given to explain the events of Chapter 8.

Likewise, the typology of Chapter 8 dealt with the events of the tribulation period. However, some of what is presented in Chapter 9 goes all the way back to the time of the Babylonian exile of the people of Israel.

Text Verse: *“Her prophets are insolent [phakhaz], treacherous people;
Her priests have polluted the sanctuary,
They have done violence to the law.” Zephaniah 3:4*

From the time of the Babylonian exile, certain events were prophesied to occur that reach forward, even to the time after the tribulation period. Through the mistranslation of a single *vav*, the entire panorama of what is being typologically presented is obliterated.

In the Wycliff Bible of 1382, Chapter 9 of Judges opens with “Forþope Abymelech... zede.” The Coverdale Bible of 1535 says, “Abimelech...wente.” They just skipped the conjunction altogether. Later, the Geneva Bible of 1587 reads, “Then Abimelech...went,” thus inserting a presupposition.

The KJV went with a more literal translation, “And Abimelech...went.” However, in 1982, the NKJV reverted to the Geneva Bible, saying, “Then Abimelech...went.” In the 2024 translation by Charlie Garrett, the most literal translation possible is rendered, “And went Abimelech.”

Can incorrectly translating a single letter, the *vav* hook, make any difference in how you look at a passage? Yes, it can. For maximum happy and greatest biblical oomph, don’t get tied down to a single translation that might lead you to a false conclusion.

Be willing to check things out, consider what is being said, and then evaluate your conclusions. You may find out that really, really interesting things are tucked away in this precious word.

As for the word *Forþope* used in the Wycliffe Bible, I know you are dying to know what it means. It is an old English spelling of *forsothe* (more recently, *forsooth*). With the advent of the printing press around the 15th century, the letters long S (ʃ) and thorn (þ) began to drop out of common use. The word essentially means “for truth,” but it also carries the idea of indeed, truly, in fact, etc. You now have a new squiggle for your brain.

Get ready! More squiggles are ahead as we contemplate God’s superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Because He Is Your Brother (verses 16-21)

In Judges 9:1-6, Abimelech’s conspiracy to reign as king was described. Having gone to Shechem, he pitted himself against the seventy sons of Jerubbaal, noting his familial connection to these men as a reason they should accept him as their ruler.

The agreement was made, the plot was carried out, and the seventy sons were executed. With that complete, the men of Shechem gathered together and made Abimelech king.

After that, Jotham went and stood on top of Mount Gerizim and spoke his parable against the men of Shechem. With that finalized, he will provide a literal interpretation of the words.

He will speak a protasis followed by an apodosis. The conditional part of this will be given in verses 16 through the first half of verse 19. The conclusion will follow at the end

of verse 19. Another protasis and apodosis will then be stated in verse 20. After that, Jotham will leave the scene, not to be heard from again...

¹⁶ **“Now therefore, if you have acted in truth and sincerity in making Abimelech king,**

v’atah im b’emeth uvthamim asithem vatamliku eth avimelekh – “And now, if in truth and sincerity you have made and kinged Abimelech.” This begins the lengthy protasis, the conditional aspect of Jotham’s explanation. In his words, the actions of his audience are set in contrast to the actions of his father.

The words “if you have acted” encompass their actions as detailed in verses 1-6. If those deeds were done in truth and sincerity in relation to the life and conduct of Jerubbaal, there will be one conclusion he will grant.

The words “in truth and sincerity” are a modification of his words from the parable itself. In verse 15, Jotham said, “If in truth you anoint me to king over you.” This is the reason for the structure of his words now. They are based on the people’s intentions in making Abimelech king.

Abimelech means My Father is King, Father of a King, Father is King, Father Reigns, etc. It can even mean Desired Counsel.

¹⁶ (con’t) **and if you have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house, and have done to him as he deserves—**

v’im tovah asithem im yerubbaal v’im betho v’im kigmul yadav asithem lo – “and if good you have made with Jerubbaal and with his house, and if according to recompense his hand you have made to him.” These words introduce the contrast. There are the men of Shechem, and there is the house of Jerubbaal.

It is important to consider that Jotham never mentions the name Gideon. Rather, the name Jerubbaal alone is mentioned nine times in this chapter. According to Bullinger, nine is the number of finality and judgment.

There is the making of Abimelech king and there is what was done to Jerubbaal’s house. Were the actions of Shechem acceptable? Were they noble and just? The thoughts are carefully placed before the people to consider, but they must look at the past to ascertain the truth...

¹⁷ for my father fought for you, risked his life, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian;

asher nakham avi alekhem vayashlekh eth naphsho mi'neged vayatsel ethkhem miyad midyan – “who fought, my father, unto you, and cast his soul from front you from hand Midian.” This is the actual contrast to the actions of the men of Shechem. Jotham reminds the people of the great deeds of Jerubbaal.

It is he who defeated Midian (Place of Judgment). In the process of warring, Jotham notes *vayashlekh et naphsho* – “and cast his soul.” Jerubbaal considered his life as nothing. Therefore, even if he prevailed over Midian, he, in essence, died in the process of defeating it. Despite this...

¹⁸ but you have risen up against my father's house this day,

Rather: *v'atem qamtem al beith avi ha'yom* – “and you, you risen upon house my father, the day.” The words are emphatic, drawing a strong contrast to the noble deeds of Jerubbaal.

Also, rather than the more common *ha'yom ha'zeh*, “the day, the this,” which we translate as “this day,” the words are less definitive, saying “the day.” There was a day when the men of Shechem rose up against his father's house...

¹⁸ (con't) and killed his seventy sons on one stone,

vatahargu eth banav shivim ish al even ekhath – “and killed his sons, seventy man, upon stone one.” Jotham reminds the men of Shechem what they had done. They gave seventy pieces of silver to Abimelech. The implication was that there was one piece of silver per life. That was recorded earlier in this chapter –

“So they gave him seventy *shekels* of silver from the temple of Baal-Berith, with which Abimelech hired worthless and reckless men; and they followed him. ⁵Then he went to his father's house at Ophrah and killed his brothers, the seventy sons of Jerubbaal, on one stone.” Judges 9:4, 5

With their bloody deed accomplished, it next says...

¹⁸ (con't) and made Abimelech, the son of his female servant, king over the men of Shechem,

vatamliku eth avimelekh ben amatho al baale sh'khem – “and kinged Abimelech son his bondmaid over masters Shechem.” The word used to describe Abimelech’s mother is *amah*. It is variously translated as maid, handmaid, female slave, etc. It is the same word used in Genesis 21 –

“And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing. ¹⁰Therefore she said to Abraham, ‘Cast out this bondwoman [*amah*] and her son; for the son of this bondwoman [*amah*] shall not be heir with my son, *namely* with Isaac.’” Genesis 21:9, 10

She may have been the concubine of Jerubbaal, but Jotham disdainfully points out that she was a mere slave in the house. The rebuke is a strong one which seems intentionally connected to the story of Abraham and Hagar.

Gideon had already told the people that it would not be he or his house that reigned over Israel but the Lord. However, if the people wanted a king, they could at least have appointed a son of one of Gideon’s wives, not one born of a mere slave. Instead, however, they chose this evil path...

¹⁸ (con’t) **because he is your brother—**

He emphatically points out the reason for their treachery: *ki akhikhem hu* – “for your brother, he.” By stating it this way, Jotham is implying that those who made Abimelech king are all just like him, sons of a bondwoman, and thus slaves. The words are cutting and acerbic. With that stated, the conditional words of the protasis continue...

¹⁹ **if then you have acted in truth and sincerity with Jerubbaal and with his house this day,**

v'im b'emeth uvthamim asithem im yerubbaal v'im beitho hayom hazeh – “and if in truth and in sincerity you have made with Jerubbaal and with his house, the day, the this.” Putting this side by side with the words of verse 16, the contrast is made clear –

“And now, if in truth and sincerity you have made and kinged Abimelech.” v.16
“and if in truth and in sincerity you have made with Jerubbaal and with his house.” v.19

Jotham is restating the matter after having presented the details. The fact that they kinged Abimelech means that they have not dealt rightly with Jerubbaal. They have

rejected what he stood for because they rejected who he is. Because of this, the apodosis is next stated...

¹⁹ (con't) **then rejoice in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you.**

The words bear emphasis: *simkhu ba'avimelekh v'yishmakh gam hu bakhem* – “rejoice in Abimelech, and rejoice also, he, in you.” You have made your decision, and you will now have to live with it. See how that turns out! What is more likely is next stated with another protasis followed by an immediate apodosis...

²⁰ **But if not, let fire come from Abimelech and devour the men of Shechem and Beth Millo;**

v'im ayin tetse esh me'avimelekh v'thokhal eth baale sh'khem v'eth beith milo – “And if else, goes fire from Abimelech, and devours masters Shechem and Beth Millo.” If there is anything less than rejoicing in one another, then there should be a horrific consequence for what has transpired.

The seventy sons that were never intended to rule over the people were given for them to learn by. Instead of seeing them as a tool of instruction to remind them that the Lord was to rule over them, they rejected Jerubbaal and his words of authority and chose a fellow slave to rule over them instead. Therefore, the kingship of Abimelech should be to their ruin. But more...

²⁰ (con't) **and let fire come from the men of Shechem and from Beth Millo and devour Abimelech!”**

v'tetse esh mi'baale sh'khem u-mi'beith milo v'thokhal eth avimelekh – “And goes fire from masters Shechem, and from Beth Millo, and devours Abimelech.” As if detonating nuclear warheads results in mutually assured destruction, there is prophesied to be fire likewise coming from the masters of Shechem and Beth Millo to destroy Abimelech.

Now, with his words complete, it next says...

²¹ **And Jotham ran away and fled;**

vayanas yotham vayivrah – “And escaped, Jotham, and fled.” Jotham, Yehovah is Upright, has uttered his parable and prophecy. With that, and in order to be kept from retribution, he made his departure from Mount Gerizim...

^{21 (fin)} **and he went to Beer and dwelt there, for fear of Abimelech his brother.**

It says nothing of fear. Rather: *v'yelekh beerah va'yeshev sham mipne avimelekh akhiv* – “and went Beer-ward, and dwelt there, from face Abimelech his brother.” Jotham simply escaped and fled toward Beer. One can escape and flee for a number of reasons. In this case, the account says nothing of fear.

Inserting a presupposition like this can only misdirect the reader from considering other options. Jotham could just as easily have gone there to gather an army and return to destroy the people.

As for the name Beer, it means Well. The only other time a location is simply named Beer is in Numbers 21:16. If it is the same location, it is across the Jordan. If not, it doesn't matter because only the name is important for the typology to be presented.

*Seventy sons were killed on one stone
That's rounded up from sixty-nine
The last has been left all alone
But this was all by God's design*

*What can we learn from these seventy men
How does their death reveal God's unfolding story
Surely, whatever will be seen will once again
Detail to us His power and glory*

*Seventy sons from Israel's history
A lesson for them, if they will just pay heed
In the interpretation of this mystery
God's final decision has been decreed*

*Show us, O God, what we are meant to see
Reveal to us the things that will be*

II. The Amazing Details Explained

The first thing to note is that this account begins with the word “And” not “Then” or something else. It is not something coming chronologically after Chapter 8. Rather, it is given to explain the consequences for those who reject Christ in the future.

To recap, the book of Joshua detailed the work of the Lord in Salvation. Chapter 1 of Judges gave the account that demonstrated the world's access to salvation in Christ. The seventy kings that gathered scraps under Adoni-Bezek's table reflected the fallen nature of man. That was reversed in Acts 2 with the giving of the Spirit to fallen man, reuniting humanity as one in Christ.

The Jews first received the Spirit, but eventually, they – as a nation – rejected Christ. The account of Caleb (a Gentile) giving Achsah, his daughter, to Othniel along with land containing springs of water showed how the message of God in Christ transferred to the Gentiles during the dispensation of grace.

After that, the failure of Israel, tribe by tribe, to subdue the land was noted from the end of Judges 1 through the beginning of Chapter 3. That revealed Israel's failure to come to Christ, They have remained in a state of disobedience, apart from God.

Then the narrative of the judges began when Othniel battled Cushan-Rishathaim. It was a picture of the Gentiles carrying the message of Christ until the House of Israel and the House of Judah would accept it.

That was a type of introduction to what lay ahead in the book. It gave a snapshot of what would occur in type and picture concerning the work of Christ as seen in Judges, even before the work was detailed.

Ehud followed. He took out Eglon. That pictured the complete atonement of transgressions of the law through the work of Christ. It was also noted that this work was fully sufficient to save both Jews and Gentiles.

Shamgar next gave a brief but complementary display of how to appropriate the work of Christ.

After that Deborah, the New Testament, referred to the Dispensation of Grace, represented by the Gentile-led church.

In Judges 5, Deborah rejoices over the events of Chapter 4. They were placed into a poetic narrative, gloriously revealing the obvious pleasure the Lord takes in the work of Christ and in His church. Someday the church will end at the rapture.

The first ten verses of Chapter 6 revealed the tribulation period after the church age. It is at that time that Israel will finally accept the gospel.

After that, Gideon was introduced to provide insight into the gospel prevailing in the tribulation period resulting in Israel as a nation being saved.

Each step of the Gideon narrative detailed the progressive nature of this event. Midian (Place of Judgment – the tribulation period) will be defeated, and Israel will come to Christ through the gospel.

The account of Judges 9 backtracks in time revealing an exact timeline for Israel from Daniel 9. The Abimelech narrative is given to confirm to Israel that the typology that has previously been seen in the Judges narrative, as detailed in these sermons, is correct. It is a warning for those in the tribulation period about a failure to come to Christ.

The key point to understanding this is found in the first sentence of the chapter – “And went Abimelech son Jerubbaal Shechem-ward.” The meaning is, “And went My Father is King, son of Let Baal Strive.” The name Jerubbaal, not Gideon, is used throughout the entire account.

Who is it that Let Baal Strive? Jesus. The law failed to strive against Him. Thus, He prevailed over it. But what did Israel do with Jesus? They rejected Him. The meaning is that they, as a nation, remain under the law.

Abimelech, who gave himself this name, went to his mother’s brothers and spoke to them and all of his mother’s father’s family (verse 1). Without saying it, the narrative implies that he gave himself this name because he was united with this family (as seen in Chapter 8).

Although getting ahead in the narrative, who is his mother? A bondmaid. He has aligned with this family, implying a family of slaves as noted in verse 18.

When at Shechem (verse 2), Abimelech asks if it is better for them that all seventy of the sons of Jerubbaal reign over them or just one. Shechem means (Having a Sense of) Responsibility. The narrative also consistently calls these men *baale*.

The connection to Baal is being highlighted. They picture those under the law striving with it in an attempt to merit God’s favor. The seventy sons of Jerubbaal picture the seventy sevens of Daniel 9 –

“Seventy weeks [*shavuim*: msc. pl.] are determined
For your people and for your holy city,

To finish the transgression,
To make an end of sins,
To make reconciliation for iniquity,
To bring in everlasting righteousness,
To seal up vision and prophecy,
And to anoint the Most Holy.” Daniel 9:24

Through Daniel, the Lord gave Israel a prophetic look into their future, telling them exactly when certain things would occur in relation to their Messiah. It speaks of the final casting off of the law and reconciliation with the Lord through Jesus.

The seventieth son, Jotham (Yehovah is Upright), called *ha’qaton*, or the youngest, pictures the seventieth week, the tribulation period. The word *qaton* comes from *qut*, to feel a loathing. It is that which grieves, is detested, despised, etc. It is the last chance given to those of Israel to come to Christ.

Verse 2 continues with Abimelech noting that he is their own flesh and blood. He is the son of a slave as they are. In hearing the offer, (verse 3), the men’s hearts were inclined to follow Abimelech. So who is Abimelech picturing? The answer is that he anticipates the rejection of Christ. Ultimately, he can be identified with the person noted by Jesus –

“I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive.” John 5:43

He will be Israel’s supposed Messiah. Just as Abimelech came in his own name (having given it to himself), this false Messiah will come in his own name. He will be a Jew or at least half-Jewish (the nationality of Abimelech’s mother cannot be sufficiently determined). However, he will claim to follow the law, but he will be a false Messiah.

Verse 4 noted that these masters of Shechem gave him seventy pieces of silver from the temple of Baal-Berith (Lord of the Covenants). The covenants speak of the Mosaic covenant and the covenant with the Antichrist.

In Israel’s rejection of Christ, they are attempting to redeem themselves from the law through their own merits, silver being a picture of redemption. Remember what Matthew Poole wrote concerning this act at the temple of Baal Berith –

“This place they chose, to signify that they still owned God, and their covenant with him; and did not worship Baal in opposition to God, but in conjunction with him, or in subordination to him.”

Israel is assuming they can rightly serve Yehovah while observing the law. But the law has been fulfilled and annulled in Christ. Unfortunately, without Christ, rightly serving the Lord is not possible.

Verse 4 continued by describing those who were hired by Abimelech using the words *req*, empty, and *phakhaz*, bubbling. The first word describes men who are not filled with the Spirit but are worthless.

The second word was in our text verse today. It is the second and last use of the word in Scripture and it describes those of Israel before the restoration of the people, meaning during the tribulation, who do violence to the law. As Christ is the fulfillment of the law, not coming to Christ perfectly describes them.

Verse 5 detailed the killing of the seventy sons of Jerubbaal on one stone by Abimelech. The act is a rejection of the detailed plan of God given to reveal the Messiah to Israel. The one stone speaks of Jesus. Peter, writing to the Jews of the end times, specifically reveals this –

“Therefore, to you who believe, *He is* precious; but to those who are disobedient,
‘The stone [Heb: *even*] which the builders rejected
Has become the chief cornerstone,’
⁸ and ‘A stone [Heb: *even*] of stumbling
And a rock of offense.’
They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were
appointed.” 1 Peter 2:7, 8

Obviously, if Jotham survived, then the number excludes him, but for the sake of the narrative, he is included in the rejection. The sixty-nine sevens led to the coming of Christ. They were killed on the stone.

The final seven is, by their own actions, kept from them. There will be no restoration with God for those who follow this path. That is seen in the words of verse 5, “And remained Jotham son Jerubbaal, the youngest, for hidden.” The word *khava* is used by Isaiah concerning the hiding of Christ. He will only be revealed for salvation to those who believe –

“Listen, O coastlands, to Me,
And take heed, you peoples from afar!
The LORD has called Me from the womb;
From the matrix of My mother He has made mention of My name.
²And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword;
In the shadow of His hand He has hidden [*khava*] Me,
And made Me a polished shaft;
In His quiver He has hidden Me.” Isaiah 49:1, 2

Verse 6 said, “And gathered all masters Shechem and all Beth Millo.” Shechem (Responsibility) looks to the people who will confirm the covenant with the Antichrist. They will see the law and renewed temple worship as their responsibility to save the people. Beth Millo (House of Filling) looks to the consecration (filling, aka consecration) of the people for temple worship.

Therefore, “And kinged Abimelech to king.” The Jews will see this person as the rightful heir to the throne of David and acknowledge him as such. Verse 6 ended with the difficult words, “with oak, standing, which in Shechem.” The oak is a symbol of strength.

As the words do not indicate a time, they could simply be a reference to what later occurs during the tribulation, referring to the Antichrist as he will be revealed –

“‘Therefore when you see the “abomination of desolation,” spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place’ (whoever reads, let him understand),
¹⁶ ‘then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.’” Matthew 24:15, 16

After this came the parable of the trees. This came from the top of Mount Gerizim. The *har*, or mount, is synonymous with a large but centralized group of people. Gerizim means Cutters Down. Despite being the mount from which the blessings of the law were proclaimed, Jotham prophesied a curse upon the people. This group of people will be cut down and separated from the Lord.

The words he calls out are to God, not the Lord. There is no covenant relationship to be considered. In the parable, it is clear that the appointment of a king is inappropriate. Instead of the final seven (Jotham) bringing them to God through Jesus, this appointment will be their demise.

He uses three trees as examples of rejection and one of acceptance. The first is the olive. It is a symbol of religious privilege. Romans 11:16-24 clearly indicates this –

“For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who *are* natural *branches*, be grafted into their own olive tree?” Romans 11:24

There will be no religious privilege for these men. Next, is the fig tree which speaks of the spiritual connection between God and man. There will be no spiritual connection to God for these men. The third is the vine which refers to the basic expression of a thing. Their basic expression is that of the law, not grace. As the law brings condemnation, there will be no salvation for these men.

Instead of these kinds of trees, their leader is the *atad*, the buckthorn. The only other use of the word outside of a designated name for a place is in Psalm 58:9. The meaning there was the thorn is something taken away and burned before it is of any use at all. This will be the state of those who identify with the coming false Messiah.

In Luke 21, Jesus says this concerning the trees –

“Then He spoke to them a parable: ‘Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. ³⁰ When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. ³¹ So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. ³² Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. ³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.’” Luke 21:29-33

These words may be a reference to Jotham’s parable. When each tree shows its true colors in the end times, be it a spiritual connection to God (the fig) or its allegiance to the Antichrist, the state of how each is manifest will make it evident that the final hour has come, the tribulation will remove all who offend, and the kingdom of God will then be realized.

The last portion of Jotham’s parable (verse 15) tells what it will be like for those who cling to the law, “And if not, go out fire from the bramble and devour cedars the Lebanon.” As Lebanon is used as a picture of works under the law, those who remain strong in law worship will be devoured through their adherence to the law under their false Messiah.

The verses in our passage today were given in the form of a condition followed by a conclusion and are intended as a prophecy. They set a contrast between Abimelech and Jerubbaal.

The purpose is to provide a contrast between Christ's striving with the law and theirs. Jesus came, lived out the law perfectly, and fulfilled the law for Israel. These people are rejecting God's provision of the tribulation period which is intended to bring them to the point where they call on Jesus.

Instead, they will cling to the self-appointed supposed Messiah who comes in his own name. Jotham (Yehovah is Upright, picturing the decision of the Lord in appointing Jesus as the true Messiah) says in verse 16 that if that is acting in truth and sincerity, and if it is rightly dealing with Jerubbaal (Christ's prevailing over the law) and his house (those who are His), there will be a particular result.

Before he says what the result is, he recounts (verse 17) the work of Jerubbaal (Jesus), saying, "He fought, my father, unto you." What Jesus did was for His people, to save them. And more, "and cast his soul from front you from hand Midian." He gave up His life to rescue His people from the Place of Judgment. Isaiah describes the act –

"Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great,
And He shall divide the spoil with the strong,
Because He poured out His soul unto death,
And He was numbered with the transgressors,
And He bore the sin of many,
And made intercession for the transgressors." Isaiah 53:12

Despite the work of Jesus, and being presented with this in the end times, most probably because of the rapture of the church leading to a right understanding of the words of Daniel 9, it says, "and killed his sons, seventy man, upon stone one."

The work of Christ is made of no effect in Israel's conduct. They will accept the false Messiah, attempting to obtain God's favor through temple rites and rituals. Thus, they essentially kill the purpose of the seventy weeks granted to them. As it said in verse 18, "and you, you risen upon house my father, the day."

The less definitive words "the day" point to the tribulation period, the day of the Lord. It is during this time that they will have once and for all cut themselves off from the grace of God in Christ. Instead, they "kinged Abimelech son his bondmaid over masters Shechem."

The one who claims his father is king is the son of a bondmaid. Those who follow him, represented by “masters Shechem” are just like him. As Jotham said, “for your brother, he.” They are all sons of bondage. This is exactly explained by Paul in Galatians 4 –

“Now we, brethren, as Isaac *was*, are children of promise. ²⁹ But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him *who was born* according to the Spirit, even so *it is* now. ³⁰ Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? “Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.” ³¹ So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.” Galatians 4:28-31

Jotham’s words were probably intended to point out a direct connection to the story of Abraham and Hagar. Paul then provides the typological meaning in Galatians 4 for us to understand. With that understood, Jotham then gave the apodosis, “rejoice in Abimelech, and rejoice also, he, in you.”

If the false Messiah can restore them to God, they will be in the sweet spot. However, Jotham provides another statement of condition with an immediate conclusion, “And if else, goes fire from Abimelech, and devours masters Shechem and Beth Millo.”

Those who accept the false worship of a return to law observance under their false Messiah will be devoured through it. Likewise, “And goes fire from masters Shechem, and from Beth Millo, and devours Abimelech.” There will be destruction in both directions as the true nature of their wickedness in rejecting Christ is made manifest.

Understanding this, verse 21 finished with, “And escaped, Jotham, and fled, and went Beer-ward, and dwelt there, from face Abimelech his brother.”

The meaning is clear. Jotham (Yehovah is Upright, picturing the decision of the Lord in appointing Jesus as the true Messiah), who is representative of that state in the tribulation period, is removed from those who return to law worship.

Beer is a picture of where the Spirit issues from, which is not where the law is observed. Abimelech, the one who rejects Christ and returns to the law in the end times, has no access to God’s approval because he has no access to the Spirit of God. Those who follow him will be, with him, separated forever from God.

The passage we have looked at, which began in Judges 9:1, is a brilliant way of restating that which has already been clearly revealed. By going back to the seventy sevens of

Daniel, it confirms other typology that reveals the ineffective nature of the law to bring about salvation.

Rather, it is a complete hindrance to a proper relationship with God. Daniel 9 is so precise that the timing of the coming Messiah is clearly presented. And yet, it then speaks of the Messiah being cut off (dying) and of false worship being instituted in the temple in Jerusalem.

If that is the case, then it means that there was something Israel missed about the coming of their Messiah. Now, after all of the amazingly clear typology of human history since Israel's rejection of Jesus seen since the beginning of Judges, this recap of the time of the law after the Babylonian exile beautifully shows them what they have missed: Jesus.

It is Jesus' work in defeating the power of the law that brought about the gospel, pictured by Gideon. Thus, there was no need to use that name here. In fact, it would have damaged the typology.

The seventy sevens of Daniel are not about the gospel, but about Israel's relationship with God under the law, first leading to Jesus and then closing with a final seven that must be worked through in order for them to come to Jesus. Those who reject this reject a right relationship with God.

The point for those who have received Jesus should then be clear. Our relationship is not ever to be based on our works before God, except those done in faith. If we spend our time attempting to merit God's favor through works, then we are not working in faith.

But if our works spring from our faith, no matter what they are, they will be rewarded by God. Paul clearly explains that to us in Romans 14:23 where he says, "whatever *is* not from faith is sin." The best part of our failing in this regard is that because of Christ we are not imputed sin.

For those who fail to come to God through Christ, unfortunately, they remain under the curse of the law. Time and time again, the same thing is being revealed to us in new and exciting ways. But the point isn't just to be excited. It is to ensure that we get it.

God has done the hard work. He has secured our salvation. And the reason why we needed it in the first place is because we put ourselves ahead of Him. We believed the

devil that said we could be like God. We broke God's law. And we were separated from Him.

Going through the Bible reveals a continuous reminder that law condemns, but God's grace saves. Therefore, let us cling to the grace of God that is found in Jesus Christ our Lord. In this, we will always and forever remain in the sweet spot of His loving favor.

Closing Verse: *"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.' ¹¹ But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for 'the just shall live by faith.' ¹² Yet the law is not of faith, but 'the man who does them shall live by them.'"* Galatians 3:10-12

Next Week: Judges 9:22-45 (Abimelech, King of Shechem, Part III) (30th Judges sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Abimelech, King of Shechem, Part II

"Now therefore, if you have acted in truth and sincerity
In making Abimelech king
And if you have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house
And have done to him as he deserves (if you have done this thing)

For my father fought for you, risked his life
And delivered you out of the hand of Midian (See,
-----here is a picture of it on my phone)
But you have risen up against my father's house this day
And killed his seventy sons on one stone

And made Abimelech, the son of his female servant
-----him and not another
King over the men of Shechem, because he is your brother

If then you have acted in truth and sincerity
With Jerubbaal and with his house this day
Then rejoice in Abimelech

And let him also rejoice in you, if it will be that way

But if not, let fire come from Abimelech and devour
The men of Shechem and Beth Millo (sending them to heck)
And let fire come from the men of Shechem
And from Beth Millo and devour Abimelech!

And Jotham ran away and fled, he and none other
And he went to Beer and dwelt there, for fear of Abimelech
-----his brother

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 9:22-45 (ABIMELECH, KING OF SHECHEM, PART III)

In our verses today, Charles Ellicott comments on the change of verbiage in verse 22 from earlier verses, saying, “Had reigned.—The verb is here *sûr*, not *malak*, as in Judges 9:6; but whether the change of word is meant to be significant we cannot say.”

The change in the verb is significant and meaningful. I was surprised to read that Ellicott seems unsure because he often argues over the morphology of individual words, noting the significance of various changes in them.

Because God is the author of Scripture, every single detail of it has meaning. This includes things we might not normally look at, such as how many times things are mentioned, variant spellings, and so forth. There is always some hidden treat that we can discover if we look closely enough and contemplate what is being presented.

There is also a point where we must move on and continue our journey through Scripture. As for the various words that are used and if they are relevant, Solomon gives us a thought to consider –

Text Verse: *“Every word of God is pure;
He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him.
⁶Do not add to His words,
Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.” Proverbs 30:5, 6*

The word translated as pure is *tsaraph*. It means to smelt, refine, and test. The Lord, in His infinite wisdom, has given us a word that indicates His word is as if it has gone through the refiner’s fire and is thus pure.

It is exquisitely placed before us as the most precious jewel, completely unblemished and perfectly sculpted for us to contemplate. The finest gems are inlaid in the most precious metals that have been refined to absolute purity.

Consider this as you read the word. What you are reading is communication from the absolutely perfect Creator to us. Despite it being transmitted through fallible man, God has cared for His word sufficiently to ensure that what we have is just what we need.

We have more verses to get through than usual today. Many of them are not at all complicated. The author simply provides the needed background in the story so that we can see where the narrative trekked to reach the conclusion.

For today, please just enjoy the verses and don't get overwhelmed with all the info. This is the word of God and we should revel in it as the verses unfold. For sure, He will be pleased with us when we are pleased with what He has given to us.

Great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Who Is Abimelech and Who Is Shechem? (verses 22-29)

The previous passage detailed Abimelech's plot to reign as king over the people. He convinced them to reject the seventy sons of Jerubbaal and anoint him king. The people agreed, had the seventy sons killed, and made Abimelech king.

From there, Jotham gave his parable of the trees and what would come upon the people because of what they had done. He ended the parable with a question as to the propriety of their actions. If they were acceptable and good, then that is one thing –

“But if not, let fire come from Abimelech and devour the men of Shechem and Beth Millo; and let fire come from the men of Shechem and from Beth Millo and devour Abimelech!” Judges 9:20

Jotham then ran away and fled, going to Beer to dwell, away from the face of Abimelech. The narrative next turns to the time of Abimelech's rule...

²² After Abimelech had reigned

vayasar avimelekh – “And wrestles, Abimelech.” Here is a word found only in this verse and in Hosea 12:4, *sur*. It comes from a primitive root meaning vanquish. By implication, it signifies to rule. Thus, causatively, it means to crown. Hence, it means “to make princes.”

It is connected with the word *sarah*, to persist, exert power, etc. Strong's adds in the thought, “have power (as a prince).” That word is only found twice in Scripture as well. The first is in Genesis 32:28 –

And He said, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled [*sarah*] with God and with men, and have prevailed.”

The second use of both of these words is found in Hosea 12 –

“The LORD also *brings* a charge against Judah,
And will punish Jacob according to his ways;
According to his deeds He will recompense him.
³ He took his brother by the heel in the womb,
And in his strength he struggled [*sarah*] with God.
⁴ Yes, he struggled [*sur*] with the Angel and prevailed;
He wept, and sought favor from Him.
He found Him *in* Bethel,
And there He spoke to us—
⁵ That is, the LORD God of hosts.
The LORD *is* His memorable name.” Hosea 12:2-5

Based on the meaning of this word, some define the name Israel as Prince of God. However, the context of Genesis 32 is clear. It is based on the thought of struggling with God. Therefore, it means He Strives with God.

This can be striving with God, for God, or it can be striving with God, against God. Either way, Israel strives with God. In the case of Abimelech (My Father is King), he is wrestling with the people and he is striving against God. I translated it as wrestles to separate his time from that of a king or a military leader. At this time, it is said...

²² (con’t) **over Israel three years,**

al Yisrael shalosh shanim – “over Israel three years.” Despite the localized nature of Abimelech’s reign in the area of Shechem, the text clearly identifies Abimelech as wrestling over Israel. Thus, that is the intent to be drawn, nothing less.

The unusual word used to define this period seems to almost indicate a form of “tyrannical despotism” (Keil). He was kinged by Shechem in verse 9:6. However, his time over Israel is neither a reign (*malakh*) as a king nor rule (*mashal*) as a military leader. Rather, it is as one who struggles with the people.

As for the number three, Bullinger says it signifies Divine Perfection. Further, he says, "...the number three points us to what is real, essential, perfect, substantial, complete, and Divine." It was after these three years of his wrestling over Israel that...

²³ God sent a spirit of ill will between Abimelech and the men of Shechem;

vayishlakh elohim ruakh raah ben avimelekh u-ben baale sh'khem— "And sends, *elohim*, spirit evil between Abimelech and between masters Shechem." There is no contentment or harmony between them. God uses this to cause this evil spirit to arise between them.

These words are used to describe the actions found in the rest of the chapter. They are an initial summary which will be carefully fleshed out, revealing how Israel will cast off this unholy rule and explaining the demise of Abimelech.

As previously seen, the name Shechem means (Having a Sense of) Responsibility. Also, note that the term *baale*, masters, is used in this passage. It is as if the men are being identified as being aligned with *baal* in contrast to the house of Jerubbaal. As for the evil spirit, it was sent...

²³ (con't) and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech,

vayivg'du baale sh'khem ba'avimelekh – "And deals covertly masters Shechem in Abimelech." Though nobody translates it as I have, the word is *bagad*. It comes from a primitive root meaning to cover. Therefore, it signifies to deal deceitfully, treacherously, etc.

As such, it gives the sense of acting covertly. In this, one can think of CIA covert ops overthrowing a leader to attain their goals. Thus are the men of Shechem dealing with Abimelech. This was so...

²⁴ that the crime *done* to the seventy sons of Jerubbaal might be settled

Rather, the words are short and abrupt: *la'vo khamas shivim b'ne yerubaal* – "To go violence seventy sons, Jerubbaal." The word *bo* means to come in or out, to come, to go in or out, or to go. In this case, it is probably signifying to go out.

Violence had been done against the sons of Jerubbaal and it needed to be expunged from Israel. This is the process that will accomplish just that, according to the evil spirit sent from *elohim*. Jerubbaal means Let Baal Strive.

As a side note to the matter, the word *khamas* is used here. It is the Hebrew word closely associated with the Arabic name used concerning the miscreants in Gaza, Hamas. In Arabic, it signifies enthusiasm, but in Hebrew it means violence. The Hebrew perfectly describes them in our modern world. As for this process from *elohim*, its purpose continues, saying...

²⁴ (con't) **and their blood be laid on Abimelech their brother, who killed them,**

v'damam la'sum al avimelekh akhikhem asher harag otham – “and their blood to set upon Abimelech who killed them.” This is the stated purpose of the evil spirit from *elohim*. First, it is to rightfully avenge what had happened to the seventy sons of Jerubbaal.

They were given as sons to Jerubbaal by the Lord, and yet Abimelech had killed them all in order to reign in Israel. This could not be allowed to stand. And more, because Abimelech was supported by the men of Shechem, the purpose extends to those who supported what he had done...

²⁴ (con't) **and on the men of Shechem, who aided him in the killing of his brothers.**

The words are more expressive: *v'al baale sh'khem asher hizqu eth yadav la'harog eth ekhav* – “and upon masters Shechem who strengthened his hand to killing his brothers.” It wasn't just that they aided him through verbal approval. Rather, they financially supported him, throwing their allegiance behind what he would do, thus strengthening his hand.

Of this process by which *elohim* sent an evil spirit between them, Keil says, “‘An evil spirit’ is not merely ‘an evil disposition,’ but an evil demon, which produced discord and strife.” There is no reason to assume this. Instead, John Lange says, “for the undeviating law by which sin punishes itself, is grounded in the very nature of the Deity.”

This seems far more likely. Wickedness tends to produce its own destruction. Because Abimelech was a wicked man with wicked intentions, and because those who strengthened his hand did so with evil intent, there was sure to be no harmony between them.

The pattern has repeated itself throughout human history. Because treachery was the basis of their actions, the general rule of self-implosion was almost inevitable. Therefore...

²⁵ And the men of Shechem set men in ambush against him on the tops of the mountains,

vayasimu lo baale sh'khem m'arvim al rashe he'harim – “And sets to him, masters Shechem, ambushing upon tops the mountains.” This begins the explanation of how the evil spirit arose between Abimelech and the people. There is a lack of peace within the land.

As for the words “to him,” although this could mean they were after Abimelech personally, it doesn’t necessarily have to mean that. Rather it could signify ambushes against his authority. He is disadvantaged by the events that occur.

John Lange takes it as meaning that their ambushes are intended to make the people think it is Abimelech ordering the crimes. This would be an explanation of the covert ops mentioned in verse 23, being an attempt to make him look even worse than he is. Whichever way, this is seen in the next words...

²⁵ (con’t) and they robbed all who passed by them along that way;

Rather: *vayigzlu eth kal asher yeavor alehem ba'derekh* – “And seizes all passing upon them in the way.” The word is *gazal*, to tear away, seize, rob, etc. It comes from a primitive root signifying to pluck off. As such, it may mean rob, but it also may mean to seize a person by force, which is how the Peshitta translates it.

In Judges 21, it will be used to describe the seizing of young maidens who are carried away to be the brides of the remnant of Benjamin. Whether the people are robbed or seized as plunder, it is something that would affect the reign of Abimelech, hence...

²⁵ (con’t) and it was told Abimelech.

vayugad la'avimelekh – “And declares to Abimelech.” The word *nagad* means to make conspicuous. If he is a king, good or bad, he couldn’t stand by and have his people robbed, thus depriving him of money he could tax. And he couldn’t have his people being seized, thus depriving him of his subjects. One can see the play on words from verse 23 and this verse –

“And dealt covertly [*bagad*] masters Shechem in Abimelech.”

“And declared [*nagad*] to Abimelech.”

²⁶ Now Gaal the son of Ebed came with his brothers and went over to Shechem;

va'yavo gaal ben eved v'ekhav vayaavru biskhem – “And goes, Gaal son Ebed and his brothers, and crosses over in Shechem.” Without any prior introduction, Gaal, son of Ebed, appears in the narrative.

The name is derived from the noun *gaal*, to loathe or abhor. Thus, it means Loathing, Abhorrence, etc. Ebed means Slave or Servant. Not much can be deduced about him and it is unknown from the text if he is an Israelite or a Canaanite.

This person is said to have crossed over in Shechem. The word might imply that he was on the other side of the Jordan, but not necessarily. It can mean to pass through, pass by, etc. He was somewhere and came through Shechem...

²⁶ (con't) and the men of Shechem put their confidence in him.

vayivtkhu bo baale sh'khem – “and trusts in him masters Shechem.” Those who had at first put their hand in with Abimelech have now put their trust in Gaal. Therefore...

²⁷ So they went out into the fields, and gathered *grapes* from their vineyards and trod *them*, and made merry.

Both sentences of the verse are filled with imperfect verbs: *vayetsu ha'sadeh vayivtsru eth karmehem vayidr'ku vayaasu hilulim* – “And goes out the field, and clips their vineyards, and treads, and makes praises.” Here is the second and last use of *hillul*, praises, in Scripture. The first use was –

“And in the year, the fourth, shall be all his fruit holy, praises to Yehovah”

-Leviticus 19:24 (CG).

The idea in Leviticus is that the fruit would be offered as praises to Yehovah. Likewise, these men who are now aligned with Gaal have clipped their vines, brought in the fruit to the winepress, trodden it, and are using it to offer praises.

They have rejected Abimelech and have aligned with Gaal. The praises are either to him directly, or to their god in praise of granting them Gaal as their leader. If the latter, that would be seen in the next words...

²⁷ (con't) **And they went into the house of their god, and ate and drank, and cursed Abimelech.**

vayavou beith elohehem vayokhlu vayishtu vayqalu eth avimelekh – “and goes in house their god, and eats, and drinks, and trivializes Abimelech.” The word *qalal* comes from a primitive root signifying to make light. Thus, they have trivialized Abimelech, making him small in their eyes.

Whoever is the object of their praise, be it Gaal directly or Baal-Berith who has provided the new leadership, they have traded any praises of Abimelech for reviling. This is explained in the next words...

²⁸ **Then Gaal the son of Ebed said, “Who is Abimelech,**

vayomer gaal ben eved mi avimelekh – “And says, Gaal son Ebed, ‘Who Abimelech?’” The words are stated contemptuously as if Abimelech was a nobody. They are not unlike the words of Nabal concerning David –

“Then Nabal answered David’s servants, and said, ‘Who is David, and who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants nowadays who break away each one from his master. ¹¹ Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers, and give *it* to men when I do not know where they *are* from?’” 1 Samuel 25:10, 11

²⁸ (con't) **and who is Shechem, that we should serve him?**

u-mi sh'khem ki naavdenu – “And who Shechem, that we serve him?” The words are curious, no doubt. Some take it to mean that Shechem is being used synonymously for Abimelech’s rule. But a who is a person, not a thing. The answer appears to be found in the next clauses...

²⁸ (con't) **Is he not the son of Jerubbaal,**

halo ben yerubaal – “Not son Jerubbaal?” Gaal continues his contemptuous words. There is the noted Jerubbaal, and then there is his son. “It’s not the son who accomplished the victory for Israel. It was Jerubbaal! What are we doing serving this guy?”

²⁸ (con't) **and is not Zebul his officer?**

u-zevul p'qido – “and Zebul his overseer?” Again, a name is introduced without any previous introduction or reason. The name Zebul comes from the verb *zevul*, to dwell. It is connected to the noun *zaval*, habitation. Thus, it means something like Habitation. He is mentioned six times in the narrative and nowhere else.

²⁸ (con't) **Serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem; but why should we serve him?**

The designation now goes from *baale*, masters, to *anshe*, men: *ivdu eth anshe khamor avi sh'khem u-madua naavdenu anakhnu* – “Serve men Hamor, father Shechem! And why we serve him – we?” Gaal has called Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal. Now, he mentions Hamor, the father of Shechem.

What he seems to be doing is saying, “Why would we serve the son when we can serve the father?” It would explain the words about serving Shechem in the first clause. In other words, it would be like someone in the Civil War saying, “Who is Davis (the leader) and who is Richmond (the place)? Serve Lincoln (the leader) and Washington (the place)!”

Even though Richmond isn't the son of Washington, you can see that he is going from the lesser to the greater. As for Hamor, it is identical to *khamor*, donkey, but that is derived from *khamar*, to be red. The name means Donkey, but that is because the donkey, and thus the name, literally means Red One.

The last words of the verse, “And why we serve him – we?” form a phrase filled with contempt. “Here is this nobody. He's just a son of the great Jerubbaal. What are people like us (WE!) doing serving him?” As such...

²⁹ **If only this people were under my authority!**

u-mi yiten eth ha'am ha'zeh b'yadi– “And who gives the people, the this, in my hand?” In verse 2, Abimelech spurred the people of Shechem to make him the ruler. Now, Gaal is doing something similar.

The people of Shechem had strengthened Abimelech's hand. Now that the evil spirit from *elohim* was fomenting strife between them, Gaal is calling for them to be placed under his authority. This appears to be the reason why Zebul was introduced. He is the overseer of the city. Therefore, if Gaal was placed over the city...

²⁹ (con't) **Then I would remove Abimelech.”**

The verb is cohortative: *v'asirah eth avimelekh* – “And I remove Abimelech.” With the people of Shechem under his authority, he promises, as if it is an imperative, to remove Abimelech from being over them. It is implied that the people agreed to this because it says...

²⁹ (con't) **So he said to Abimelech, “Increase your army and come out!”**

vayomer la'avimelekh rabeh tsvaakha vatseah – “And says to Abimelech, ‘Multiply your army and come out!’” The words “And says to Abimelech” could mean one of a couple things. Gaal may have said it indirectly through a messenger. But what seems likely is that the words were not really to Abimelech. Instead, they are uttered as a boastful or drunken person might. Abimelech yelled out for any and all to hear.

No matter what, his words are in the form of an imperative. “Get yourself ready. War is coming, so come out!”

*Power and control will mean nothing on the day
When we must stand before the judgment of God
No person will be able to say
I am worthy, so give me the approval nod*

*What is it for a man to gain the whole world
But to then lose his soul?
When the deeds of our lives are unfurled
What will be found upon our scroll?*

*Love the Lord your God, yes, love Him always
He alone is worthy to receive such as this
Give to Him the glory He is do for all your days
In this, you will find joy and eternal bliss*

II. Where Indeed Is Your Mouth Now? (verses 30-45)

³⁰ **When Zebul, the ruler of the city, heard the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, his anger was aroused.**

vayishma zevul sar ha'ir eth divre gaal ben aved vayikhar apo – “And hears Zebul, governor the city, words Gaal son Ebed, and burns his nostril.” Again, there are various

possibilities concerning these words. It could be that Zebul was there with the men as they partied and trivialized Abimelech.

If so, it was only fun until Gaal challenged his position as the head of the city, at which time he took personal offense. Or it could be that the words made their way to Zebul from someone who heard them firsthand. Either way, once he heard the words, he was severely torqued off, as if smoke fumed out of his nostrils...

³¹ And he sent messengers to Abimelech secretly,

It is a complicated clause: *vayishlakh malakhim el avimelekh b'tarmah* – “And sends messengers unto Abimelech in deceit.” A new word is introduced here, *tormah*. It will be seen six times, always meaning deceit or deception.

However, that meaning is unsuitable here, unless the deceit is that he agreed to the words of Gaal as he spoke them. If so, then the deceit is not against Abimelech, but Gaal. If not, it may be that it is a proper noun, “in Tarmah.” If this is the case, then the name of the location where Abimelech was would be Deception.

³¹ (con't) saying, “Take note! Gaal the son of Ebed and his brothers have come to Shechem;

l'mor hineh gaal ben eved v'ekhav baim sh'khemah – “to say, ‘Behold, Gaal son Ebed, and his brothers coming Shechem-ward.’” The words seem to imply that Abimelech already knew who Gaal was. Zebul is warning that Gaal and his brothers had come unto Shechem. Then, upon their arrival...

³¹ (con't) and here they are, fortifying the city against you.

v'hinam tsarim eth ha'ir alekha – “And behold, adversarying the city against you.” The word is *tsur*, to confine, bind, besiege, etc. It comes from a primitive root meaning to cramp. As such, it is normally translated with the idea of a city being besieged by cramping the people inside.

In this case, the action is outward from the city against Abimelech. Thus, I have coined a new word and say they are adversarying the city. This would then be in line with Exodus 23:22 –

“But if you indeed obey His voice and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary [*tsar*] to your adversaries [*tsar*].”

Whether this is a valid thought or not, the point is that the city is being prepared, either the people representing the city, or the city itself...

³² Now therefore, get up by night, you and the people who *are* with you, and lie in wait in the field.

His words are emphatic: *v'atah qum laylah atah v'ha'am asher itakh v'erov ba'sadeh* – “And now arise, night, you and the people who with you, and lie in wait in the field.” It is the same word translated as ambush in verse 25. This time, however, it is not merely setting up an ambush, but they are also lying in wait to attack.

The curious thing is that Zebul is directing Abimelech, his superior, to do this. It is contrary to the propriety of the situation for him to do so without some further explanation as to why. However, none is provided. Despite that, he continues with his minute directions...

³³ And it shall be, as soon as the sun is up in the morning, *that* you shall rise early and rush upon the city;

v'hayah ba'boqer kizroakh ha'shemesh tashkim uphashatta al ha'ir – “And is, in the morning, according to rising the sun, rising early and deployed upon the city.” As seen, this is not simply an ambush. Rather, the people lie in wait. Some will charge the city at the rising of the sun while others will be set for an ambush when needed.

Of these words, John Gill says, “For being with his forces advanced near to it by a march in the night, he would be able by sunrising to attack the city before the inhabitants were up to defend it, and so surprise them.”

That completely dismisses the next words and logic itself. If the people were not up yet, the gates would be shut and bolted. Instead of an attack, it would be a besieging attack. Some posted guards may be speared or shot, but from that point on, it would be a battle against a barricaded city. That isn't what Zebul next says...

³³ (con't) and *when* he and the people who are with him come out against you, you may then do to them as you find opportunity.”

v'hineh hu v'ha'am asher ito yotsim elekha v'asitha lo ka'asher timtsa yadekha – “And behold, he, and the people who with him coming out towards you. And do to him according to which finding your hand.” Zebul is confident that the rush upon the city would elicit a response. The people in the city would come out to battle against them.

³⁴ So Abimelech and all the people who were with him rose by night, and lay in wait against Shechem in four companies.

vayaqum avimelekh v'kal ha'am asher imo laylah v'erervu al sh'khem arbaah rashim – “And arises, Abimelech, and all the people who with him, night, and lies in wait upon Shechem, four heads.” Just as instructed, so Abimelech did. With him were enough people to be divided under four heads. Thus, there is to be both a frontal assault and ambushes against those who come out.

The number four “is the number of things that have a beginning, of things that are made, of material things, and matter itself. It is the number of material completeness. Hence it is the world number, and especially the ‘city’ number” (Bullinger).

³⁵ When Gaal the son of Ebed went out and stood in the entrance to the city gate,

vayetse gaal ben eved vayaamod pethakh shaar ha'ir – “And goes out, Gaal son Ebed, and stands opening gate the city.” The gate of the city is where judging takes place, business is transacted, and so forth. He has come here, probably thinking that he should be the one to lead the city, even though Zebul possessed that right.

However, once Gaal was there, indicating that the gates of the city had been opened for the day...

³⁵ (con't) Abimelech and the people who were with him rose from lying in wait.

vayaqum avimelekh v'ha'am asher ito min ha'marav – “and arises, Abimelech, and the people with him from the lying in wait.” With the gates open, and with Gaal standing in them, indicating someone was there to conduct business, it was then time for Abimelech to initiate the proposed action...

³⁶ And when Gaal saw the people, he said to Zebul, “Look, people are coming down from the tops of the mountains!”

vayar gaal eth ha'am vayomer el zevul hineh am yored merashe he'harim – “And sees, Gaal, the people, and says unto Zebul, ‘Behold, people descending from heads the mountains.’” Gaal was standing at the gate looking out. There is no reason at all for him to suspect an attack. This is simply a person looking at the skyline as anyone would do early in the morning at the gate of the city.

However, his eyes catch the movement of Abimelech and his men. Despite this, Zebul treats Gaal with the same contempt as Gaal had directed toward him...

³⁶ (con't) **But Zebul said to him, “You see the shadows of the mountains as *if they were men.*”**

vayomer elav zevul eth tsel he'harim atah roeh ka'anashim – “And says unto him, Zebul, ‘Shadow the mountains you see, according to men.’” Zebul mockingly jests at Gaal as if he were an uneducated doof. It is obvious that they are people, but Zebul is clearly having fun with the moment. On the other hand...

³⁷ **So Gaal spoke again and said, “See, people are coming down from the center of the land,**

vayoseph od gaal l'daber vayomer hineh am yordim me'im tabur ha'arets – “And adds again, Gaal, to speak, and says, ‘Behold, people, descenders, from with center the land.’” Here is a new and rare word, *tabur*, translated as center.

It is from an unused root meaning to pile up. Thus, it signifies accumulated. By implication, then, it is a navel or a summit. As such, it is the middle. It will only be seen again in Ezekiel 38 –

“You will say, ‘I will go up against a land of unwalled villages; I will go to a peaceful people, who dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates’ — ¹²to take plunder and to take booty, to stretch out your hand against the waste places *that are again* inhabited, and against a people gathered from the nations, who have acquired livestock and goods, who dwell in the midst [*tabbur*] of the land.’: Ezekiel 38:11, 12

Gaal is now certain of what he sees and proclaims it again...

³⁷ (con't) **and another company is coming from the Diviners' Terebinth Tree.”**

v'rosh ekhad ba mi'derekh elon m'onim – “and head one coming from way Oak Soothsayers’.” Seeing that there is a rush upon the city from the center, the natural thing to do is scan the entire visible panorama. In doing so, he sees a second group coming from an area known as Soothsayers’ Oak. It was probably a giant spreading oak that people thought was suitable for practicing divination or witchcraft.

³⁸ Then Zebul said to him, “Where indeed is your mouth now, with which you said, ‘Who is Abimelech, that we should serve him?’

vayomer elav zevul ayeh epho pikha asher tomar mi avimelekh ki naavdenu – “And says unto him, Zebul, ‘Where here your mouth which you said, “Who Abimelech that we serve him?”” It is a derogatory interrogatory: “Where’s your big mouth now? It’s time to put up or shut up. You questioned Abimelech’s authority. Well, here’s your chance to do something about it.”

³⁸ (con’t) Are not these the people whom you despised? Go out, if you will, and fight with them now.”

halo zeh ha’am asher maastah bo tse na atah v’hilakhem bo – “Not this the people who you rejected in him? Go out, I pray, now, and fight in him.” The meaning is that when he rejected Abimelech, he rejected those who are now with him.

Therefore, stating it as an imperative, Zebul tells Gaal to go out to fight Abimelech and those with him. And more, he adds in the taunting, *na*, or I pray. It is a jab like, “Well, if you’re man enough.” It leaves little room for Gaal to do anything but go.

³⁹ So Gaal went out, leading the men of Shechem, and fought with Abimelech.

The words return to *baale*, masters, once again: *vayetse gaal liphne baale sh’khem vayilakhem ba’avimelekh* – “And goes out, Gaal, to faces masters Shechem, and fights in Abimelech.” With little choice except to face total disgrace, Gaal went out before the masters of Shechem to face his fate...

⁴⁰ And Abimelech chased him, and he fled from him; and many fell wounded, to the very entrance of the gate.

The words are exciting as the imperfect verbs come rolling forth: *vayirdphehu avimelekh vayanav mipanav vayiphlu khalalim rabim ad petakh ha’shaar* – “And pursues him, Abimelech, and flees from his face, and falls pierced many, unto entrance the gate.” It is

a total rout of the forces of Gaal. His people retreated and were cut down all the way to the entrance of the city itself. With that job tidied up, it next says...

⁴¹ Then Abimelech dwelt at Arumah, and Zebul drove out Gaal and his brothers,

vayeshev avimelekh barumah vaygaresh zevul eth gaal v'eth ekhav – “And dwells Abimelech in the Arumah, and dispossesses, Zebul, Gaal and his brothers.” The name Arumah is found only here. It comes from *rum*, to be high. Thus, it means Height or Elevated, or even Exalted. If the latter, it can be positive or negative. For example, speaking of the antichrist, Daniel 11 says –

“Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt [*rum*] and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done.” Daniel 11:36

By stopping at the gate of Shechem, it is apparent that Abimelech left the matter of the city and Gaal to Zebul the city manager. From there Zebul took appropriate action to eject Gaal...

⁴¹ (con't) so that they would not dwell in Shechem.

mi'sheveth bishkhem – “from dwelling in Shechem.” Gaal is expelled from the city, and that seems like the end of the matter. However, it is the masters of Shechem that rebelled against Abimelech. Thus, any remaining would have to be dealt with. Therefore...

⁴² And it came about on the next day that the people went out into the field, and they told Abimelech.

v'hi mimakorath vayetse ha'am ha'sadeh vayagidu la'avimelekh – “And is from morrow, and goes out the people the field, and declares to Abimelech.” With Abimelech gone from the gates of Shechem, and with Gaal and his brothers expelled from the city, the people went back to the field as people need to do.

However, they were the ones who had allied with Gaal and against Abimelech. As soon as they are seen in the field, on the very next day, he sets forth to act...

⁴³ **So he took his people, divided them into three companies, and lay in wait in the field.**

vayiqakh et ha'am vayekhetsem lishloshah rashim vayeerov ba'sadeh – “And takes the people, and divides them to three heads, and lays in wait in the field.” This time, the division of his people is under three heads. Bullinger notes that “the number three points us to what is real, essential, perfect, substantial, complete, and Divine.” In other words, Divine Perfection. With his companies arrayed...

⁴³ (con't) **And he looked, and there were the people, coming out of the city; and he rose against them and attacked them.**

vayar v'hineh ha'am yotse min ha'ir vayaqam alehem vayakem – “And sees, and behold, the people going from the city. And arises against them, and strikes them.” Again, as before, Abimelech was able to destroy those left in the city. This time, it would have been easier because they were completely unsuspecting.

⁴⁴ **Then Abimelech and the company that was with him rushed forward and stood at the entrance of the gate of the city;**

Rather than then, it says and. This explains what was just said: *va'avimelekh v'kharashim asher imo pashtu vayaamdu petakh shaar ha'ir* – “And Abimelech, and the companies that with him deploys and stands entrance gate the city.” There was a rush towards the gate. This would keep any from retreating inside, and it would allow them to keep the entrance open if those inside tried to shut the gates.

⁴⁴ (con't) **and the other two companies rushed upon all who were in the fields and killed them.**

ushne kharashim pashtu al kal asher ba'sadeh va'yakum – “And two companies deployed upon all who in the field, and strikes them.” With the city secured, one company remained with Abimelech. The other two deployed into the field and struck all who were there.

⁴⁵ **So Abimelech fought against the city all that day; he took the city and killed the people who were in it;**

va'avimelekh nilkham ba'ir kol hayom ha'hu vayilkod eth ha'ir v'eth ha'am asher bah – “And Abimelech fought in the city, all the day, the it. And captures the city and the

people in her killed.” By securing the gate, they were able to gain access into the city, seize it, and kill everyone in it in one day. With that complete...

⁴⁵ (fin) **and he demolished the city and sowed it with salt.**

vayitots eth ha’ir vayizraeha melakh – “And tears down the city, and sow her, salt.” By salting the city, it means that he considers the city irretrievably destroyed, no longer to be useful. And that, in perpetuity. Shechem, (Having a Sense of) Responsibility was to no longer be considered as such.

Biblically, salt is a sign of covenant faithfulness, incorruptibility, and perpetuity.

With that, we will close today. It was a lot of verses and information to take in. We will complete the passage and explain it in the next sermon. For now, we can look to the actions of Abimelech and know that this is the fate of those who conspire and kill.

Eventually, the very thing done to obtain power is what often leads to the demise of the doer. It is as if the divine hand of justice reaches down and fills their lives with the trouble they have brought upon others.

It isn’t always this way. But even those who have lived like this and died in peace still have to face the Judge of all mankind. How much better it would be for people to let go of such things and exalt the Lord by coming to Jesus!

In doing so, people can at least expect a joyous reunion with God when their day to stand before Him comes. Let us consider this and place Christ Jesus in the appropriate place in our lives. All of the power, money, and fame in the world ultimately means nothing when our days are through.

Live for the Lord! It will make an eternal difference in how things go for our souls.

Closing Verse: *“I will bless the LORD at all times;
His praise shall continually be in my mouth.
² My soul shall make its boast in the LORD;
The humble shall hear of it and be glad.
³ Oh, magnify the LORD with me,
And let us exalt His name together.” Psalm 34:1-3*

Next Week: Judges 9:46-57 *He's headed to heck. That's his trek'm, this is for shore...*
(Abimelech, King of Shechem, Part IV) (30th Judges sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Abimelech, King of Shechem, Part III

After Abimelech had reigned over Israel three years
God sent a spirit of ill will, like when getting a bad check
Between Abimelech and the men of Shechem
And the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech

That the crime done to the seventy sons of Jerubbaal
Might be settled and their blood be laid on their brother Abimelech
Who killed them, and on the men of Shechem
Who aided him in the killing of his brothers, chopping at the neck

And the men of Shechem set men in ambush
Against him on the tops of the mountains, each a roughneck
And they robbed all who passed by them along that way
And it was told Abimelech

Now Gaal the son of Ebed came
With his brothers and went over to Shechem
And the men of Shechem
Put their confidence in him

So they went out into the fields, and gathered grapes
From their vineyards and trod them, and made merry
And they went into the house of their god
And ate and drank, and cursed Abimelech with words pretty scary

Then Gaal the son of Ebed said
"Who is Abimelech, and who is Shechem, that him we
-----should serve? Please observe...
Is he not the son of Jerubbaal, and is not Zebul his officer?
Serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem; but him, why

-----should we serve?

If only this people were under my authority!
Then I would remove Abimelech, no doubt!
So he said to Abimelech
“Increase your army and come out!”

When Zebul, the ruler of the city (where he was housed)
Heard the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, his anger was aroused

And he sent messengers to Abimelech secretly, saying
“Take note! Gaal the son of Ebed and his brothers (yes, it is true)
Have come to Shechem; and here they are
Fortifying the city against you

Now therefore, get up by night, you and the people who
-----are with you
And lie in wait in the field; this you are to do

And it shall be, as soon as the sun is up in the morning
That you shall rise early and rush upon the city
And when he and the people who are with him come out
-----against you
You may then do to them as you find opportunity

So Abimelech and all the people
Who were with him rose by night
And lay in wait against Shechem
In four companies, hiding out of sight

When Gaal the son of Ebed went out
And stood in the entrance to the city gate
Abimelech and the people who were with him
Rose from lying in wait

And when Gaal saw the people, he said to Zebul
“Look, people are coming down from the tops of the mountains!
-----fer sher
But Zebul said to him

“You see the shadows of the mountains as if they men were

So Gaal spoke again and said

“See, people are coming down, take a look and see
From the center of the land, and another company is coming
From the Diviners’ Terebinth Tree

Then Zebul said to him, “Where indeed is your mouth now
With which you said, ‘Who is Abimelech? Really... wow!
That we should serve him?’ Are not these the people
-----whom you despised?
Go out, if you will, and fight with them now

So Gaal went out, what the heck
Leading the men of Shechem, and fought with Abimelech

And Abimelech chased him, and he fled from him
-----he wouldn’t wait
And many fell wounded, to the very entrance of the gate

Then Abimelech dwelt at Arumah, and Zebul drove out Gaal
-----and his brothers too
So that they would not dwell in Shechem, something they
-----wouldn’t do

And it came about on the next day (but still night in Quebec)
That the people went out into the field, and they told Abimelech

So he took his people, divided them into three companies
And lay in wait in the field, waiting to react
And he looked, and there were the people, coming out of the city
And he rose against them and them he attacked

Then Abimelech and the company that was with him
Rushed forward and stood at the entrance of the gate of the city
And the other two companies rushed upon all
Who were in the fields and killed them, showing no pity

So Abimelech fought against the city all that day

He took the city and killed the people who were in it
And he demolished the city and sowed it with salt
A brutal guy indeed, we must admit

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 9:46-57 (ABIMELECH, KING OF SHECHEM, PART IV)

Every story we have read in the Bible, from creation through Gideon is history. These things have actually occurred in the world and later in the history of Israel. Further, these things point to real events that will happen in the future history of Israel.

And yet, there is a spiritual element involved as well. Therefore, there are times that the actual historical events and the spiritual applications will overlap. In the sermon today, you will see an example of this.

The explanation covers thirty-six verses. I don't even attempt to explain every detail of them, lest we have a sermon four hours long. However, enough detail is provided to give you a snapshot of both the historical events and the spiritual applications that are anticipated as well.

I must say that there is speculation involved in several of the conclusions that are presented. For example, Daniel 11 is cited several times. Those references are based on assumptions concerning the structure of Daniel 11, meaning that not all of the verses are necessarily chronological as Daniel presents them.

And more, there is overlap between Daniel's words, those of Jesus, Paul, and John in Revelation that must be inferred as to how things will play out in the end times.

Text Verse: *"Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."* 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4

What is seen today is based on how Abimelech was typologically presented in the Judges 9:16-21 sermon, "...he anticipates the rejection of Christ. Ultimately, he can be identified with the person noted by Jesus." To confirm that, John 5:43 was cited.

Like Christ, who is the embodiment of the law, the Antichrist is the ultimate expression of those who reject Christ. Each person who does is reflected in Abimelech. The coming of the Antichrist will be the final step in that ongoing rejection. John details that for us in 1 John 2:18-23 –

“Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. ¹⁹They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but *they went out* that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us. ²⁰But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. ²¹I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth. ²²Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. ²³Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.”

The Bible is clear, and the words of Scripture are all-inclusive. If you have rejected Jesus, you are of the devil. Of them, a person who denies the deity of Jesus is explicitly said to be an antichrist. Keep this in mind as we go through the verses today.

When you see Abimelech named, you can think of any such person. At the same time, you can specifically think of the coming Antichrist. There is overlap. But this spirit of the Antichrist will someday be removed from the world.

Remember that I have speculated at times on various things. So look to the overall picture and forgive anything that I have failed to properly square up with what God intends to reveal.

Marvelous things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. God Repaid the Wickedness of Abimelech (verses 46-57)

⁴⁶ **Now when all the men of the tower of Shechem had heard *that*,**

vayishmu kal baale migdal sh'khem – “And heard, all masters Tower Shechem.” The words are based on the events described in the previous verses. Abimelech had come against Shechem. Gaal had gone out to fight against them and was routed. The next day Abimelech laid in wait against the city, and as the people went out of it, Abimelech rose against them and attacked.

In verse 25, it said that Abimelech fought against the city all that day, took it, and killed the people in it. After that, he demolished it and sowed the city with salt. Now, all of the men of the tower have heard about these events.

The location and timing of this is uncertain, but the text says nothing like “the next day.” In fact, this is probably the same day as verses 42-45. Because of this, what is described here may be a different location, but near Shechem, or what is being said is in Shechem and the events are an explanatory part of what occurred during the destruction noted in those verses.

Either way, these people have heard about the attack, and instead of fighting...

⁴⁶ (cont') **they entered the stronghold of the temple of the god Berith.**

vayavou el ts'riakh beith el b'rith – “and entered into citadel, house god Berith.” Here is a new and very difficult word, *ts'riakh*, translated as citadel. It is from *tsarakh*, to cry or roar. Thus, Strong's see the connection between the two words as clearness of vision. As such, he takes this as a high place, a citadel.

Others take it as an underground chamber or some other type of stronghold. This word is only found here three times and once more in 1 Samuel 13:6 –

“When the men of Israel saw that they were in danger (for the people were distressed), then the people hid in caves, in thickets, in rocks, in holes [*ts'riakh*], and in pits.”

With this verse, the translations vary greatly and the context doesn't help a great deal. Suffice it to say that it is a secure place big enough for a great number of people. Thus, citadel seems to be logical. In this case, it is in the citadel of god Berith, or god of the covenant.

This is probably the same house (temple) as that of Baal-Berith seen in Judges 9:4. Some scholars disagree, but it seems likely. Either way, these people have retreated into some secure location associated with the god Berith, hoping to be safe from the army of Abimelech.

⁴⁷ **And it was told Abimelech that all the men of the tower of Shechem were gathered together.**

vayugad la'avimelekh ki hiqabtsu kal baale migdal sh'khem – “And declared to Abimelech that gathered all masters tower Shechem.” The term masters, rather than men, is used here. Its last use was in verse 9:39 when the masters of Shechem went out with Gaal against Abimelech.

Of those, some may have retreated during the battle while some may not have gone out with Gaal. The point is that these are a part of the original group who had allied with Abimelech starting in verse 2 and who Jotham had cursed in his parable. That ended with the words –

“and if not — fire cometh out from Abimelech and devoureth the masters of Shechem and the house of Millo, and fire cometh out from the masters of Shechem and from the house of Millo, and devoureth Abimelech.”

-Judges 9:20 (YLT)

Thus, the words of Jotham are being fulfilled in this account. These masters are holed up in the citadel and Abimelech is made aware of it...

⁴⁸ Then Abimelech went up to Mount Zalmon, he and all the people who were with him.

va'yaal avimelekh har tsalmon hu v'khal ha'am asher ito – “And ascended, Abimelech, Mount Zalmon, he and all the people who with him.” Here is a new location, *har tsalmon*, or Mount Zalmon. As seen, the *har*, or mount, is a lot of something gathered. It is synonymous with a large but centralized group of people.

Zalmon is derived from *tselem*, image. The *on* (*vav-nun*) at the end either localizes or personifies the word. Thus, it means Place of *the* Image or Man of *the* Image. Abarim quaintly translates it as Image Guy. Others take the name from *tse*, shade, and translate the name as Shady, seeing the mountain as one that has trees and thus appears dark or shady.

⁴⁸ (con't) And Abimelech took an ax in his hand

vayiqakh avimelekh eth ha'qardumoth b'yado – “And took Abimelech the axes in his hand.” It is a new word, *qardom*, translated as axe. It is possibly from the verb *qadam*, meaning to meet (in the sense of striking upon). That is a form of *qedem*, meaning both east and aforetime.

The unusual use of the plural probably means that the axe in his hand is representative of all the axes to be used. He took the axe(s)...

⁴⁸ (con't) **and cut down a bough from the trees, and took it and laid *it* on his shoulder;**

vayikroth sokath etsim vayisaeha vayasem al shikhmo – “and cut branch trees, and lifted upon his shoulder.” Again, another new word found only in this verse and the next one is used, *sok*. It is from *suk* a fence or hedge. Thus, it is a branch, as something interleaved.

After cutting off his branch, he laid it on his shoulder. The word *karath*, means to cut off or down. It is the same word used in the cutting of a covenant. Once this was done...

⁴⁸ (con't) **then he said to the people who were with him, “What you have seen me do, make haste *and* do as I *have done*.”**

vayomer el ha'am asher imo mah r'ithem asiti makharu asu kamoni – “and said unto the people who with him, ‘What seen done, hurry – do as I.’” The men with him were to likewise get a branch and bring it along. Abimelech has a plan...

⁴⁹ **So each of the people likewise cut down his own bough and followed Abimelech,**

Vayikhr'thu gam kal ha'am ish sokhoh vayelkhu akhare avimelekh – “And cut, also, all the people, man his branch. And went after Abimelech.” In response to the word of Abimelech, those with him followed suit. From there they...

⁴⁹ (con't) **put *them* against the stronghold, and set the stronghold on fire above them,**

vayasimu al hatsriah vayatsithu alehem eth hatsriah ba'esh – “and set upon the citadel, and kindled upon them the citadel in the fire.” The word *al* signifies above, over, or upon. Some translate this as against, over, on, on top of, etc. If it is over or on, the citadel would be a place that was low, like a vault, and the fire is set over them, suffocating them.

Or, as fire burns upward, it could be a large structure in which the people gathered, the branches being laid upon (against) it and then lit, the people inside would be trapped as the flames engulfed the structure. Whichever is correct, the result says...

⁴⁹ (con't) **so that all the people of the tower of Shechem died, about a thousand men and women.**

vayamuthu gam kal anshe migdal sh'khem k'eleph ish v'ishah – “And died also all men Tower Shechem according to one thousand man and woman.” Here, the word *anshe*, men, not *baale*, masters, is used. This, then, is inclusive of the masters and the women.

It is the fulfillment of the words of Jotham against these people where fire came from Abimelech and devoured the masters of Shechem.

⁵⁰ **Then Abimelech went to Thebez, and he encamped against Thebez and took it.**

vayelekh avimelekh el tevets vayikhan b'tevets vayikdah – “And went, Abimelech, unto Thebez, and camped in Thebez, and seized her.” The name is Tevets. It is either from *yavats*, to be bright, or *buts*, fine white linen. That comes from *buts*, to bleach, and thus whiteness. Therefore, it means Brightness, White Linen, Whiteness, or something akin to this.

Abimelech went to this location, camped there, and seized it. The reason for this is seen in the next verse. Despite seizing the city, however...

⁵¹ **But there was a strong tower in the city, and all the men and women—all the people of the city—**

The NKJV has changed the order and wording so that the main point is lost: *u-migdal oz hayah b'thok ha'ir vayanusu shamah kal ha'anashim v'hanashim v'khol baale ha'ir* – “And tower, strong, was in midst the city. And fled there all the men and the women and all masters the city.”

There are three categories: the men, the women, and the masters. This is the last use of *baale* in the chapter. This explains why Abimelech has come against Thebez. They are those who had aligned with him, but then enmity arose between the two parties. Eventually they had submitted to Gaal. Now Abimelech has come to war against them. Of these men, it next says they...

⁵¹ (con't) **fled there and shut themselves in; then they went up to the top of the tower.**

vayggru baadam vayaalu al gag ha'migdal – “And shut behind them. And ascended upon roof the tower.” The people were in an elevated defensive position. This would

make it vulnerable to a long siege, but if an attack took place, depending on their weapons, they could have a chance of prevailing over the attackers. Abimelech was not prepared for a siege. Therefore...

⁵² So Abimelech came as far as the tower and fought against it; and he drew near the door of the tower to burn it with fire.

vayavo avimelekh ad ha'migdal vayilakhem bo vayigash ad petakh ha'migdal l'sharpho ba'esh – “And came, Abimelech, unto the tower, and fought against it. And drew unto door the tower to burn it in the fire.” In his attack, clearly the best option would be to burn the door.

The rest of the tower would have been stone and would take a long time to break through. Therefore, to burn through the door would be the quickest and best option. Setting archers around the tower to distract those on top, men could run in, set wood in a pile, and run out. When a large enough pile was ready, one could rush forward with a torch, toss it in, and run away.

It appears Abimelech wanted to be the one to light the pile...

⁵³ But a certain woman dropped an upper millstone

vatashlekh ishah akhath pelakh rekhev – “And cast, woman one, piece rider.” The word is *shalakh*. The lady cast the stone outwards toward where Abimelech was applying fire to the door. As for the stone, it says “piece rider.” The first word is new, *pelakh*, a slice or piece, from the verb *palakh*, to split or slice.

The second word is *rekhev*. It signifies a vehicle, like a chariot. In this case, it is a rider, the upper millstone that rides upon the lower millstone and which then crushes the grain to make bread. Taking this piece of a rider, the lady has something else to crush...

⁵³ (con't) on Abimelech's head and crushed his skull.

al rosh avimelekh vatarits eth gulgaltho – “upon head Abimelech and crushed his skull.” Like a Satsuma plum under the foot of an elephant, Abimelech's skull didn't stand a chance. It was crushed by the weight and force of the stone. The word *gulgaltho*, skull, is where the name Golgotha, Place of the Skull, is derived from. With his skull crushed, but with enough life and sense left in him to talk...

⁵⁴ **Then he called quickly to the young man, his armorbearer,**

vayiqra m'herah el ha'naar nose kelav – “And called, quickly, unto the youth, lifter his articles.” The word armorbearer is a paraphrase, even if correct. A soldier would have someone young and not skilled in battle carry his things and do menial jobs for him. In a battle, this person would often be the one to finish off anyone his master had wounded in battle, following him and using a sword or spear for the task.

⁵⁴ (con't) **and said to him, “Draw your sword and kill me, lest men say of me, ‘A woman killed him.’” So his young man thrust him through, and he died.**

vayomer lo sh'loph kharbkha u-motheni pen yomru li ishah haragath'hu vayidq'rehu naaro vayamoth – “and said to him, ‘Draw your sword and kill me, lest saying of me, “Woman killed him.”’ And pierced him, his young man, and dies.”

The embarrassment of such a matter was so great that it encompasses the final words of Abimelech. Instead of spurring his men on to victory, calling out to the Lord, or some other worthy declaration, he is concerned about how people would view him if he was killed by a woman.

However, the sentiment is not unlike the satisfaction Deborah felt when Jael killed Sisera. Sisera, the great commander and foe of Israel was slain by a tent woman. As for Abimelech, exactly what he didn't want is what transpired. Generations later, at the time of David, the record of his death is recounted in 2 Samuel 11:18-21–

“Then Joab sent and told David all the things concerning the war, ¹⁹ and charged the messenger, saying, ‘When you have finished telling the matters of the war to the king, ²⁰ if it happens that the king's wrath rises, and he says to you: “Why did you approach so near to the city when you fought? Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall? ²¹ Who struck Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? Was it not a woman who cast a piece of a millstone on him from the wall, so that he died in Thebez? Why did you go near the wall?’—then you shall say, ‘Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.’””

Another connection to his death is made in the demise of Saul, the first person truly considered king over Israel when he, being wounded in battle, asked his own armorbearer to thrust him through. Unfortunately, the boy was too afraid and Saul had to dispatch himself to Sheol.

⁵⁵ And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they departed, every man to his place.

vayiru ish Yisrael ki meth avimelekh vayelkhu ish limqomo – “And saw men Israel that dead Abimelech, and went man to his place.” With the leader dead, the impetus to continue the battle was ended. There would be no point in taking the tower as there was nothing left of their hopes in serving under Abimelech as king. Thus, they simply abandoned the fight and went home.

⁵⁶ Thus God repaid the wickedness of Abimelech, which he had done to his father by killing his seventy brothers.

vayeshev elohim eth raath avimelekh asher asah l’abiv l’harog eth shivim ekhav – “And returned, God, evil Abimelech which did to his father, to kill seventy his brothers.” The expression that one’s evil is returned upon his head is seen in the next verse. It is also found in 1 Samuel 25 where the evil of Nabal is said to be returned upon his head.

However, that is left out here because the casting of the stone on Abimelech’s head was not evil. It was positive retribution. The fact that he died is sufficient to show that the evil was returned to him. Ellicott, however, identifies the irony expressed in these words, saying, “The murderer of his brothers ‘on one stone’ is slain by a stone flung on his head.”

God, the overseer of the stream of time and existence, determined that there should be recompense for what Abimelech had done. Thus, the words of prophecy were given to Jotham and they were fulfilled accordingly in the demise of Abimelech. Likewise...

⁵⁷ And all the evil of the men of Shechem God returned on their own heads,

v’eth kal raath anshe sh’khem heshiv elohim b’rosham – “And all evil, men Shechem, returned God in their heads.” Here, the idiom is fully expressed. The men of Shechem committed evil and God returned evil on their heads for what they had done in supporting the killing of the house of Jerubbaal...

^{57 (fin)} and on them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal.

vatavo alehem qilalath yotham ben yerubaal – “and came upon them curse Jotham, son Jerubbaal.” This confirms that the words of Jotham were words of prophecy, given to

proclaim what the outcome of their wickedness would be. Just as it was proclaimed, so it came to pass.

The meanings of the names are: Shechem, (Having a Sense of) Responsibility. Jotham, Yehovah is Upright. Jerubbaal, Let Baal Strive. As for the name Jerubbaal, rather than Gideon, it alone is mentioned in this chapter nine times. Nine, according to Bullinger, nine is the number of finality and judgment.

*Forces are at work in this fallen world
And they will continue until the end
Eventually, God's plan will be fully unfurled
And the human heart will no longer need to mend*

*Until that day, Satan is hard at work
Infecting minds and troubling souls
But there will be an end to that insufferable jerk
When have been completed all redemption's goals*

*Don't be caught up in the strong delusion
Instead, fix your eyes on Jesus before it's too late
Someday, maybe soon, there will be complete confusion
Get right with the Lord and avoid a terrible fate*

II. Explaining the Typology

Chapter 9 of Judges is long and filled with a load of detail. The first half, verses 1-21, were previously explained as the final seven years of the time of the tribulation. Jotham pronounced his parable and curse over the people and ran away, dwelling at Beer.

At the time designated by God, the tribulation period, the final seven years of Daniel's seventy sevens, will be ushered in. As noted in the explanation of the first half of the chapter, Abimelech pictures those who reject Christ, but that is ultimately fulfilled in the Antichrist.

The purpose of the seventy sevens was stated in Daniel 9:24 –

*“Seventy weeks are determined
For your people and for your holy city,
To finish the transgression,*

To make an end of sins,
To make reconciliation for iniquity,
To bring in everlasting righteousness,
To seal up vision and prophecy,
And to anoint the Most Holy.”

As Christ accomplished those things for Israel, their rejection of Him meant exile. They are like Abimelech, having given themselves their own name, “My Father is King.” If the Lord isn’t their father, that means – by default – that the devil is. Jesus said this to them in John 8:44, “You are of *your* father, the devil.”

It is the reason why Jesus said this to the church in Revelation –

“I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and *I know* the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but *are* a synagogue of Satan.” Revelation 2:9

He repeats this idea in Revelation 3:9. Those Jews who reject Christ are not true Jews. Paul conveys that same thought in Romans 2. They do not belong to Christ, and therefore, they do not belong to God. The Antichrist is the ultimate fulfillment of this attitude. In his destruction, this apostate state among the Jews will end.

The rejection of God’s plan is emblematic of the killing of the seventy sons of Jerubbaal. Only the youngest, Jotham, was left. He represents the final seven years of the plan. But even during the tribulation, this rejection will continue.

Abimelech was “kinged” in Shechem. However, verse 22 began with, “And wrestled, Abimelech, over Israel three years.” Keil defined this period as a form of “tyrannical despotism,” something that seems likely under the Antichrist.

This three-year period could point to the midpoint of the tribulation period as three and one half is more than three years, but it probably just points to the meaning of the number three, Divine Perfection. There is a time when God’s plans will meet the perfect time for completion.

At that time, God will send an evil spirit to cause the final events of the tribulation period to come about. The Antichrist will do the things foretold by Jesus and Paul and the people will realize he is not their Messiah at all.

The purpose of this was stated in verse 24, “To go violence seventy sons, Jerubbaal.” In other words, the purpose of the seventy sevens was obliterated in the selection of the Antichrist. Therefore, he must be removed for the final matter of reconciliation to be settled.

But this goes beyond the ending of the Antichrist. Jotham’s prophecy noted that the ending of those who allied with him was to come upon them as well. That was stated again in verse 24. This period extends beyond just Jews, though. The treaty of the Antichrist deals with Israel and the nations.

Hence, verse 25 noted the ambush on the tops of the mountains. As a mountain is synonymous with a large but centralized group of people, being plural it means that various groups of people are being referred to, as one would expect in the end times battles.

In verse 26, Gaal, the son of Ebed was introduced. Gaal means Loathing, Son of Slave. His name seems to be derived from the account. He then typifies the spirit of ill-will sent between Abimelech and the masters of Shechem.

He represents the state of loathing that arises in those who remained under the law (Slave) and their supposed Messiah. As I said in that verse, “They have rejected Abimelech and have now aligned with Gaal.”

They know this guy is not their Messiah, and they see that the temple has not brought about their salvation. Hence, the curious words of verse 28 said –

“Who *is* Abimelech, and who *is* Shechem, that we should serve him? *Is he* not the son of Jerubbaal, and *is not* Zebul his officer?”

Gaal, this state of loathing, notes that the Antichrist is nobody, that Shechem, (Having a Sense of) Responsibility (living by the law), is nothing, and Habitation (the temple) is its overseer. The Jews completely abandon these things. Abimelech is identified as a son, even if illegitimate, with Jerubbaal (Let Baal Strive).

Not realizing that Jesus has already prevailed, these Jews reject the entire plan God has set forth for their restoration as detailed in Daniel. Instead, Gaal said, “Serve men Hamor, father Shechem! And why we serve him – we?”

In this, he uses the word *anshe*, men, instead of *baale*, masters. As seen in previous sermons, Hamor, Red One, pictures Adam, the man made from the red soil of the earth, which the name Adam implies. *Adam* (ruddy) comes from *adom*, to be red.

What is being said is that these end-times Jews have rejected the Lord Jesus, they now reject the thought of the temple and the law saving them, and so they have returned to man as their god. Man must save himself, period. No law, no Savior, etc.

Man is his own beginning, god, and end purpose. It is the inevitable state man faces without understanding God and what He has done in Christ.

Next, Zebul, Habitation, meaning the temple and its rites, notifies Abimelech of the people's rejection of him, even "adversarying" the city against him. Looking ahead at their thoughts, one can see what is on their minds, "This guy is not our Messiah! We reject the entire notion of what he stands for and everything associated with him, including this temple."

Gaal (Loathing), the spirit of ill-will has risen up to fulfill the parable and curse of Jotham. Without going through every detail, what is recorded of the battle is given to show this. Ultimately, what it says in Daniel 11:41 is what that is pointing to –

"He will also invade the beautiful land, and many will fall..."

Despite innumerable translations botching that verse, it doesn't say "many countries." It is simply speaking of the people in the land. The evil spirit between the coming Antichrist and the people who once followed him will be for their doom.

In verse 37, it mentioned the Soothsayers' Oak. The only reason I can think of why this is mentioned is because within Israel, even today, there are still people who practice witchcraft, divination, and so forth.

The temple will be set aside for those who want to go that route, but Israel, being Israel, will allow whatever people want to do to continue to flourish, just as they always have. Very rarely in their history is it noted that good kings arose and removed other gods, divination, and other such things from their land.

At this time, however, the great insurrection against the Antichrist will be quashed. Gaal (Loathing) and his brothers will be cast out. Also, it said Abimelech dwelt at Arumah, High, Elevated, or Exalted. This may refer to what it says in Daniel 11 –

“Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt [*rum*] and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done.” Daniel 11:36

Paul also refers to this in 2 Thessalonians 2. The final verses about Shechem being destroyed and the city being sowed with salt seems to be referring to the final ending of the sacrifices and offerings of the temple as detailed in Daniel 9:27.

Despite that accomplishment by Abimelech, the narrative continued with those who gathered together in the tower of Shechem who still needed to be dealt with. In order to destroy them, it says he went up to Mount Zalmon.

As noted, Zalmon comes from *tselem*, image. Abarim defined it as Image Guy. That coincides with what it says in Revelation 13 –

“He was granted *power* to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.” Revelation 13:15

Mount Zalmon refers to those people who have aligned with the Antichrist. In taking “axes in his hand,” coming from a word, *qadam*, associated with aforeside (*qedem*), it appears to be telling us that the Antichrist will acknowledge a god from times past. If so, that is explained in Daniel 11:39 –

“Thus he shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge.”

The final battle mentioned is that of Thebez or Brightness. It is where Abimelech finally meets his end. Paul refers to the end of the Antichrist in 2 Thessalonians 2 –

“And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.”

-2 Thessalonians 2:8

Understanding that the Antichrist is simply the embodiment of the rejection of Christ that has existed since His coming, saying that Abimelech is killed is saying that all rejection of Christ will end at that time. The actual demise of the Antichrist is that he will be cast alive into the Lake of Fire.

The ignoble way that Abimelech was ended, meaning by the hand of a woman with a piece of a millstone, is a way of showing how “rejection of the gospel” will die an ignoble death.

Golgotha, the place of the skull, is where his defeat lies. However, the actual end of Abimelech came with a sword. The law itself is what condemns and brings an end to those who reject Christ. Jesus alone fulfilled it, and He did so at the place of the skull.

Only through coming to Him can such a fate be avoided for the people of the world. This is the lesson of Abimelech. A rejection of what Christ has done is a rejection of who He is. When we share the gospel, it includes the words “Christ died for our sins.”

It is by law that we have the knowledge of sin. It is in the breaking of law that we become sinners. John tells us that if we say that we have not sinned, we make God a liar, and His word is not in us.

Let us accept the gospel, acknowledge that God is truthful and that we have sinned. In this, we can then receive His mercy by believing that Jesus has paid our sin debt. This is what God asks of you today.

Closing Verse: *“And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.”*

-Daniel 11:45

Next Week: Judges 10:1-5 *Hola! No need to fear, so this sermon will tell...* (Tola and Jair, Judges of Israel) (31st Judges sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Abimelech, King of Shechem, Part IV

Now when all the men
Of the tower of Shechem had heard that, thinking it was neat
They entered the stronghold
Of the temple of the god Berith

And it was told Abimelech

That all the men of the tower of Shechem were gathered together
Then Abimelech went up to Mount Zalmon
He and all the people who were with him (what do you
-----suppose was the weather?)

And Abimelech took an ax in his hand and cut down
-----a bough from the trees
And took it and laid it on his shoulder, probably the right one
Then he said to the people who were with him
“What you have seen me do, make haste and do as I have done

So each of the people likewise cut down his own bough
And followed Abimelech, put them against the stronghold
And set the stronghold on fire above them
So that all the people of the tower of Shechem died, about
-----a thousand men and women we are told

Then Abimelech went to Thebez, the guy just wouldn't quit
And he encamped against Thebez and took it

But there was a strong tower in the city
And all the men and women—all the people of the city
Fled there and shut themselves in
Then they went up to the top of the tower, maybe holding
-----a planning committee

So Abimelech came as far as the tower
And fought against it, even though it was higher
And he drew near the door of the tower
To burn it with fire

But a certain woman dropped an upper millstone, aiming
-----for the cull
On Abimelech's head and crushed his skull

Then he called quickly to the young man, his armorbearer
And said to him, “Draw your sword and kill me
-----my reputation would be fried!
Lest men say of me, ‘A woman killed him’

So his young man thrust him through, and he died

And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead
They departed, every man to his place, according to their druthers
Thus God repaid the wickedness of Abimelech
Which he had done to his father by killing his seventy brothers

And all the evil of the men of Shechem
God returned on their own heads, leading to their fall
And on them came the curse
Of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 10:1-5 (TOLA AND JAIR, JUDGES OF ISRAEL)

In the NIV Life Application Study Bible that my mother gave me in 2001, this note is provided concerning our verses today –

“In five verses we read about two men who judged Israel for a total of 45 years, yet all we know about them besides the length of their rules is that one had 30 sons who rode around on 30 donkeys. What are you doing for God that is worth noting? When your life is over, will people remember more than just what was in your bank account or the number of years you lived?”

Well, that is why it is called a life application study Bible. It applies the Bible to your daily life, but not much more. Actually, we know a lot more about these men than the commentary cited. We know that their time of judgeship comes after Abimelech. We know their names and the names of the father and grandfather of one of them.

We also know the tribes they are from and where one of them ruled. We also see where the sons of one of them led the towns which they possessed and where those towns were located.

If we have read the Bible several times and remember what is in it, we can recall even more things about them as well based on their genealogies, etc. So, a good life application concerning the NIV’s life application comment is that we will get out of the Bible what we are willing to look for, and that not everyone, even a scholar writing a commentary, may have provided the very basics of what is presented.

In other words, read your Bible, but read it contemplatively and carefully. Consider what is presented and ask questions of the text concerning what you read.

Text Verse: *“Make me understand the way of Your precepts;
So shall I meditate on Your wonderful works.” Psalm 119:27*

The idea conveyed by the NIV commentary is partially right. The contents of these five verses are not as detailed as many of the Judges stories we have seen or will see. However, by the time we have finished these few verses, you will see that there is a great deal we can learn from what is said here.

In fact, even I was surprised at the amount of detail and what it is telling us about the future. The pages of Judges have thus far taken us on a journey through a great deal of redemptive history. We have seen amazing details concerning the history of Israel which includes our own dispensation and the time just after it, meaning the tribulation period.

Having evaluated that period in great detail, including a lengthy passage pointing us to the coming of the Antichrist, what is ahead? Will we have new pictures of some other era of Israel's history, or will it continue the narrative that we began in Judges 1, moving forward in time beyond the tribulation?

I didn't know as I entered into the verses. But by the time I was through evaluating the mechanics of them, the answer was readily apparent. With that said, let us enter into the passage and take a careful look at each verse. From there, we can then discover the typology behind them.

After reviewing seemingly innumerable passages since Genesis 1:1, I am fully convinced that typology is the main substance that is to be discovered within the pages of Scripture.

Every story, and every detail of every story, is provided not only for a literal/historical account of what has taken place, but to tell us marvelous details about what God in Christ means for the people of the world.

Such great things as this are all to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. A Man of Issachar (verses 1, 2)

With Abimelech (My Father is King) out of the picture, the narrative turns to two judges whose lives are almost completely overlooked. Of them, like others, Keil says –

“Of these two judges no particular deeds are mentioned, no doubt because they performed none.” Keil

It is a sentiment that fails to understand the purpose of the biblical narrative. As has been seen, even if minimal detail is given, that which is provided is there for a reason: typology. God is telling us a story and is using only the relevant details to convey that story.

These judges may have built great cities (1 Kings 12:25), led valiant battles (Judges 8:13), married lots of wives (2 Samuel 5:13), and so forth. However, those details, in regard to the lives of these men, are not relevant to the typology being provided.

Despite this, and with the sparsest details provided, it is possible to glean quite a bit from the minimal descriptions given of them...

¹After Abimelech there arose to save Israel Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo,

The words are unusual: *vayaqum akhare avimelekh l'hovoshia eth Yisrael tola ben puah ben dodo* – “And arises after Abimelech to save Israel Tola, son Puah, son Dodo.” The reason the words are unusual is because they include the name of the grandfather. It is a rare thing and not seen in any other judge’s genealogy.

The reason for this is probably to avoid confusion concerning the ancestry of these two. Both Tola and Puah are family names.

Having said that, one tradition says that the term *ben dodo*, or son of Dodo, is an appellative, not a name. The word “son” can mean a designation rather than a literal sonship. That will be explained when the name Dodo is defined.

The word used to describe Tola is *qum*, to arise or stand. We are not told how his judgeship came about or for what reason he arose or was raised up. He simply arose to save Israel.

Further, it notes that his ascension was after Abimelech. Thus, there was no overlap in their times of judging. But also, Abimelech’s time over Israel was one of usurpation, appointing and establishing himself as a sovereign. This is not the case with Tola.

As for the names, Tola and Puah are family names of brothers of the sons of Issachar who were first mentioned in Genesis 46:13. There, with a variant spelling of Puah, it says—

“The sons of Issachar *were* Tola, Puvah, Job, and Shimron.”

They are again recorded in Numbers 26:23, also with the variant spell of Puah –

“The sons of Issachar according to their families *were*: of Tola, the family of the Tolaites; of Puah [Puvah], the family of the Punites.”

They are listed once again in 1 Chronicles 7:1 with the same spelling as in this Judges account –

“The sons of Issachar *were* Tola, Puah, Jashub, and Shimron—four *in all*.”

The name Tola is from *tola*, a crimson grub worm from which is derived the scarlet (purple) colored dye used for the crimson colors of the tabernacle referred to in Exodus. That worm is used to describe the coming Messiah in Psalm 22 –

“But I *am* a worm [*tola*], and no man;
A reproach of men, and despised by the people.
⁷ All those who see Me ridicule Me;
They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, *saying*,
⁸ ‘He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him;
Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!’” Psalm 22:6-8

The name means Crimson Worm or simply Worm.

The name Puah may come from one of several roots. If from *peh*, it means Mouth, Utterance, Lip, etc. (Abarim). If from *poh*, it may mean Here (NASB). Lange describes its root this way, “Puah is Chaldee for *rubia tinctorum*, or madder red.” Thus, it would mean Madder.

The name Dodo is from *dod*, beloved, love, or uncle. It means something like Beloved, His Beloved, or Loving. Because of the unusual reference to a grandfather (as noted above), some have suggested this name is being used as an appellative. Thus, it would be “son of his uncle (or cousin).” If so, it would be referring to Abimelech mentioned in verse 1.

However, Abimelech was from Manasseh, not Issachar. Thus, this is unlikely.

¹ (con’t) **a man of Issachar;**

ish yisaskhar – “man Issachar.” This corresponds with the family names mentioned above from the tribe of Issachar. Issachar means He is Wages.

¹ (con’t) **and he dwelt in Shamir in the mountains of Ephraim.**

There is an emphasis in the words: *v'hu yoshev b'shamir b'har ephrayim* – “and HE dwelling in Shamir in Mount Ephraim.” The emphasis seems to be because, despite being of Issachar, Tola dwelt in a more centralized location.

Shamir comes from *shamir*, a thorn (e.g. Isaiah 10:17) or a hard stone (e.g. Ezekiel 3:9). It is from the same root as *shamar*, to guard or keep watch. Strong's sees the connection between the two as a guard is the one who would prick another like a thorn or a hard pointed stone as a defense. The name thus means Guard, Adamant, or Sharp Point.

As seen many times, a *har* (mount) is a lot of something gathered. It is synonymous with a large but centralized group of people.

Ephraim means both Twice Fruitful and Ashes.

² He judged Israel twenty-three years; and he died and was buried in Shamir.

vayishpot eth Yisrael esrim v'shalosh shanah vayamath vayiqaver b'shamir – “And judges Israel twenty and three year, and dies, and buried in Shamir.” The word *shaphat*, to judge, is used. Thus, he was a valid judge of Israel and not a usurper like Abimelech.

Bullinger does not define the number 23. This is what we learn concerning this person, Tola. He arose, judged, and died...

*Twice fruitful! This is the work of the Lord
It is a defining mark of what He has done
He has taken away the enmity of the sword
And united His people, together as one*

*It was His afflictions that made it so
His cross, His death, and His glorious rising again
For our sakes, to the cross He did go
To redeem the souls of His children*

*He is the One who guards Israel
And watches over all of the sons of men
Of His glorious work, Scripture does tell
The wonderful workings of Christ, for God's children*

II. The Gileadite (verses 3-5)

³ After him arose Jair, a Gileadite;

vayaqum akharav yair ha'giladi – “And arises after him Jair the Gileadite.” Again, it notes that this judge arose, just as Tola did. Likewise, it is after Tola. Thus, there is no overlap in their times of judging Israel.

He is noted as Jair. The name is derived from *or*, to be or become light. Thus, his name means Enlightener, He Enlightens, He Will Diffuse Light, One Giving Light, etc.

The Gilead means The Perpetual Fountain.

This person is connected to the name mentioned in Numbers 32 and Deuteronomy 3. That will be looked at shortly. Of him...

^{3 (con't)} and he judged Israel twenty-two years.

vayishpot eth Yisrael esrim ushtayim shanah “and judges Israel twenty and two year.” Like Tola, the wording means he is one who judges. It is a legitimate ruling of the people under the Lord. As for the duration of his time as judge, Bullinger notes –

“TWENTY-TWO being the double of eleven, has the significance of that number in an intensified form,—disorganization and disintegration, especially in connection with the Word of God. For the number two is associated with the second person of the Godhead, the living Word.”

The main thing Jair is historically remembered for is...

⁴ Now he had thirty sons who rode on thirty donkeys;

The words of verse 4 are unusual and exciting. First, to determine meaning, they will be looked at in individual clauses: *v'hi lo shloshim banim rokhvim al shloshim ayarim* – “And is, to him, thirty sons, riding upon thirty donkeys (villages).”

The number thirty is defined by Bullinger –

“THIRTY being 3 x 10, denotes in a higher degree the perfection of Divine order, as marking the right moment.” E.W. Bullinger

The word translated as donkey is *ayir*. It is a colt, a young donkey. The word comes from *ur*, to rouse oneself or awaken. The connection is that of raising (bearing) a burden. This type of donkey pictures ruling status. This is seen in Zechariah –

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your King is coming to you;
He *is* just and having salvation,
Lowly and riding on a donkey,
A colt [*ayir*], the foal of a donkey.” Zechariah 9:9

Thus, to us, the seemingly comical note of “thirty sons, riding upon thirty donkeys,” is actually equivalent to saying, “thirty sons who ruled.” Of these sons, it next says...

⁴ (con’t) **they also had thirty towns,**

u-shloshim ayarim lahem – “and thirty donkeys (villages) to them.” There is a play on words here. The word translated as donkey of the previous verse, and the word translated as “town” in this verse are identical except with the later added vowel points.

For fun, by transposing the thought one could say they rode upon the cities and they ruled upon the donkeys and the meaning would become clear, this is how wordplay works.

⁴ (con’t) **which are called “Havoth Jair” to this day,**

lahem yiqreu khavoth yair ad hayom hazeh – “to them called Havoth Jair unto the day, the this.” The name Khavoth is the plural of the word *khavah*, an encampment or village. That is the same name as *Khavah*, Eve, Adam’s wife. It means Life-Giving or Life. As such, the village is life-giving or a living place where the bustle of life occurs.

Therefore, the name Havoth Jair means something like Villages of the Enlightener, but with the understanding that it is Life Giving or Livings (Villages) of the Enlightener.

The surprising part of the first Jair mentioned in Numbers is his genealogy. He is reckoned as a son of Manasseh, rather than a son of Judah, despite Machir’s daughter having married Hezron, a grandson of Judah.

This could be because Hezron was old when he married her and already had other children. He may not have wanted this son to interfere with the inheritance rights of his other children, so their son was reckoned through Manasseh.

Confusion arises concerning the number of the cities. In 1 Chronicles 2, Jair is said to have twenty-three cities. However, in Deuteronomy 3, Moses says there are sixty.

This is often looked at as a contradiction, but that is because they don't see that the term Khavoth Jair is being used in both a wider and a narrower sense. In 1 Chronicles 2, it says –

“(Geshur and Syria took from them the towns of Jair, with Kenath and its towns—sixty towns.) All these *belonged to* the sons of Machir the father of Gilead.”

-1 Chronicles 2:23

What this means is that when Moses speaks of the sixty towns of Jair in Deuteronomy 3, he is referring to everything taken by both Jair and Nobah. In Numbers, it is used in its stricter sense, meaning only the cities captured by Jair. The wider sense used in Deuteronomy is inclusive of what Nobah took, meaning Kenath and its daughter villages.

Here in Judges 10, it says that the thirty sons have thirty villages. There is no contradiction in this. The sons of Jair were given thirty of the sixty towns in this area to rule, and they were called by the name of their father within the wider sense of the term mentioned above. Of these cities, it next says...

⁴ (con't) **which *are* in the land of Gilead.**

asher b'erets ha'gilad – “which in land the Gilead.” It is the land west of the Jordan. This is the same area where the next Judge, Jephthah, will exercise his time over Israel. As noted, the Gilead means The Perpetual Fountain.

The unusual nature of the words is seen in the repetition of the word *ayarim* and a twice repeated *lahem* (to them).

v'hi lo shloshim banim rokhvim al shloshim ayarim u-shloshim ayarim lahem lahem yiqreu khavoth yair ad hayom hazeh asher b'erets ha'gilad – “And is, to him, thirty sons, riding upon thirty donkey (villages), and thirty villages (donkeys) to them, to them called Havoth Jair unto the day, the this, which in land the Gilead.”

The pun on the word donkey/village was explained. The translation of the “to them” which is often ignored by translators should not be. Rather, the translation as I gave it with the parenthetical inserts explains the meaning. It begins a new thought. It gives the idea of “Even to them, such and so.”

⁵ And Jair died and was buried in Camon.

vayamath yair vayiqaver b’qamon – “And dies, Jair, and buried in Camon.” Not much was recorded of him except the note about his sons and his time of ruling, but it is sufficient for him to be remembered as a judge of Israel.

The name Qamon is found only here in Scripture. It is derived from *qum*, to arise. Thus, it signifies Elevation, Height, or Arising.

*The Enlightener! Christ is the One
His light has shown forth for all the world
The marvelous things our Lord has done
Are in the word, waiting to be unfurled*

*He who is the Judge of Israel
Christ the Lord leads them through the ages
Saving them and keeping them, so the word does tell
It is carefully revealed in its precious pages*

*And He has called out to the Gentiles too
The Enlightener has shown forth for them as well
He is the Lord our God, faithful and true
Come, let us discover what the word does tell*

III. Pictures of Christ

The words *vayaqum akhare avimelech*, And arises after Abimelech, necessitate that the verses we have looked are to be considered as chronological. When a passage says something like, “And it happened...” it may be chronological, categorical, etc. However, the word “after” demands a chronological approach to what is presented.

Abimelech anticipates the coming rule of the Antichrist. After that period, meaning during the tribulation period, the next dispensation is the Millennium, the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth.

It is the time when Israel will finally recognize who Jesus is and they will serve Him. The five verses we have just analyzed anticipate that time.

After Abimelech, the one to deliver Israel is Tola, the son of Puah, the son of Dodo. Said literally, Worm, son of Utterance, son of His Beloved. To explain the *tola*, or worm, Psalm 22 was cited, “But I *am* a worm [*tola*], and no man.”

David, under inspiration and in anticipation of the coming Messiah, proclaimed that he would be called Worm. Like the crimson grub, He is the one whose crimson blood stained the cross of Calvary.

He is the son of Puah: the Word of God, the Utterance spoken by the Creator – the Son of God.

He is the son of Dodo, the Son of His Beloved – the Son of God.

After that, Tola is noted as a man of Issachar, a man of He is Wages. Israel will recognize that Jesus is the Wages given to purchase them from the penalty of the law.

It next said that Tola was dwelling in Shamir. This explains Jesus’ rule in the Millennium. As noted, the word is from *shamir*, a thorn, and that is from the same root as *shamar*, to guard or keep watch. It is the exact description of the Lord as noted in Psalm 121:4. He is the Shomer Yisrael, the One keeping Israel –

“He will not allow your foot to be moved;
He who keeps you will not slumber.
⁴Behold, He who keeps Israel [*shomer Yisrael*]
Shall neither slumber nor sleep.” Psalm 121:4

He maintained them throughout their history under the law, and He will maintain them as His people throughout the Millennium, even to its completion –

“Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number *is* as the sand of the sea. ⁹They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. ¹⁰The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the

lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *are*. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” Revelation 20:7-10

Shamir is noted as being in Mount (a gathering) Ephraim (Twice Fruitful/Ashes). This thought has consistently referred to Jesus being the Messiah of both the Jew and the Gentile (Twice Fruitful), a right that came because of His afflictions.

That then refers to those who will reign with Him in the Millennium –

“And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.” Revelation 20:4

This resurrection involves anyone, Jew or Gentile, who refuses the mark of the beast. They will live and reign with Christ Jesus during the Millennium. The reign of twenty-three years is noted. It is a period not defined by Bullinger, and for good reason. The reign of Christ during the Millennium is not fully defined by Tola.

It is certain that the period of the next judge, Jair, continues the typology because his time as judge also says *vayaqum akharav yair* – “And arose after him Jair.” Earthly judges die. In order to maintain the typology, the “after him” is provided.

He is noted as *yair ha’giladi*, He Enlightens the Perpetual Fountainite. The Light is Christ. The Perpetual Fountain is the Spirit who issues from Him. Isaiah 60 provides the Millennial light analogy –

“The sun shall no longer be your light by day,
Nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you;
But the LORD will be to you an everlasting light,
And your God your glory.

²⁰ Your sun shall no longer go down,
Nor shall your moon withdraw itself;
For the LORD will be your everlasting light,
And the days of your mourning shall be ended.

²¹ Also your people *shall* all *be* righteous;
They shall inherit the land forever,
The branch of My planting,

The work of My hands,
That I may be glorified.
²² A little one shall become a thousand,
And a small one a strong nation.
I, the LORD, will hasten it in its time.” Isaiah 60:19-22

Zechariah, also referring to the Millennium, provides the fountain analogy –

“In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.” Zechariah 13:1

Of Jair’s rule, it is twenty-two years. As noted by Bullinger, it is an intensified form of eleven: disorganization and disintegration, especially in connection with the Word of God. Two is associated with the second Person of the Godhead, the living Word.

The Millennium is certainly associated with Jesus, the second Person of the Godhead. But a time of heightened disorganization and disintegration? That seems like it is contradictory to the Millennium, but it actually isn’t.

There are numerous verses that indicate such a state. Despite being a time of Christ’s rule, there will astonishingly be those who rebel against it, both within the land and outside of it –

Within: “No more shall an infant from there *live but a few days*,
Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days;
For the child shall die one hundred years old,
But the sinner *being* one hundred years old shall be accursed.” Isaiah 65:20

Without: “And it shall come to pass *that* everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. ¹⁷ And it shall be *that* whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. ¹⁸ If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they *shall have no rain*; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. ¹⁹ This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.” Zechariah 14:16-19

However, because these two judges reflect the time of the Millennium, it would seem appropriate to combine the time of the two judgeships into one as well, meaning forty-five years.

It is a derivative of 9 and 5. Nine signifies finality or judgment. Finality is an exacting mark of the Millennium, the final dispensation of the seven-thousand-year span of man on earth. It is the time when judgment on sin is finally complete in mankind. However, the Millennium itself is stamped with the marvelous number five, GRACE.

Of Jair, it said that he had thirty sons, riding upon thirty donkeys. Thirty is “in a higher degree the perfection of Divine order, as marking the right moment.”

It is the “right moment” for the final dispensation to be realized. Christ’s work is completed. The nation has come to Him. Those of the tribulation, both Jew and Gentile, are raised to rule (pictured by the sons on donkeys). And, finally, harmony is realized in the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The rule of these sons is said to be in Havoth Jair, Life-Giving of the Enlightener. An exact description of this is found during the promised Millennium in Revelation 20 –

“Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” Revelation 20:6

These words were then said to be in the land of the Gilead, the Perpetual Fountain. Just as Christ is the Perpetual Fountainite, so His people will dwell in the fellowship of the eternal Spirit of God, the Perpetual Fountain –

“Until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high,
And the wilderness becomes a fruitful field,
And the fruitful field is counted as a forest.” Isaiah 32:15

That prophecy refers to the time after the exile of Israel in the latter days, just as the typology here anticipates. It is during this timeframe that Jair was said to be buried in Qamon. As noted, the name is derived from *qum*, to arise. Isaiah also prophesied of that for the redeemed of the Lord –

“Arise [*qum*], shine;
For your light has come!

And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you.

²For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth,
And deep darkness the people;
But the LORD will arise over you,
And His glory will be seen upon you.

³The Gentiles shall come to your light,
And kings to the brightness of your rising.” Isaiah 60:1-3

The old adage, the devil is in the details, doesn’t quite explain the matter when it comes to Scripture. Rather, we can boldly proclaim: Christ is in the contents! These five verses, seemingly sparse in their contents, tell us about two of the judges of Israel.

And yet, they contain a marvelous tapestry of what is ahead for us in the stream of redemptive history. At the beginning of the sermon, I mentioned the commentary on these verses from the NIV Life Application Study Bible.

Their comments were not very deep, nor did they comprise everything that they claimed was in these verses. And yet, I have remembered their brief words since the first and only time I read them well over twenty years ago.

This is because what they asked is actually quite important –

“What are you doing for God that is worth noting? When your life is over, will people remember more than just what was in your bank account or the number of years you lived?”

We, like the stories that we have been evaluating from Judges, are on a trip through history. Our lives are much shorter than it seemed when we were young. As we age, we realize that more and more. My granddaughter was born just three months and one day before I typed this sermon.

But what really caught me off guard is that my little baby, Tangerine, is now thirty-seven (shhhhh! Don’t tell anyone I said so). It was only yesterday that I held her in my arms for the first time and looked at her precious face.

My son isn’t far behind. The little boy is now a man. And yes, both of them have a couple of gray hairs 😊. Our lives are, as Moses says in Psalm 90, like grass. In the morning, it flourishes and grows up, and in the evening, it is cut down and withers.

What is it that you are doing for the cause of the Lord Jesus? Before you know it, your years will end and the time set to stand before Him will have arrived. The thought that goes through my mind daily is, "Use me up now, Lord."

Let the Lord and His coming kingdom be the constant thought on your mind. Be filled with the desire to be a part of what He is doing now. The days are coming to their fulfillment and what is left undone will not be called back for a second chance.

Read the word. Let it fill your mind. And then let the knowledge you glean from it be what directs your feet each moment of each day. To the glory of God who placed you here at this point in time, may it be so.

Closing Verse: *"So teach us to number our days,
That we may gain a heart of wisdom." Psalm 90:12*

Next Week: Judges 10:6-18 *The voice of the people sounds quite chagrined...* (We Have Sinned!) (32nd Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Tola and Jair, Judges of Israel

After Abimelech there arose to save Israel
Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a funny name it would seem
A man of Issachar
And he dwelt in Shamir in the mountains of Ephraim

He judged Israel twenty-three years, just short of
-----another leap year
And he died and was buried in Shamir

After him Jair, a Gileadite, arose among his peers
And he judged Israel twenty-two years

Now he had thirty sons who rode on thirty donkeys
They also had thirty towns, not too bad!
Which are called "Havoth Jair" to this day

Which are in the land of Gilead

And Jair died and was buried in Camon
And into the ground he was sown

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 10:6-18 (WE HAVE SINNED!)

There will not be an explanation of typology at the end of these verses, but there will be an explanation of why that is not yet needed. As for the verses, despite translational differences from the NKJV at times, the words are simple and clear in their meaning with one exception.

In the first clause of the final verse, the words become complicated and seemingly make no sense. What scholars argue will be noted. As for the translations, every single one of them that I reviewed, a total of thirty-nine translations, all carry the same general meaning.

However, in my translation, which seemed obvious to me from the start, the thought is presented in a completely different manner. Despite this, I confidently finished the analysis of the verse under the assumption that the translation was correct.

However, I could not verify if my thinking was right because Sergio was flying home from Italy. Despite that, about an hour later he responded from the flight still traveling over the Atlantic. He asked what I needed and I sent him the contents of verse 18, waiting anxiously to see if I would have to redo an hour of typing.

Text Verse: *"Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: ⁶ 'O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?' says the LORD. 'Look, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel! ⁷ The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, ⁸ if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. ⁹ And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, ¹⁰ if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it.'*

¹¹ 'Now therefore, speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, "Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I am fashioning a disaster and devising a plan against you. Return now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.'"" Jeremiah 18:5-11

It took a while, but Sergio finally responded, "I see no other better way to translate than the way you did." Boy did that make me happy. Then another message –

“Before I read your translation in Hebrew, it made perfect sense to me. I had no difficulty reading it. Then you started saying that others translate it differently, and I thought, ‘Why?? It’s so simple. We Hebrews say it that way all the time, even today.’”

Why something seemingly obvious was overlooked is a mystery to me, but I appreciated Sergio’s comments. He finished his words with, “Thank you for using Sergio’s Hebrew Services from the Air.” Rather, thank you, Sergio.

The text verse mirrors what is going on in today’s passage. And there is a reason for that. God is consistent in how He deals with people, including Israel. As we progress through the verses, try to keep this in mind. It pertains to individuals as much as it does to nations. Jeremiah 18 tells us this explicitly.

As for Israel’s attitude concerning their relationship with the Lord, John Lange beautifully expresses it, as well as the relationships of churches, denominations, and even nations today –

“Sin and forgiveness are the hinges of all history; especially of the history of Israel, including in that term the spiritual Israel of modern times. They follow each other like night and morning. As soon as the prayers and faith of a great man cease from among the people, and the earth is heaped over his grave, the new generation breaks loose, like an unrestrained youth.”

Other than his words about “the spiritual Israel,” he is exactly right. A church is only as sound as the leader of that church. A denomination will begin to apostatize as soon as one corrupt leader enters its body. And a nation will only follow the Lord as long as the leader of that nation is a proper example to his people.

The history of Israel is being outlined in the story of its judges. Let us consider how quickly the people departed from the Lord once a judge was gone. In learning the lesson of Israel’s judge, we can then consider our own walk before the Lord in a more perfect light.

It is the Lord, not a leader, to whom we should hold fast. Even if we are guided by a sound leader, we should never divert our attention from the Lord to the leader. He is there to motivate, direct, and teach, but only so far as it is with the Lord as the focus of the motivation, direction, and instruction.

This is a certain truth that is to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. We Have Sinned! (verses 6-10)

⁶Then the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD,

It doesn't say either, then, or again. Rather: *vayosiphu bene Yisrael laasoth ha'ra b'ene Yehovah*— "And added, sons Israel, to do the evil in eyes Yehovah." The words are identical to the opening clause of Judges 3:12 and Judges 4:1. It is as if there is a divine scale being added with weight with every evil act of Israel. And it isn't just evil, but "the evil." Saying this adds stress to the words.

This is the seventh of eight times it will be seen in Judges, and it will continue throughout the Old Testament, especially in the books of Kings and Chronicles.

For example, the word *ra*, or evil, is used nineteen times in Judges, but eight times it includes the article, *ha'ra*, the evil, when referring to the people's conduct before the Lord. As here, each time, it says the evil was done *b'ene Yehovah*, or "in eyes of Yehovah." The offense is personal in the relationship between the people and the Lord.

In Judges, the article *ha* is always used in relation to the conduct of the sons of Israel, meaning the people collectively. However, later, when kings rule the land, that same term will usually refer to the conduct of the king, being the one to do "the evil."

Thus, during the time of the Judges, the Lord is the ultimate leader of the people. It is the judge, the Lord's temporarily appointed leader, who is called to bring the people back from doing "the evil." Once the kingdom is established, it is the king himself who causes the people to err or who brings them back to the Lord.

As for this instance of doing "the evil," it next says...

⁶ (con't) and served the Baals and the Ashtoreths,

Israel dines on a smorgasbord of rebellion, beginning with: *vayaavdu eth habalim v'eth ha'ashtaroth* — "and served the Baals and the Ashtaroth."

The false gods already named and worshipped in Judges, and which were overthrown by past judges, are the first to be mentioned. The Baals and the Ashtaroth were first named in Judges 2:13. At the time of Gideon, he destroyed the altar of Baal and the wooden image of Asherah that was upon it.

The worship of *baal* has been seen several times in Judges. The word means a master, owner, lord, etc. Among other things, for example, it can refer to a husband in relation to a wife, the owner of a piece of property, a master of assemblies, or the captain of the guard.

In this context, it is used in the sense of gods. They can be general gods, such as worshiping the sun or stars, or they can be the names of specific gods, such as Baal-Zebub, Baal-Berith, etc.

Ashtaroth is a plural word. It is the name of a Sidonian deity. The Asherahs were represented by large wooden pillars or images set up in honor of Ashtaroth.

In serving other gods, they are dealing falsely with the Lord. This is reflected in the name Israel – He Strives with God. Israel strives with God (for God) or he strives with God (against God). Either way, Israel strives with God. So it is when they worship the Lord or when they worship other gods.

Along with these, it next notes...

⁶ (con't) **the gods of Syria, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the people of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines;**

v'eth elohe aram v'eth elohe tsidon v'eth elohe moav v'eth elohe b'ne amon v'eth elohe plishtim – “and gods Aram, and gods Sidon, and gods Moab, and gods sons Ammon, and gods Philistines.” The apostasy of Israel spreads in seemingly every direction.

Aram was not yet a nation at this time, but the people group was to Israel's northeast. Sidon is to Israel's northwest. Moab is to Israel's southeast. Ammon is directly east. The Philistines lay on Israel's southwest.

Thus, Israel reached for the false gods within and without instead of holding fast to the Lord who had granted them their land in the first place. In all, seven sets of false gods are named in this one verse.

It is a sad and scathing indictment on the state of Israel that they were so willing to abandon the Lord in their search for religious pleasure and false spirituality.

As for the names, Aram means High or Elevated. Sidon comes from *tsud* – to hunt. Thus, it is Hunting Place. As it is on the coast, it means to hunt fish and thus, Fishery. Moab is the people group descended from Lot through the union with his older daughter. It means From Father.

The Ammonites were descendants of Lot through his younger daughter. Thus, they stood in relation to Israel as relatives. The name Ammon means A People based on her calling her son Ben Ammi, Son of My People.

The Philistines were from the area of Phoenicia. The name comes from *palash*, signifying to roll in the dust as an act of mourning. They are the Grievors or Weakeners. As for Israel, it next says...

⁶ (con't) **and they forsook the LORD and did not serve Him.**

vayaazvu eth Yehovah v'lo avaduhu – “and forsook Yehovah, and no served Him.” The words tell us that Israel simply walked away from the Lord. The people were so delighted with other gods that they left behind any part of the rites and rituals laid down in the law.

This would mean that the tabernacle was neglected, and the annual feasts were ignored. If they were observed, it would be considered serving the Lord, even if it was in conjunction with other gods, but these words clearly indicate that no service was given to the Lord, even if cultural aspects of the society – such as circumcision – may still have been practiced. Because of this...

⁷ **So the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel;**

vayikhar aph Yehovah b'Yisrael – “And burned nostril Yehovah in Israel.” It is the all-too-common expression where it is as if the Lord is standing in the midst of the people, fuming. His face is flushed, and smoke and fire come pouring out of His nose in righteous indignation. Therefore...

⁷ (con't) **and He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and into the hands of the people of Ammon.**

vayimkerem b'yad p'lishtim u-b'yad b'ne amon – “and sold them in hand Philistines and in hand sons Ammon.” This is a general statement of what is to come in the chapters ahead. As noted, Ammon was directly east of Israel.

The coming account of Jephthah in Judges 11 & 12 will detail the struggle between Israel and Ammon. Also, it was noted that the Philistines were located to Israel's southwest. The struggle against them will be noted in the lengthy account of Samson in Judges 13-16.

These two people groups oppressed Israel from both sides, like a vice squeezing until the pain of affliction was too much for them. Only then would they remember the Lord and turn to Him for divine assistance.

⁸ From that year they harassed and oppressed the children of Israel

The words make a devastating alliteration: *vayiratsu vayr'ottsu eth b'ne Yisrael ba'shanah hahi* – “And shattered, and crushed, sons Israel, in the year, the it.” The first word, *raats*, is used for the second and last time in Scripture. It signifies to shatter. The second word, *ratsats*, signifies to crush. Taken together, it gives the sense of a pot being cast down, shattered, and then someone stomping on the broken pieces, crushing them till they are like the fine powdery dust that blows in in the Gobi Desert.

One can imagine the land and the people being laid waste by the actions of those who came against them.

As for the words, “in the year, the it” or “in that year,” there is no explicit reference given. My best guess, because the narrative will next deal with the oppression of the sons of Ammon, is that this is referring to that account. Thus, the oppression of Ammon lasted...

^{8 (con't)} for eighteen years

sh'moneh esreh shanah – “Eight ten year.” It is the same period that Israel served under Eglon, King of Moab in Judges 3. Eighteen is either 2x9 or 3x6. 2x9 indicates division matched with finality or judgment. 3x6 indicates divine perfection matched with the number of man destitute of God. Both fit the situation.

Israel had the choice of serving the Lord or the false gods of the nations. They chose to serve the false gods until the finality of their judgment.

Likewise, this is the Lord's divinely set period for Israel while they are destitute of the Lord's favor. Israel is being instructed on what it means to serve the Lord or to serve their enemies.

8 (con't) —all the children of Israel who *were* on the other side of the Jordan in the land of the Amorites, in Gilead.

eth kal b'ne Yisrael asher b'ever ha'yarden b'erets ha'emori asher bagilad – “all sons Israel who in side the Jordan in land the Amorite who in the Gilead.” The term “in side the Jordan” is given based on the reference point of the writer. In this case, it means “on the other side of the Jordan.”

The Jordan means “the Descender.” Amorite came from *amar*, to utter or say. It means Renown. The Gilead means The Perpetual Fountain. In addition to vexing them on the other side of the Jordan, it also says...

⁹ Moreover the people of Ammon crossed over the Jordan to fight against Judah also, against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim,

vayaavru b'ne amon eth ha'yarden l'hilakhem gam bihudah u'b'binyamin uv-veith ephrayim – “And crossed over, sons Ammon, the Jordan, to fight also in Judah and in Benjamin and in house Ephraim.” The Ammonites weren't content to just harass the Israelites east of the Jordan, but they crossed the Jordan and attacked deep into the heart of Canaan.

Judah means Praise. It is the southern tribe of the land. Benjamin was just north of Judah. It means Son of the Right Hand. The house of Ephraim is north of Benjamin. Ephraim means Twice Fruitful and Ashes.

In the book of Hosea, Ephraim and the northern tribes of Israel are referred to synonymously several times. For example –

“I know Ephraim,
And Israel is not hidden from Me;
For now, O Ephraim, you commit harlotry;
Israel is defiled.” Hosea 5:3

It seems necessary to say this because the verses in Judges 10, especially verses 8 & 9, set up the narrative in Judges 11 and 12. In Judges 12, there is a great conflict between Jephthah and the men of Ephraim.

⁹ (con't) **so that Israel was severely distressed.**

vatetser l'Yisrael meod – “And distressed to Israel, greatly.” The same word, *yatsar*, was used in Judges 2:15 to describe the events in the book of Judges. Notice how Judges 2 parallels what is now said –

2:14 – They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths.

10:6 – Then the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals and the Ashtoreths.

2:14 – And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel.

10:7 – So the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel.

2:14 – and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around.

10:7 – and He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and into the hands of the people of Ammon.

2:14 – so that they could no longer stand before their enemies.

10:8 – From that year they harassed and oppressed the children of Israel.

2:15 – And they were greatly distressed [*yatsar*].

10:9 – So that Israel was severely distressed [*yatsar*].

Judges 2 gave a broad panorama of the coming stories recorded in Judges. The greater details of those earlier verses are being provided as the book continues to unfold.

¹⁰ **And the children of Israel cried out to the LORD,**

vayizaqu b'ne Yisrael el Yehovah – “And cried out, sons Israel, unto Yehovah.” It is not unlike the words of Judges 6 –

“So Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD.” Judges 6:6

This is the purpose of allowing the enemies of Israel to prevail over them. In serving other gods and forsaking the Lord, things don't go well. Israel remembered the stories of the past and realized that the path they have taken is wrong. They then turn back to the God of their fathers. Their cry is accompanied by an admission of guilt...

¹⁰ (con') saying, **"We have sinned against You, because we have both forsaken our God and served the Baals!"**

I'mor khatanu lakh v'ki azavnu eth elohenu vanaavod eth habalim – "to say, "Sinned to You, and because forsaken our God and served the Baals." The words "Sinned to You" openly and unambiguously acknowledge that they were responsible for their plight. When Gideon was told he was to deliver Israel, he asked, "O my lord, if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us?"

As a type of the gospel, his naivete is completely understandable. The Lord remained with Israel, even in their rejection of Him. Israel cried out to the Lord, but in a general way. The Lord then responded in a specific way, providing what they had already rejected, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the case of this narrative, Israel has realized that the Lord has been with them, but as a Father chastising His son for disobedience. They know this and openly admit it. In their confession, they acknowledge sins of omission, "we have forsaken our God," as well as sins of commission, "we have served the Baals."

In response, the Lord will remind them of seven deliverances He has provided. These, then, are set in contrast to the seven apostatizing influences noted in verse 6...

*Did I not deliver you on the day
When I made the long walk to Calvary?
What is it you are doing? What do you say?
This great offense you bring before Me?*

*I delivered you from the enemy and made you whole
Don't you know you were bought at a price?
Your burning passions you must control
It is I who restore you to paradise*

*You are seated in the heavenly places
If you truly belong to Me*

*Remove from yourself all disgraces
And live out your days as they are intended to be*

II. Go Cry Out to the Gods You Have Chosen! (verses 11-18)

¹¹ So the LORD said to the children of Israel, “*Did I not deliver you from the Egyptians and from the Amorites and from the people of Ammon and from the Philistines?*”

The words are purposefully anacoluthic (lacking grammatical sequence or coherence), leaving the verb unstated: *vayomer Yehovah el b’ne Yisrael halo mimitsrayim u-min ha’emori u-min b’ne amon u-min p’lishtim* – “And said Yehovah unto sons Israel, ‘Not from Egypt, and from the Amorite, and from sons Ammon, and from Philistines?’”

For clarity, the NKJV inserts these words to complete the thought: “Did I not deliver you?” However, the Lord omits what it was that He had done as a means of getting His people to think through their past.

Israel was delivered from Egypt in the book of Exodus. They were delivered from the Amorite in Numbers 21. They were delivered from Ammon who allied with Eglon in Judges 3. They were also delivered from the Philistines under Shamgar in Judges 3.

Without specifying how or by whom the Lord spoke to Israel, He reminds them of their past deliverances. Despite this, Israel continued to walk away from Him when things stabilized and life returned to normal. Understanding this, He continues...

¹² Also the Sidonians and Amalekites and Maonites oppressed you; and you cried out to Me, and I delivered you from their hand.

v’sidonim va’amaleq u-maon lakhatsu etkhem vatitsaqu elay va’ovoshia etkhem miyadam – “And Sidonians, and Amalek, and Maon oppressed you, and cried out unto Me, and I saved you from their hand.” The deliverance from the Sidonians may have been a part of the battle recorded in Joshua 11 where a great alliance came together against Joshua. In that battle, some of the enemies were chased to Greater Sidon, implying they were troops from that area fleeing to their homes.

The Lord delivered Israel from the Amalekites several times starting in Exodus 17. Of the final group, Maon, there is no recorded oppression from them. Because of this, some scholars defer to lesser texts, which read either Midian or Canaan.

There is no need for this. Maon is noted in 1 Samuel 23 and 25. There were inhabitants who oppressed Israel there and the people would have remembered that. The name means Abode or Place of Habitation. Despite all of this...

13 Yet you have forsaken Me and served other gods.

It is emphatic: *v'atem azavtem oti vataavdu elohim akherim* – “And you, you forsook Me, and served gods other.” The contrast is clearly stated for the people to consider their wickedness. The Lord delivered them from seven oppressors in the past. And yet they... they! forsook the Lord and served other gods despite all He had done for them...

13 (con't) Therefore I will deliver you no more.

laken lo osiph l'hovoshia etkhem – “Thus, no adding to save you.” He had repeatedly delivered them, and they repeatedly turned away from Him. He proved Himself faithful while they had proven themselves faithless. Therefore, He was washing His hands of them. If they loved the other gods so much, then...

14 “Go and cry out to the gods which you have chosen; let them deliver you in your time of distress.”

If thought through, the words are filled with irony and sarcasm: *l'ku v'zaaqu el ha'elohim asher b'kheartem bam hemah yovoshu lakhem b'eth tsarathkhem* – “Go! And cry out unto the gods which chosen in them. They save to you in time your distress.”

The gods that Israel chose are identified with their oppressors. In other words, these people groups had their own gods that they invented. Israel went after those gods. In doing so, the people whose gods Israel served oppressed them.

They did nothing but bring disaster to Israel, but the Lord tells them to go cry out for deliverance to the gods of their enemies. It would be laughable if it were not so sad.

15 And the children of Israel said to the LORD, “We have sinned!”

The verb itself carries the first-person construct. Thus, there is brevity being conveyed: *vayomru b'ne Yisrael el Yehovah khatanu* – “And said, sons Israel, unto Yehovah, ‘Sinned!’” The people collectively call out their state. With that, they speak their own emphatic words in response to the Lord’s emphatic pronouncement of verse 13...

¹⁵ (con't) **Do to us whatever seems best to You; only deliver us this day, we pray."**

aseh atah lanu k'khal ha'tov b'enekha akh hatsilenu na ha'yom ha'zeh – "Do, You, to us, according to all the good in Your eyes. Only, deliver us, we pray, the day, the this."

The Lord said: "And you, you forsook Me."

The people said: "Do, You, to us."

They understand what they did and acknowledge that whatever the Lord does to them is acceptable. However, they need immediate relief from their plight.

The words of these four verses form a short chiasm. Line a provides the people's appeal to the Lord. Line b gives the action or desired action of the Lord. Line c acknowledges the sin of the people. Line d carries the Lord's contrast to the people's petition. The anchor (x) provides the sarcastic admonition of the Lord to His disobedient children –

a. v.12 - And cried out unto Me.

b. v.12 - And I saved you from their hand.

c. v.13 - And you, you forsook me, and served gods other.

d. v.13 - Thus, no adding to save you.

x. v.14 - Go! And cry out unto the gods which chosen in them.

d. v.14 - They save to you in time your distress.

c. v.15 - And said, sons Israel, unto Yehovah, 'Sinned!

b. v.15 - Do, You, to us, according to all the good in Your eyes.

a. v.15 - Only, deliver us, we pray, the day the this.'"

Who is Israel's Savior? That is the question that Israel has struggled with throughout their history. It is not because the Lord hasn't made it evident to them. It is because they have continuously failed to see evidence of the Lord's hand in every moment of their existence.

Only when things get so bad that they have nowhere else to turn do they acknowledge the Lord and take the action necessary to be restored to Him. In this case, they have taken the first step. Here, they press forward to the next step...

¹⁶ **So they put away the foreign gods from among them and served the LORD.**

vayasiru eth elohe ha'nekhar miqirbam vayaavdu eth Yehovah – "And turned aside gods, the foreign, from their midst, and served Yehovah." Israel repented. They changed their

mind about their situation. Now, bearing fruits worthy of that repentance, the people removed the foreign gods.

The meaning is more than chucking out idols. Some foreign gods involved sun or star worship, sacrificing children, etc. The meaning is that the people removed the foreign gods from their presence and from their lives. They purified their hearts and devoted themselves to the Lord. Because of this...

16 (con't) And His soul could no longer endure the misery of Israel.

va'tiqtsar naphsho baamal Yisrael – “And reaped His soul in toil Israel.” The word *qatsar* is used. It signifies to curtail or shorten and is often used to indicate reaping.

In Judges 16, it is used when Delilah annoyed Samson to death. Here, it is as if the endurance of the Lord to ignore Israel's plight is shortened to the point where He has met His end of trying. Thus, the NKJV gives a good paraphrase of the intent.

17 Then the people of Ammon gathered together and encamped in Gilead. And the children of Israel assembled together and encamped in Mizpah.

The word “then” is a chronological word, something not implied in the verse: *vayitsaaqu b'ne amon vayakhanu bagilad vayeasphu b'ne Yisrael vayakhanu bamitspah* – “And cried out, sons Ammon, and camped in the Gilead, and gathered sons Israel, and camped in the Mizpah.”

Regardless of the timing of the event, the same word, *tsooq*, that was used in verse 12 concerning Israel crying out to Yehovah is now used concerning the Ammonites crying out a gathering for war.

The details in this verse and the next prepare us for the account of Jephthah in Judges 11. There is a gathering of the sons of Ammon to engage in battle in the Gilead, the Perpetual Fountain. In response to this, the sons of Israel come together and camp in the Mizpah, meaning The Watchtower.

This location will be mentioned twice in Judges 11. It is where Jephthah's home is. A variant spelling, Mizpeh, is also used to identify various places, including in Judges 11. The spelling of the location now may identify it as the same place where Jacob and Laban made their parting agreement in Genesis 31.

¹⁸ And the people, the leaders of Gilead, said to one another,

The words are rather difficult: *vayomru ha'am sare gilad ish el reehu* – “And said the people, ‘Rulers Gilead, man unto his friend.’” There is no easy way to identify what is being said. There is no “and” between the words people and rulers. Despite this, Ellicott says that people and rulers cannot be in apposition (referring to the same thing).

Other scholars, and all translations, place them in apposition, even though it is a very strange thing to do. The way I translated it, however, resolves the tension in the words. There is the main group gathered together, identified as “the people.” They speak to the rulers of Gilead collectively. In essence –

“Hey, rulers of Gilead, each of you talk to your friend and decide...”

¹⁸ (con’t) “Who is the man who will begin the fight against the people of Ammon?”

mi ha'ish asher yakhel l'hilakhem bivne amon – “who the man who begins to fight in sons Ammon?” In other words, “You rulers decide among yourselves who will begin the fight against the sons of Ammon. Whoever does this...”

¹⁸ (fin) He shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.”

yihyeh l'rosh l'khol yoshve gilad – “He shall be to head to all inhabiting Gilead.” The result of their previous proposition would be, “When you rulers have appointed their ruler, that person will be our overall ruler.” If this is correct, then the rulers in this verse are to be equated to the elders of Chapter 11 –

“It came to pass after a time that the people of Ammon made war against Israel. ⁵ And so it was, when the people of Ammon made war against Israel, that the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob. ⁶ Then they said to Jephthah, ‘Come and be our commander, that we may fight against the people of Ammon.’” Judges 11:4-6

Whether this is correct or not it is exactly what comes about. It also resolves the odd verbiage found in this last verse of Chapter 10.

The verses today refer to events occurring on both sides of the Jordan. The Jordan typologically anticipates the coming of Jesus in His first incarnation. He is the Descender.

Therefore, the coming narrative will deal with events both before His coming and after His coming.

The account of Jephthah in Judges 11 and 12 will center on events east of the Jordan, anticipating events that pertain to those prior to Christ's coming. Three Judges will be mentioned in quick succession at the end of Judges 12, all west of the Jordan.

Those will be followed by the account of Samson which deals with the oppression from the Philistines west of the Jordan. Thus, we can anticipate those things will deal with events after the coming of Christ.

As for the passage today, remember that the time markers inserted by the translators, such as "then" and "again," are not in the text.

Thus, it appears that the words of the passage are like those of Judges 2. They are given to anticipate what lies ahead. This seems logical because of how verses 7-9 are structured –

"So the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and into the hands of the people of Ammon. ⁸From that year they harassed and oppressed the children of Israel for eighteen years—all the children of Israel who *were* on the other side of the Jordan in the land of the Amorites, in Gilead. ⁹Moreover the people of Ammon crossed over the Jordan to fight against Judah also, against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim, so that Israel was severely distressed."

Israel sinned against the Lord and so their enemies, both the Philistines (west) and Ammon (east), harassed and oppressed Israel. But then the words go from east of the Jordan (vs. 8) to west of the Jordan (vs. 9). Likewise, the narrative in the coming chapters follows that pattern.

It also refers to war "in Judah and in Benjamin and in house Ephraim." As Ephraim is later used synonymously with the northern tribes of Israel, it appears that the narrative is saying that the spiritual war that is ongoing in Israel extends from the time before Christ to the time of His coming, including the time of the divided spiritual state of Israel after that.

It will be exciting to see if this pans out as we continue through the coming chapters. As for the words within the text today, Paul says in Ephesians 4:25-32 –

“Therefore, putting away lying, ‘Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,’ for we are members of one another. ²⁶ ‘Be angry, and do not sin’: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, ²⁷ nor give place to the devil. ²⁸ Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with *his* hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. ²⁹ Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. ³² And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”

Just as Israel grieved the Lord throughout its history, we can grieve the Lord today. Israel had the law and they failed to uphold it. There are things we are asked to do and that we are asked not to do.

We are not under law, but we are still children of the Lord Jesus. We should live our lives in a manner befitting that position. When we fail, like Israel, we will not be cut off, but we are setting ourselves up for tough times if we don’t quickly turn back to Him.

Don’t let the sin that so easily besets life interfere in a close and personal walk with the Lord. Let us learn the lesson of Israel and apply it to our continued walk before this great Lord who came to redeem us and bring us back to Himself.

Closing Verse: *“For the LORD will judge His people*

And have compassion on His servants,

When He sees that their power is gone,

And there is no one remaining, bond or free.

³⁷ *He will say: ‘Where are their gods,*

The rock in which they sought refuge?

³⁸ *Who ate the fat of their sacrifices,*

And drank the wine of their drink offering?

Let them rise and help you,

And be your refuge.” Deuteronomy 32:36-38

Next Week: Judges 11:1-11 *oohwah! We’ll be with him for a spell, even until his time is done...* (Jephthah, Judge of Israel, Part I) (33rd Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

We Have Sinned!

Then the children of Israel again did evil
In the sight of the LORD, something to which they are prone
And served the Baals and the Ashtoreths
The gods of Syria, the gods of Sidon

The gods of Moab, the gods of the people of Ammon
And the gods of the Philistines, things were lookin' grim
And they forsook the LORD
And did not serve Him

So the anger of the LORD
Was hot against Israel
And He sold them into the hands of the Philistines
And into the hands of the people of Ammon as well

From that year they harassed and oppressed
The children of Israel for eighteen years, things were getting bad
All the children of Israel who were on
The other side of the Jordan in the land of the Amorites, in Gilead

Moreover the people of Ammon
Crossed over the Jordan to fight against Judah also
Against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim
So that Israel was severely distressed from the mighty blow

And the children of Israel cried out to the LORD
Saying, "We have sinned against You
Because we have both forsaken our God
And served the Baals! Such evil we are prone to do

So the LORD said to the children of Israel
"Did I not deliver you from the Egyptians, that rugged crew
And from the Amorites and from the people of Ammon

And from the Philistines too?

Also the Sidonians and Amalekites
And Maonites oppressed you as I planned
And you cried out to Me
And I delivered you from their hand

Yet you have forsaken Me and served other gods
Therefore I will deliver you no more, this is your mess
“Go and cry out to the gods which you have chosen
Let them deliver you in your time of distress

And the children of Israel said to the LORD
“We have sinned against you this day!
Do to us whatever seems best to You
Only deliver us this day, we pray

So they put away the foreign gods
From among them and served the LORD for a spell
And His soul could no longer endure
The misery of Israel

Then the people of Ammon gathered together
And encamped in Gilead
And the children of Israel assembled together
And encamped in Mizpah for a tad

And the people, the leaders of Gilead, said to one another
“Who is the man who will begin the fight
Against the people of Ammon?
He shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead in our sight

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise

Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 11:1-11 (JEPHTHAH, JUDGE OF ISRAEL, PART I)

In reading Adam Clarke's commentary on Judges 11:8, I couldn't help but think of the relationship between Israel and Jesus. Israel turned away from Him, spurning Him as their Messiah. That has cost them for the past two thousand years.

To this day, they still don't realize it. But a time is coming when that will change. Think of the words of the elders of Israel in the future as I read what Clarke said about the elders' words to Jephthah –

“Therefore we turn again to thee now - We are convinced that we have dealt unjustly by thee, and we wish now to repair our fault, and give thee this sincere proof of our regret for having acted unjustly, and of our confidence in thee.” Adam Clarke Commentary on Judges 11:8

Jephthah was driven from his father's house by his brothers so he went to the land of Tob. Jesus has been all but driven out of the house of His brothers, the Jewish people. They often won't even speak His name unless they use it as a curse.

And yet, someday, they will come before Him and admit that they regret their conduct and that they have acted unjustly toward Him. That isn't a maybe. It will happen. The Bible has prophesied it, and it is simply a matter of when it will come to pass.

Text Verse: *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! ³⁸ See! Your house is left to you desolate; ³⁹ for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’” Matthew 23:37-39*

Those who hold to replacement theology claim that Jesus' words in our text verse were fulfilled at the time of Palm Sunday when the multitudes proclaimed, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!” as they hailed Him as their Messiah.

There are two obvious problems with that. The first is that Jesus' words come chronologically after that, even if that is obscured between the gospel narratives. More importantly, He was saying this in response to what had just happened.

The multitudes, as they came to Jerusalem, hailed Jesus in this manner, but it says after that in Matthew 21:10, “And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, ‘Who is this?’” Even if the multitudes were gladly making this proclamation, the city of Jerusalem, the seat of power in the nation, was not.

Jesus was using that event of Palm Sunday and telling Jerusalem that until they heralded Him, just as the multitudes had done, they would see Him no more. To this day, He is hidden from them. But that will change someday. The leaders of the nation will call out for Him and He will return to them.

One can see the hints of a parallel concerning that in the opening words of the narrative about Jephthah. In the end, the Lord is trying to awaken Israel, as well as the world at large, to the fact that He has come to dwell among His people and that He will return again to judge the world.

This is an absolute certainty because it is spoken of in God’s superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Jephthah (verses 1-3)

The narrative of Chapter 10 leads directly into the account being presented here. Israel commits “the evil,” the Lord withholds His hand of protection, Israel is oppressed, and the people cry out to the Lord. The chapter ends with the people of Ammon gathering and encamping against Israel. Then came the question of who would lead them in battle.

Whoever it was would be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead. Chapter 11 opens by naming the person who will be that leader...

¹ Now Jephthah

v’yiphtakh – “And Jephthah.” Without yet saying it, it is the response to the question of who will lead the people. The name Jephthah comes from the verb *pathakh*, to open. Thus, it means something like He Opens, He Will Open, etc. Abarim says –

“... since the opening of lips precedes speaking, and the opening of ears precedes hearing, our verb may also mean to speak and to hear (and to see, to be hospitable, to ask for with open hands, and so on). Our verb may be applied to the opening of

constricting things, which gives it the meaning of to loosen or release. This verb (or perhaps a whole separate one) may also be used to mean to engrave, although engraving and opening a surface so that the surface speaks are not that far apart.”

He is next noted as...

¹ (con't) **the Gileadite**

ha'giladi – “the Gileadite.” These words have three distinct but possible meanings. The first is that Gilead is the name of a location, usually noted as *ha'gilad*, or “the Gilead,” as in Judges 10:8. It could also be the name of a person, a descendant of Machir as recorded Numbers 26 –

“The sons of Manasseh: of Machir, the family of the Machirites; and Machir begot Gilead; of Gilead, the family of the Gileadites.” Numbers 26:29

The third option is that this is a descendant of that Gilead who has the same name as his ancestor. In this case, it is probably either of the first two. Normally, when a person is identified by his father's name, it will specifically say he is “the son of [insert someone cool, like ‘Charlie’ here].”

Jones' Dictionary of the Old Testament Proper defines the name Gilead as coming from *gulla*, a spring or basin, and *ad*, perpetuity. Thus, it is Perpetual Fountain. Of Jephthah, he...

¹ (con't) **was a mighty man of valor,**

hayah gibor khayil – “was mighty valor.” The words are not unlike those used to describe Gilead in Judges 6, “The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!” The narrative has identified the protagonist, carefully describing him in advance of relaying his coming heroic leadership.

¹ (con't) **but he was the son of a harlot;**

The word “but” is subjective, as in “he was this, but...” That is not a necessary contemplation. Rather, the narrative simply conveys facts: *v'hu ben ishah zonah* – “and he son woman, harlot.” The verb *zanah*, to be a harlot, is used.

Various commentaries try to diminish this, as they did with the account of Rahab, by saying she is an innkeeper or something similar. But the wording is precise and it means a woman who commits fornication as in a harlot. This then sets the tone for his life until his calling to be the leader. Concerning his parentage, however, Deuteronomy 23:2 says—

“One of illegitimate birth shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his *descendants* shall enter the assembly of the LORD.”

The meaning is one born of incest or who is illegitimately generated, such as in the case of Jephthah. Exactly what “enter the assembly of the Lord” means is debated. Whatever the actual meaning, at the time, it was understood by the people.

The word *qahal*, or assembly, is not the same as *edah*, or congregation. Therefore, it may be that such a person could be a part of the congregation, but not entitled to the benefits of the assembly. Regardless, of his genealogy, it says...

¹ (con’t) **and Gilead begot Jephthah.**

vayoled gilad eth yiphtakh – “And begot Gilead Jephthah.” The words are highly debated. Is this referring to Gilead, the son of Machir, already noted in Numbers 26? Is the name of the location Gilead, taking the place of an unidentified personal name? Or is the name Gilead, like those of Tola and Puah of Judges 10, a family name being used by a later descendant of the first Gilead?

The latter seems most likely. It is certainly not the name of the location. If it was, it would say *ha’gilad*, the Gilead. However, no matter what its meaning, the account is focusing on the name itself.

² **Gilead’s wife bore sons;**

vateled eshet gilad lo banim – “And bore, wife Gilead, to him sons.” This refers to a legitimate wife. Jephthah was born to a harlot but lived in the house as a son. These are sons born to Gilead’s wife.

² (con’t) **and when his wife’s sons grew up, they drove Jephthah out,**

vayigd’lu b’ne ha’ishah vay’garshu eth yiphtakh – “And grown sons the wife. And expelled Jephthah.” The father has obviously died at this point. He raised Jephthah as a

member of the family, but he was driven out by the grown sons when the father was no longer in the picture.

² (con't) **and said to him, “You shall have no inheritance in our father’s house, for you *are* the son of another woman.”**

vayomru lo lo tinkhal b’beith avinu ki ben ishah akhereth atah – “and said to him, ‘No inheriting in house our father, for son woman another, you.’” The word *akher*, another, is obviously being used contemptuously. They were sons of the wife of Gilead while Jephthah was the son of a harlot. The same word is used in relation to false gods throughout the Old Testament, such as in the previous chapter –

“Yet you have forsaken Me and served other gods [*elohim akherim*]. Therefore I will deliver you no more.” Judges 20:13

While they had no compunction about serving other gods, these brothers were unwilling to live with a brother from another mother. Because of his expulsion by them, it next says...

³ **Then Jephthah fled from his brothers and dwelt in the land of Tob;**

va’yivraKh yiphtakh mipne ekhav vayeshev b’erets tov – “And bolted, Jephthah, from faces his brothers, and dwelt in land Tob.” There are different words translated as fled. For example, one signifies to flee as in escaping. The word used here means to flee as in bolting. Jephthah was driven out of his house and so he simply bolted to Tob.

The name Tob means Good. It could be the name of a particular land or a person named Tob, of which the area is then identified. Even if a person, the area will later have the person’s designation stamped on it –

“When the people of Ammon saw that they had made themselves repulsive to David, the people of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Beth Rehob and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand foot soldiers; and from the king of Maacah one thousand men, and from Ish-Tob twelve thousand men. ⁷ Now when David heard *of it*, he sent Joab and all the army of the mighty men. ⁸ Then the people of Ammon came out and put themselves in battle array at the entrance of the gate. And the Syrians of Zoba, Beth Rehob, Ish-Tob, and Maacah *were* by themselves in the field.” 2 Samuel 10:6-8

Ish-Tob means Man of Tob. Thus, he is a man from the area of Tob. It is located, according to Barnes, “to the north of Gilead, toward Damascus.” In that area, it says...

³ (con’t) **and worthless men banded together with Jephthah and went out *raiding* with him.**

vayithlaqtu el yiphtakh anashim reqim vayetsu imo – “And gathered unto Jephthah men empties. And went out with him.” Here, the same word is seen as was used to describe the men who went out with Abimelech, *req*. It is an adjective meaning empty, coming from *ruq*, to pour out. They were men of no substance be it in their persons or in their pockets.

As for the word “raiding,” that is conjecture. If that was the intent the text probably would have said it. Rather, they simply allied with him and whatever they did, they did it under his authority. If it was raiding or the like, unlike Abimelech, it was likely directed against Israel’s foes rather than against his own people.

Because of his obvious leadership and authority in whatever ventures they undertook, notice was taken and word returned to those in Gilead.

Who is faithful to the Lord?

Who will lead us against the enemy?

This One will lead us toward

The final goal and victory

We will appoint Him as our Head

And we will follow where He may lead

No more false gods, but instead

We will follow the One we truly need

Only the Lord can gain the victory

And so, we will follow the One He has sent

This is not at all contradictory

This One is the Lord, one hundred percent

II. Did You Not Hate Me? (verses 4-8)

⁴ **It came to pass after a time that the people of Ammon made war against Israel.**

vayhi miyamim vayilakhmu b'ne amon im Yisrael – “And was from days, and warred sons Ammon with Israel.” These words return to the narrative of Judges 10:7-9 –

“So the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and into the hands of the people of Ammon. ⁸ From that year they harassed and oppressed the children of Israel for eighteen years—all the children of Israel who were on the other side of the Jordan in the land of the Amorites, in Gilead. ⁹ Moreover the people of Ammon crossed over the Jordan to fight against Judah also, against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim, so that Israel was severely distressed.”

Probably during the time of Israel’s enemies harassing and oppressing them, Jephthah was expelled. Eventually, the people realized that the other gods they served were the source of their problems and they put them away (10:16). During this time, Jephthah was establishing himself as a man of valor. As such, the Lord was raising him up to be the ruler and judge of Israel...

⁵ And so it was, when the people of Ammon made war against Israel, that the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob.

v’hi ka’asher nilkhamu b’ne amon im Yisrael vayelkhu ziqne gilad laqakhath eth yiphtakh meerets tov – “And was according to which warred sons Ammon with Israel, and went elders Gilead to take Jephthah from land Tob.” This now returns to the narrative of Judges 10:17, 18 –

“Then the people of Ammon gathered together and encamped in Gilead. And the children of Israel assembled together and encamped in Mizpah. ¹⁸ And the people, the leaders of Gilead, said to one another, “Who is the man who will begin the fight against the people of Ammon? He shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.”

That is where Judges 10 ended. The leaders mentioned there are the same as the elders mentioned here in Chapter 11. Instead of mentioning them in their own position as leaders, it identifies them based on their age and sagacity.

In other words, one could see Jephthah saying, “You all are leaders of your people. Why don’t you become the commander.” However, in identifying them as elders, it is like saying, “We elders (the wise and mature) have come to you understanding you would make a great commander.”

Until this point, the first verses of Chapter 11 have provided details left unstated from Chapter 10. Now the two harmoniously join together to continue the narrative. These leaders, who are the elders went to Tob...

⁶Then they said to Jephthah, “Come and be our commander, that we may fight against the people of Ammon.”

The final verb is cohortative: *vayomru l’yiphtakh l’khah v’hayitah lanu l’qatsin v’nilakhamah bivne amon* – “And said to Jephthah, ‘Come, and be to us to ruler, and we are fighting in sons Ammon.’” In other words, “We want you to be our ruler. Once you agree, we are going to fight against the sons of Ammon.”

In their request, they use the word *qatsin*, a chief or ruler. They are not asking for a king. It is the Lord who appoints a judge, something Jephthah will later be designated as in Judges 12:7.

In verse 10:18, the elders had asked who the man would be who would begin to fight against the people of Ammon. It seems that nobody volunteered. Because of this, someone suggested they go retrieve Jephthah whom they had heard about. With their surprising proposal set before him, Jephthah naturally questions their reasoning...

⁷So Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, “Did you not hate me, and expel me from my father’s house?”

va’yomer yiphtakh l’ziqne gilad ha’lo atem s’nethem othi vatgarshuni mibeith avi – “And said, Jephthah, to elders Gilead, ‘Not you hated me, and expelling me from house my father?’” The similarity to what the people did to the Lord is not to be missed.

In the previous chapter, the people essentially kicked the Lord out of their lives. But in their distress, they came back to Him looking for deliverance. Now they are doing the same thing with Jephthah.

The tenor of the Lord’s question in Judges 10:11 is the same as that of Jephthah here. Both begin with the same negative particle. It is notable that Jephthah places the actions of his brothers upon the elders of the land.

In essence, what his brothers did to him was condoned by, and thus the responsibility of, these leaders, the elders of the land. Their hatred of him led to his expulsion by them.

⁷ (con't) **Why have you come to me now when you are in distress?"**

u-madua batem elay atah kaasher tsar lakhem – “And why you come now according to which distressed you?” Again, there is similarity to the response of the Lord in the previous chapter –

“Go and cry out to the gods which you have chosen; let them deliver you in your time of distress.” 10:14

“Why have you come to me now when you are in distress?” 11:7

The uncaring or belligerent attitude of the people is highlighted and contrasted to the logical, rational response to their actions.

⁸ **And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, “That is why we have turned again to you now,**

vayomru ziqne gilad el yiphtakh laken atah shavnu elekha – “And said, elders Gilead, unto Jephthah, ‘Thus, now turned unto you.’” The distress is the reason for their coming to him. “Because of the distress, we have turned to you.” As such, there is a need which is next stated...

⁸ (con't) **that you may go with us and fight against the people of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.”**

Rather than “that,” as if the following words are the reason they came, the distress led to them to search out a deliverer. Only after he is identified is the note concerning his leadership in battle stated.

Keil says, “Therefore (כי, because we have formerly done thee wrong) we have now come to thee again to make thee our head, if thou comest with us and fightest against the Ammonites.” He is right that it is something formerly stated, but he misidentifies what it is. It isn’t that the people did Jephthah wrong, even though that is true. Instead, it refers to the distress they are facing from their enemies.

The verbs are in the perfect aspect: *v’halkhta imanu v’nilkhamta bivne amon v’hayitha lanu l’rosh l’khol yoshve gilad* – “And gone with us, and fought in sons Ammon. And are to us to head to all inhabiting Gilead.”

The fighting isn't the reason (that you may...). Rather, the distress (Thus) is the reason. Once the turning is accomplished, their words about the fighting are also as if it is accomplished. Compare the two:

"Thus, now turned unto you. And gone with us, and fought in sons Ammon. And are to us to head to all inhabiting Gilead." CGT

"We are turning to you now because we want you to go with us and fight the Ammonites and lead all the people of Gilead." GNT

What is being seen here is the same as what was seen in the previous chapter –

"And said, sons Israel, unto Yehovah, 'Sinned!' Do, You, to us, according to all the good in Your eyes. Only, deliver us, we pray, the day the this.'" Judges 10:15

The people turned to the Lord. They then petition the Lord to deliver them. The Lord sends distress in order to show their need for Him. In identifying the need, they can then rightly ask Him to deliver them.

The elders noted their need. They turned to Jephthah because he is the one the Lord has provided to accomplish the delivery. As a result, they are confident he has met the need, and he is their commander. Because of this Jephthah affirms the matter...

*The Lord shall be hearing this day
The words that we have spoken
May He judge accordingly, so we say
If our oath, we have broken*

*We shall trust in the Lord
Who has set You before us
We shall be obedient to the word
We shall forever follow Jesus*

*Yes, the Lord has heard what we have said
He is witness to the commitment made by us
With the Lord, we shall always tread
As we walk together with Jesus*

III. I, I Shall Be Your Head (verses 9-11)

⁹ So Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead,

vayomer yiphtakh el ziqne gilad – “And said, Jephthah, unto elders Gilead.” The men have acknowledged that they are in distress. It is the reason why they have come to Jephthah. They have stated that Jephthah will fight for them and he will be their head. As such, an acknowledgment is made...

⁹ (con’t) “If you take me back home to fight against the people of Ammon, and the LORD delivers them to me, shall I be your head?”

Charles Ellicott says, “We must not be surprised if Jephthah does not display a disinterested patriotism. He was only half an Israelite; he had been wronged by his father’s kin; he had spent long years of his manhood among heathens and outlaws, who gained their livelihood by brigandage or mercenary warfare.”

He has misread the entire passage. Jephthah is not at all disinterested. Nothing in the account says his mother was not an Israelite. It says she was a harlot. And we have no idea what he did with his time away from Israel. Not a word about it is provided.

Jephthah’s words are not a question, but an emphatic statement: *im m’shivim atem othi l’hilakhem bivne amon v’nathan Yehovah otham l’phanai anokhi ehyeh lakhem l’rosh* – “If taking you, me, to fight in sons Ammon, and has delivered Yehovah, them, to my face, I, I am, to you to head.”

The “if” is not a question but an assertion based on what they have just said. Essentially, he responds, “As you are taking me to fight against Ammon. Once Yehovah has delivered them, then I will certainly be your head.”

Not only is this an assertion, but it is based on his reliance in the covenant keeping Lord, Yehovah, not merely “God” which could be misconstrued. Israel has been faithfully unfaithful to Yehovah, pursuing other gods. Jephthah is calling their attention to the Lord alone.

John Lange, supporting the view of Keil that this is not a question but an affirmation, says –

“The position of affairs has altogether erroneously been so apprehended, as if Jephthah were fearful lest, after victory achieved, they would then no longer recognize him as head, and wished to assure himself on this point beforehand. This view originates in the

failure to perceive the spiritual background on which the action is projected. Jephthah is not a man who will be their head at any cost. There is no trace of ambition in his language. He is willing to be their head, if they are such members as will insure the blessing of God. Whoever knows his countrymen as he knew them, and has himself turned to God, will not be willing to be their leader, unless they have become other than they were. For that reason he says: If you bring me back, in order truly and unitedly to fight Ammon, and be worthy of God's blessing,—in that case, I will be your head. The guaranty of victory is sought by this valiant man, not in his own courage, but in the worthiness of the warriors before God."

To sum up Lange's thought, we can look to a parallel in Jesus. Jesus came. His disciples know that He is the Messiah for their state of distress. There is a need to be relieved from that distress as they cannot save themselves. They come to Him to relieve that distress because they know He is the Lord's instrument of delivery. In coming to Him, they say, "You have gone with us. You have fought the enemy. You are our Head."

Based on that, the response is, "If you will take Me to fight this battle, I, I will certainly be your Head." What did Peter say to Him in John 6? —

"But Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.'" John 6:68

Peter identified the need, knowing he did not possess eternal life but that Jesus did. He needed to be relieved. He went to Jesus to be relieved because he knew that Jesus was the Lord's instrument of delivery. He acknowledges that Jesus will go with them, He will defeat the enemy, and He is their Head.

Jesus' response is, "If you will trust me with this, I will certainly be your Head." Jephthah understands their need and he knows his position. He is affirming their words, not questioning them. Therefore...

¹⁰ And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, "The LORD will be a witness between us,

vayomru ziqne gilad el yiphtakh Yehovah yihyeh shomea benotenu — "And said, elders Gilead, unto Jephthah, 'Yehovah shall be hearing between us.'" They acknowledge Yehovah's presence, and they state that He will be a witness to what they commit to. By saying "hearing," it is as if He is the Judge of a case set before Him.

Understanding this, we can remember that in Chapter 10, it said —

“And the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, saying, ‘We have sinned against You, because we have both forsaken our God and served the Baals!’ Judges 10:10

Again, after Yehovah chided them, they spoke further –

“‘We have sinned! Do to us whatever seems best to You; only deliver us this day, we pray.’ ¹⁶ So they put away the foreign gods from among them and served the LORD. And His soul could no longer endure the misery of Israel.” Judges 10:15, 16

After acknowledging their state, recognizing their appointed leader, and hearing his words, they call the Lord as a Judge between them...

¹⁰ (con’t) **if we do not do according to your words.”**

im lo kidbarkha ken naaseh – “if not according to your word, thus we do.” The words “according to your word” confirm that what Jephthah said was not a question but an affirmation. If he had questioned them, they would have said something like, “Surely we will do as you have asked.”

Rather, they respond with “You have spoken, we will act accordingly.” What Jephthah has said, they have committed to. Therefore...

¹¹ **Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead,**

vayelekh yiphtakh im ziqne gilad – “And walked, Jephthah, with rulers Gilead.” There is a three-step process involved in the matter. The first step was for the elders to petition Jephthah and wait on his reply. After a favorable reply, Jephthah went with them to the second step, which involved all of the people who had gathered as detailed in verse 10:17...

¹¹ (con’t) **and the people made him head and commander over them;**

vayasimu ha’am oto alehem l’rosh u-l’qatsin – “and set the people, him, over them to head to ruler.” Nothing is said about how this came about, but it is a formal acknowledgment of their acceptance of Jephthah as their head and ruler. With that, the third step of the process is...

¹¹ (fin) **and Jephthah spoke all his words before the LORD in Mizpah.**

vaydaber yiphtakh eth kal d'varav liphne Yehovah bamitspah – “And spoke, Jephthah, all his words to face Yehovah, in the Mizpah.” The words “to face Yehovah” are rightly paraphrased “before the Lord.” This is an acknowledgment that Jephthah spoke the agreement between the people and himself in the presence of the Lord.

There is no need to assume that this was done in the presence of the ark, the high priest, or any other such thing. It is just a way of acknowledging that the Lord is included in the proclamation and that He was a witness to the agreement.

The elders confirmed their words were heard by the Lord, witnessing to what they had said to Jephthah. In like manner, he now speaks his words before all the people in the presence of the Lord.

As for the name the Mizpah, it means The Watchtower.

With the verses of the passage complete for today, we can remember the parallel that was noted at the beginning of the sermon. Jephthah was driven out from among his brothers, but the leaders of his people came to be reconciled to him and to recognize him as their head.

Israel will someday do just the same with Jesus. With them back in the land, and with the animosity of the great alliance of those mentioned in Ezekiel 38 shaping up, it probably won't be long until the time when they face that battle, known as Gog/Magog.

With that, the end times will begin on a global scale. The lack of faith and trust in the Lord that Israel now displays will come to an end. Whatever will direct them to seek out Jesus, it will have its intended effect.

They will respond by acknowledging Him as their ruler and He will be there to rescue them from the woes that would otherwise seem impossible to overcome.

As for us, that is already realized. Jesus Himself said that to His apostles, and it is a truth that belongs to us as well, “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Have faith in this as you go through those times of tribulation that you are certain to face. It is not always an easy life, but we possess a certain hope. Hold fast to it and don't

let the world bring you down. As for the ongoing narrative, more about Jephthah lies ahead. Stay tuned.

Closing Verse: *“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. ⁵ Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” 1 John 5:4, 5*

Next Week: Judges 11:12-28 *Hoorah, as a judge, he is really swell, it is true..* (Jephthah, Judge of Israel, Part II) (34th Judges sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Jephthah, Judge of Israel, Part I

Now Jephthah the Gileadite
Was a mighty man of valor, yes suh!
But he was the son of a harlot
And Gilead begot Jephthah

Gilead's wife bore sons; and when his wife's sons grew up
They drove Jephthah out, and said to him
“You shall have no inheritance in our father's house
For you are the son of another woman, to us that's grim

Then Jephthah fled from his brothers
And dwelt in the land of Tob
And worthless men banded together with Jephthah
And went out raiding with him, raiding places they did probe

It came to pass after a time, as the record does tell
That the people of Ammon made war against Israel

And so it was, when the people of Ammon
Made war against Israel
That the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah
From the land of Tob, they needed him for a spell

Then they said to Jephthah, yes to him they did moan

Come and be our commander, that we may fight against
-----the people of Ammon

So Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead
“Did you not hate me, and expel me? Oh such a mess!
From my father’s house?
Why have you come to me now when you are in distress?

And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah
“That is why we have turned again to you now, a deal not so bad
That you may go with us and fight against the people of Ammon
And be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead

So Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead
“If you take me back home to fight instead
Against the people of Ammon
And the LORD delivers them to me, shall I be your head?

And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah
“The LORD will be a witness between us
If we do not do according to your words
Just come quickly, no more fuss!

Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead
And the people made him head, oohrah!
And commander over them
And Jephthah spoke all his words before the LORD in Mizpah

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 11:12-28 (JEPHTHAH, JUDGE OF ISRAEL, PART II)

In the passage today, there are remembrances from Israel's past that are brought back into the narrative to help explain what is going on and why certain things are the way they are.

For example, Israel ascended out of Egypt, but that is because Israel first went down to Egypt. They were in Egypt for a reason that goes beyond what the surface text says. In other words, the Lord told Abraham in Genesis 15 that his descendants would be strangers in a land not their own, they would serve another, and they would be afflicted four hundred years.

After that, the Lord told him that in the fourth generation his descendants would return to their land, "for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet complete." The surface reason for what was coming is explained in that thought.

However, during all of that time, and in the Exodus itself, there was typology being portrayed in the movement of the people, in what happened to them as they moved, in the names that are highlighted, and so forth.

Each step of the way, each story presented, and each feature provided has led us through a history that is alive and brimming with details of what God is doing in the world and how that is anticipating other things as well.

As an example, Paul cites Scripture concerning Abraham and tells us that what is written is not simply isolated to that account...

Text Verse: *"He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, ²¹ and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. ²² And therefore 'it was accounted to him for righteousness.' ²³ Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, ²⁴ but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, ²⁵ who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification." Romans 4:20-25*

Paul says that what was said to and written about Abraham was not merely an isolated story that only pertained to him. It was written to reveal what is on God's mind

concerning justification. One might say, “Well, yeah, that is an instructive tool for us concerning a particular doctrine, but that doesn’t mean everything has this type of a purpose.”

That would be an incorrect analysis shared by far too many people. If God wanted to teach us about justification by faith, all He needed to do was speak it out plainly and be done with it. But He didn’t until many eons later. And more, Paul says to Timothy that all Scripture is given by God and is profitable for doctrine.

In other words, God having Israel bypass Edom and Moab is a part of something that is teaching us doctrine. If it wasn’t, He would not have included it in His word. Israel did innumerable things that are not recorded in Scripture, but that detail about bypassing Moab and Edom is specifically recorded for us to learn something.

The name of a king of Moab, Balak, is mentioned over forty times in Scripture. The name of the king of Ammon, with whom Jephthah is now dealing, is never given. We are being taught points of doctrine in particular names of people and places.

Everything in Scripture is there for us to learn from. Let us pay heed to what is said and do our very best to process it as best as we can. The Lord is telling us more than just one story. He is giving us insights into other things as well.

Such great things are to be considered when reading His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. All the Land of the Amorites (verses 12-22)

The verses set before us detail the words of Jephthah in his exchange with the people of Ammon. They are based on the words of Chapter 10 which introduced the events leading up to Jephthah’s appointment as Israel’s Judge –

“Then the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals and the Ashtoreths, the gods of Syria, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the people of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines; and they forsook the LORD and did not serve Him. ⁷ So the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and into the hands of the people of Ammon. ⁸ From that year they harassed and oppressed the children of Israel for eighteen years—all the children of Israel who *were* on the other side of

the Jordan in the land of the Amorites, in Gilead. ⁹ Moreover the people of Ammon crossed over the Jordan to fight against Judah also, against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim, so that Israel was severely distressed. ... Then the people of Ammon gathered together and encamped in Gilead. And the children of Israel assembled together and encamped in Mizpah. ¹⁸ And the people, the leaders of Gilead, said to one another, “Who is the man who will begin the fight against the people of Ammon? He shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.” Judges 10:6-9 & 17, 18

After this came the details of Jephthah’s life that led to his selection by the people to lead them. Once he was made commander over the people, he takes his first steps as their leader...

¹² Now Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the people of Ammon,

vayishlakh yiphtakh malakhim el melek b’ne amon – “And sends, Jephthah, messengers unto king sons Ammon.” Ammon has gathered for war in Gilead, land belonging to Israel. Israel is gathered in Mizpah where they agreed to make Jephthah their commander. It is from Mizpah that Jephthah sends out these messengers to the king of Ammon...

¹² (con’t) saying, “What do you have against me, that you have come to fight against me in my land?”

l’mor mah li va’lakh ki batha elay l’hilakhem b’artsi – “to say, ‘What to me and to you for come unto me to fight in my land?’” These are the words of Jephthah, even if they are transmitted by messengers. As the leader of Israel speaking to the king of Ammon, the words are in the first person and second person singular.

As for the words “to me and to you,” they are a proverbial expression that extends into the New Testament. In this case, they mean something like, “What is going on between you and me that you are preparing to wage war?”

At other times, the same expression can mean something like “Please leave me alone and let me live my life” (1 Kings 17:18) or “We have nothing in common in the matter at hand” (2 Kings 3:13). In John 2:4, Jesus uses the expression with the Greek *Ti emoi kai soi gynai*, or “What to me and to you, woman?” There, His words convey the sense of “Why are you bothering me with this?”

Jephthah, before aligning his troops for battle wants to know the reason for the Ammonites coming into Israelite territory and setting up in military formation, intending to engage in battle. If diplomacy can handle the matter, that is the first and preferred option.

As for the names, Jephthah means He Opens. Ammon means A People.

In response to Jephthah's inquiry, it next says...

¹³ And the king of the people of Ammon answered the messengers of Jephthah,

vayomer melekh b'ne amon el malakhe yiphtakh – “And says, king sons Ammon unto messengers Jephthah.” The meaning is, “Here is my response to take back to Jephthah. These are messengers receiving the response as if it is spoken directly to Jephthah, just as an emissary or ambassador would do today. And his words are...

¹³ (con't) “Because Israel took away my land when they came up out of Egypt, from the Arnon as far as the Jabbok, and to the Jordan.

ki laqakh Yisrael eth artsi ba'aloto mimitsrayim me'arnon v'ad ha'yaboq v'ad ha'yarden – “For took, Israel, my land in his ascending from Egypt from Arnon, and until the Jabbok and until the Jordan.” The basis of the issue here rests upon the words “my land.” Several points must be remembered.

First, Israel, when ascending from Egypt, was prohibited from coming against his relatives, Esau, Moab, and Ammon. The record of these is found in Deuteronomy 2. The specific record for Ammon says –

“So it was, when all the men of war had finally perished from among the people, ¹⁷ that the LORD spoke to me, saying: ¹⁸ ‘This day you are to cross over at Ar, the boundary of Moab. ¹⁹ And *when* you come near the people of Ammon, do not harass them or meddle with them, for I will not give you *any* of the land of the people of Ammon *as* a possession, because I have given it to the descendants of Lot *as* a possession.’” Deuteronomy 2:16-19

Israel was obedient to this command and never came against these relatives. Second, this once was Ammon's land, but it was no longer his at the time of Israel's ascending –

“And they turned and went up by the way to Bashan. So Og king of Bashan went out against them, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei. ³⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Do not fear him, for I have delivered him into your hand, with all his people and his land; and you shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon.” ³⁵ So they defeated him, his sons, and all his people, until there was no survivor left him; and they took possession of his land.”
-Numbers 21:33-35.

The land Israel occupied east of the Jordan once belonged to Moab and Ammon, but Sihon and Og had taken it from them. Therefore, it no longer belonged to them. As such, what is happening now means that the king of Ammon either doesn't know the history of the land, or he is counting on Israel not remembering what occurred.

Either way, the land was lost by Moab and Ammon in battle, becoming the possession of the Amorites. That, in turn, was taken in battle by Israel, thereby becoming the territory of Israel. Ammon had no claim on the land they had previously lost.

As for the names, Egypt means Double Trouble. Arnon means Roaring Stream, but it carries the sense of Rejoicing. Jabbok means Pouring Out. The Jordan means The Descender.

¹³ (con't) **Now therefore, restore those *lands* peaceably.”**

v'atah hashivah etten b'shalom – “And now, returning these in peace.” The king, either depending on a faulty memory among his people or the hope of a faulty memory in Israel, is looking to regain land from Israel that they had legitimately lost in battle. He offers first to receive it without a battle.

¹⁴ **So Jephthah again sent messengers to the king of the people of Ammon,**

va'yoseph od yiphtakh vayishlakh malakim el melekh b'ne amon – “And adds again, Jephthah, and sends messengers unto king sons Ammon.” The words of the king of Ammon were received. From there, unless Jephthah was schooled in Israel's history, he would have consulted the scribes who kept such matters either verbally or in writing, compiled the facts, and again addresses the king of Ammon...

¹⁵ **and said to him, “Thus says Jephthah: ‘Israel did not take away the land of Moab, nor the land of the people of Ammon;**

vayomer lo koh amar yiphtakh lo laqakh Yisrael eth erets moav v'eth erets b'ne amon – “And said to him, ‘Thus said Jephthah, “No took, Israel, land Moab and land sons Ammon.”” To begin his response to the king, he doesn’t just address the king’s immediate request, but expands upon it, including Moab in the response.

These people descend from the two sons of Lot, Moab and Ben Ammi. This was a great swath of land east of the Jordan controlled by these two brothers. The Jabbok divided the two portions between the two brothers with Moab to the south and Ammon to the north.

The Amorites invaded the land and took it from them. Thus Moab lived in their remaining land southward while Ammon lived in their remaining land northward. Israel had taken this land from those who possessed it. But more, when Israel asked Sihon and Og permission to pass through their land, those kings had come against them to wage war.

Israel did not initiate the events that led to their control of the land. Instead, they responded to the attack of the foes accordingly. As for the name Moab, it means From Father.

¹⁶for when Israel came up from Egypt, they walked through the wilderness as far as the Red Sea and came to Kadesh.

ki ba'alotham mimitsrayim va'yelekh Yisrael ba'midbar ad yam suph va'yavo qadeshah – “For in our ascending from Egypt, and walking, Israel, in the wilderness until Sea Ending, and comes Kedesh-ward.” This refers to the time from leaving Egypt, spending a year at Sinai, departing from there and finally arriving at Kadesh. This covers the narrative from Exodus 12 until Numbers 13.

The name Yam Suph means Sea *of the* Ending, coming from the verb *suph*, to come to an end or cease. Kadesh means Holy or Sacred.

It was at Kadesh that Israel sent spies into Canaan, were told to go in and take the land, and failed to believe the Lord (Numbers 13 & 14). Because of that, they were sentenced to wander in the wilderness, until the disobedient generation had perished.

Jephthah skips over that period of time and simply refers to the end of those years. When they were complete...

¹⁷ Then Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, “Please let me pass through your land.”

Here, Israel is spoken of as a single entity: *vayishlakh Yisrael malakhim el melekh edom l'mor ebrah na b'artsekha* – “And sends, Israel, messengers, unto king Edom to say, ‘Let me pass through, I pray, in your land.’” This is recorded in Numbers 20:14-17 –

“Now Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom. ‘Thus says your brother Israel: ‘You know all the hardship that has befallen us, ¹⁵ how our fathers went down to Egypt, and we dwelt in Egypt a long time, and the Egyptians afflicted us and our fathers. ¹⁶ When we cried out to the LORD, He heard our voice and sent the Angel and brought us up out of Egypt; now here we are in Kadesh, a city on the edge of your border. ¹⁷ Please let us pass through your country. We will not pass through fields or vineyards, nor will we drink water from wells; we will go along the King’s Highway; we will not turn aside to the right hand or to the left until we have passed through your territory.’”

¹⁷ (con’t) But the king of Edom would not heed.

v’lo shama melekh edom – “And no heard, king Edom.” His refusal and Israel’s repeated request, followed by Edom coming out against Israel to prohibit them from entering is recorded in Numbers 20:18-21.

¹⁷ (con’t) And in like manner they sent to the king of Moab, but he would not *consent*. So Israel remained in Kadesh.

v’gam el melekh moav shalakh v’lo avah vayeshv Yisrael b’qadesh – “And also, unto king Moab, sent. And no willing. And dwells, Israel, in Kadesh.” This is not recorded in the account in Numbers, but it is an obvious verbal tradition. As such, we can see that those things recorded in Scripture have been given for the sake of typology.

If this event had been recorded at the time it occurred, it would have marred the typology being presented. This is a logical inference to be made from the ongoing narrative.

¹⁸ And they went along through the wilderness and bypassed the land of Edom and the land of Moab,

vayelekh ba'midbar vayashav eth erets edom v'eth erets moav – “And walked in the wilderness. And skirts, land Edom and land Moab.” This is seen in Numbers 21 and it is substantially repeated in Deuteronomy 2. From this point they...

¹⁸ (con't) **came to the east side of the land of Moab, and encamped on the other side of the Arnon.**

vayavo mimizrakh shemesh l'erets moav vayakhnun b'ever arnon – “And comes from ascension sun to land Moab. And encamps in side Arnon.” This continues the record of Numbers 21, particularly verses 11-15. Israel went all the way around the lands of Edom and Moab, came to where Jephthah is now, and camped on the north side of the Arnon because the south belonged to Moab. This would have been in the territory of Sihon that once belonged to Moab.

¹⁸ (con't) **But they did not enter the border of Moab, for the Arnon was the border of Moab.**

v'lo bau bigvul moav ki arnon g'vul moav – “And no entered border Moab, for Arnon border Moab.” This was due to the specific command of the Lord. Not only did Moab not give permission for Israel to pass through their land, but the Lord also instructed Israel to not even skirt within their border –

“Then the LORD said to me, ‘Do not harass Moab, nor contend with them in battle, for I will not give you *any* of their land *as* a possession, because I have given Ar to the descendants of Lot *as* a possession.’” Deuteronomy 2:9

¹⁹ **Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, king of Heshbon;**

vayishlakh Yisrael malakhim el sikhon melek ha'emori melek khashbon – “And sends, Israel, messengers unto Sihon, king the Amorite, king Heshbon.” Other than the last two words, this is a letter for letter repeat of Numbers 21:21 with one exception. The name Sihon is spelled with an additional letter, *vav*.

This will be the case all four times here in Judges, but it is a variant spelling seen elsewhere as well –

Judges 12:19 - סִיחֹן
Numbers 21:21 - סִיחֹן

Sihon means Warrior. Amorite means Renown.

¹⁹ (con't) **and Israel said to him, “Please let us pass through your land into our place.”**

I only found two Catholic Bibles that are close in the translation. It is first person singular and the first verb is cohortative: *vayomer lo Yisrael nabrah na b'artskha ad m'qomi* – “And says to him, Israel, ‘We are passing, I pray, in your land unto my place.’”

This is recorded in Numbers 21:22 where it is also first person with a cohortative verb. Israel is stating that they will pass through, but it will only be with the consent of Sihon.

Remember that at this time, the lands in question here were not a part of Israel's land grant. Jephthah is careful to restate this to the king of Ammon. In essence, “We were on our way to our land, explicitly telling Sihon that was our destination. And yet, he would not allow our passage.

It should also be remembered why Sihon the Amorite refused this. Israel is claiming Canaan is their place. However, Amorite not only dwelt east of the Jordan but also west in Canaan. Israel is claiming land where Sihon's own kin lived. Therefore, despite the request...

²⁰ **But Sihon did not trust Israel to pass through his territory.**

Almost all translations say “trust.” That doesn't seem likely: *v'lo heemin sikhon eth Yisrael avor bigvulo*– “And no , Sihon, Israel passing through his border.” This is recorded in Numbers 21:23. Here, it uses the word *aman*, to confirm or support. In Numbers, it uses the word *nathan*, give.

It isn't that he didn't trust Israel. Rather, Sihon did not give permission, and thus, he did not confirm passage. Israel intended to go to his place, Canaan, but that is where more Amorites dwelt. Sihon would not allow this.

²⁰ (con't) **So Sihon gathered all his people together, encamped in Jahaz, and fought against Israel.**

vayeesoph sikhon eth kal amo vayakhanu b'yehatsah vayilakhem im Yisrael – “And gathers, Sihon, all his people, and encamps in Jahaz, and fights with Israel.” The words here are recorded with variations in Numbers 21:22. Jahaz means Trodden Down.

Jephthah includes this detail so that it is understood by the king of Ammon that it was Sihon, possessor of the land, who came out against Israel. He encamped against them and fought with them. Israel was the victor of a battle they did not initiate. Thus, they had every right to possess the land of Sihon. As it says...

²¹ And the LORD God of Israel delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel, and they defeated them.

vayiten Yehovah Elohe Yisrael eth sikhon v'eth kal amo b'yad Yisrael vayakum – “And gives, Yehovah God Israel, Sihon and all his people in hand Israel. And struck them.” This is recorded in Numbers 21:24. However, there it said, “Then Israel defeated him with the edge of the sword.”

Here, however, in order to show the ultimate Power behind the victory, Jephthah says that it was the Lord God of Israel who gave Sihon and his people into Israel's hand. As such...

²¹ (con't) Thus Israel gained possession of all the land of the Amorites, who inhabited that country.

vayirash Yisrael eth kal erets ha'emori yoshev ha'arets ha'hi – “And dispossessed, Israel, all land the Amorite dwelling the land, the it.” In Numbers, it simply says, “And dispossessed his land.” Here, Jephthah is sure to remind the king that this is “all land the Amorite, dwelling in the land.” Therefore, any claim to the land by Ammon died when Sihon was defeated. And again...

²² They took possession of all the territory of the Amorites, from the Arnon to the Jabbok and from the wilderness to the Jordan.

vayirshu eth kal gevul ha'emori me'arnon v'ad ha'yaboq u-min ha'midbar v'ad ha'yarden – “And possessed all border the Amorite from Arnon and until the Jabbok, and from the wilderness and until the Jordan.” This continues to loosely cite Numbers 21:24. Jephthah is carefully detailing the exact borders of the land that was taken from the Amorite.

Ammon was to the north of the Jabbok. It was fortified, and Israel did not venture into their land. However, everything between the Arnon to the Jabbok (south to north) and between the wilderness and the Jordan (east to west) was conquered by Israel in the defeat of the Amorite.

*This is our inheritance and possession
Given by the Lord God of Israel
We did not take it by aggression
When the Amorites attacked, for them, things didn't go well*

*What was theirs now belongs to us
It wasn't yours to lose
So over it, please don't make a fuss
We will defend our land, if that is what you choose*

*May the Lord, the Judge decide the matter
And settle this issue once for all
Surely your hopes He will shatter
When in the battle, out to Him we call*

II. I Have Not Sinned Against You (verses 23-28)

²³ 'And now the LORD God of Israel has dispossessed the Amorites from before His people Israel;

v'atah Yehovah Elohe Yisrael horish eth ha'emori mipne amo Yisrael – “And now, Yehovah God Israel, dispossessed the Amorite from faces His people: Israel.” It is the Lord God of Israel who accomplished the action, even if He used Israel to have it come about. The Amorite was dispossessed from his land and from before the Lord's people, Israel. Thus, Israel is set in contrast to the Amorite. He now is identified with the land. With that, he says...

²³ (con't) should you then possess it?

Not a single translation gives what I believe is a proper rendering of this. The words are emphatic and incredulous. They are in the singular because of the construction: *v'atah tirashenu* – “And you, you dispossess him?”

Lange says, “[תִּרְשְׁנֵנוּ, תִּרְשְׁנֵנוּ] lit. ‘seize him.’ ‘The construction of יִרְשׁ with the accusative of the people,’ says Keil, ‘arises from the fact that in order to seize upon a land, it is necessary first to overpower the people that inhabits it.’ Both he and Bertheau, however, refer the suffix to ‘the Amorite,’ and are then obliged to make the Amorite stand for the ‘and of the Amorite.’”

That isn't what Jephthah is saying. He is no longer referring to the Amorite as the reference. Rather, the meaning is that the Lord had dispossessed the Amorite. The people stood for the land. He did this before His people, Israel. Israel now stands for the land. Israel is the nearest antecedent in the words. As the Lord placed Israel, His people, in the land, Jephthah refers to Israel in the singular – "Would you dispossess him?"

"And now, Yehovah God Israel, dispossessed the Amorite from faces His people: Israel. And you, you dispossess him?" (CG).

That may seem like too much explanation for two Hebrew words, but the matter in question is possession of the land. Possession signifies an inheritance because it is from the Lord and is the inheritance of Israel. Therefore, Ammon has no right to the inheritance. That seems evident from the next words...

²⁴ Will you not possess whatever Chemosh your god gives you to possess? So whatever the LORD our God takes possession of before us, we will possess.

halo eth asher yorishkha k'mosh elohekha oto tirash v'eth kal asher horish Yehovah elohenu mipanenu oto nirash – "Not which you possessing, Chemosh your god he possesses? And all which dispossesses, Yehovah our God, from our faces – it we possess."

The land is identified with the people. However, the people are identified with their God (or god). The Amorite dispossessed Ammon, and so, the land belonged to them. The Lord dispossessed the Amorite, and so, the land belongs to Israel to possess.

As for the name, Strong's lists Chemosh under an unused root meaning "to subdue." If so, it means something like Vanquisher. Abarim, however, lists it as a prefix, meaning As If, along with the word for salvation or a word for being ambulant or for feeling.

Thus, they say to a Hebrew it will sound like As If He Saves, As If He Moves, or As If He Feels. The k prefix is more precisely identified with "According to" rather than "as if." Thus, I would refine it to According to His Saving.

For context, it appears Jephthah is reaching back to a proverb that is recorded in Numbers 21 –

"Come to Heshbon, let it be built;
Let the city of Sihon be repaired.

²⁸ “For fire went out from Heshbon,
A flame from the city of Sihon;
It consumed Ar of Moab,
The lords of the heights of the Arnon.

²⁹ Woe to you, Moab!
You have perished, O people of Chemosh!
He has given his sons as fugitives,
And his daughters into captivity,
To Sihon king of the Amorites.

³⁰ “But we have shot at them;
Heshbon has perished as far as Dibon.
Then we laid waste as far as Nophah,
Which *reaches* to Medeba.”

³¹ Thus Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites. Numbers 21:27-31

Israel defeated Sihon the Amorite. But Sihon had defeated the people of Chemosh, god of Moab who Jephthah is associating with Ammon. As Israel defeated Sihon who defeated the people of Chemosh, Israel’s God, Yehovah, is greater than Chemosh.

²⁵ And now, *are* you any better than Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he ever strive against Israel? Did he ever fight against them?

The translation is fine, but it misses the beauty of the Hebrew. The verse is filled with verbal expression: *v’atah hatov tov atah mibalak ben tsipor melek moav harov rav im Yisrael im nilkhom nilkham bam* – “And now, gooding good, you, from Balak, son Zippor, king Moab? Striving, he strove with Israel? If fighting he fought in them?”

The words of Jephthah seem contradictory to Joshua 24, where it said that Balak the son of Zippor arose to make war against Israel. Arising to wage war is not the same as waging war. He called Balaam to curse Israel so that he could wage war, but that plot failed and no war was ever waged. As such, because of the Lord, the superiority of Israel was seen in that account.

But more, Balak wasn’t concerned with retaking lands previously lost. He was, instead, troubled with the thought of being overtaken in the land he still possessed. Jephthah is asking the king of Ammon to determine if he is any greater than Balak was.

As for the names, Balak means something akin to Devastator, Empty, or Wasting. Zippor comes from *tsippor*, a little bird.

²⁶ While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and its villages, in Aroer and its villages, and in all the cities along the banks of the Arnon, for three hundred years, why did you not recover *them* within that time?

The word “within” is incorrect: *b’sheveth Yisrael b’khashbon u-vivnotheha uvaror u-vivnotheha uvkhal hearim asher al yede arnon sh’losh meoth shanah u-madua lo hitsaltem baeth ha’hi* – “In dwelling, Israel, in Heshbon and her daughters, and in Aroer and her daughters, and in all the cities which upon hands Arnon, three hundreds year. And why not deliver in time, the it?”

The meaning is not that they should have taken the land during those three hundred years. It is that Israel dwelt in the land and in these key cities of that time. But if Ammon wanted the land, they should have retaken it at the time of the original defeat of the Amorite by Israel, but they didn’t. Rather, Israel moved in, and they have lived there ever since.

As for the three hundred years, the total years listed from Numbers to here in Judges do not specifically match. But this does not account for the times when some judges overlap. The timeline is not necessarily chronological unless the text specifically says so, such as using the word “after” to define an event. The number itself is what the text is focusing on.

Three hundred is a multiple of three and ten. Three signifies Divine Perfection. Expanding on that, Bullinger says –

“The number three, therefore, must be taken as the number of Divine fulness. It signifies and represents the Holy Spirit as taking of the things of Christ and making them real and solid in our experience. It is only by the Spirit that we realise spiritual things. Without Him and His gracious operation, all is surface work: all is what a plane figure is to a solid.”

Of the number ten, Bullinger says –

“Completeness of order, marking the entire round of anything, is, therefore, the ever-present signification of the number ten. It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete.”

In the Gideon series, the number three hundred was shown to be a picture of the work of Christ and the cross.

As for the names, Heshbon signifies an explanation of things, or Intelligence. Aroer means Stripped, Bare, or Naked.

²⁷ Therefore I have not sinned against you, but you wronged me by fighting against me.

His words are emphatic: *v'anokhi lo khatati lakh v'atah oseh iti raah l'hilakhem bi* – “And I, not I sinned to you. And you do me evil to fighting in me.” Jephthah is speaking for Israel in the singular. Israel has done nothing against Ammon. But Ammon is now doing evil to Israel by coming against them for battle.

This is obviously his intent because Israel defeated the Amorite, not the Ammonite. The Lord God of Israel gave Israel what Chemosh lost to the Amorite. And Israel has had the right of possession since the time they defeated the Amorite. Therefore, Ammon is the perpetrator of evil against Israel, who is guiltless before the Lord. Therefore...

²⁷ (con't) May the LORD, the Judge, render judgment this day between the children of Israel and the people of Ammon.”

yishpot Yehovah ha'shophet ha'yom ben b'ne Yisrael u-ben b'ne amon – “Judge, Yehovah, the Judge, the day between sons Israel and between sons Ammon.” The meaning is either Ammon will release its claim against Israel and thus the Lord will have judged the case through the words of His leader, or Ammon will go to battle against Israel, and the Lord will determine the outcome based on the results of the battle.

In other words, the king of Ammon will either heed Jephthah's words or he will reject them. He chooses the latter...

²⁸ However, the king of the people of Ammon did not heed the words which Jephthah sent him.

v'lo shama melek b'ne amon el divre yiphtakh asher shalakh elav – “And no heard, king sons Ammon, unto words Jephthah which sent unto him.” The king of Ammon saw the state of the land, weighed out his options in regard to the size and power of Israel in relation to his own mustered troops, and decided that he could prevail in the battle.

The problem with his analysis of the situation is that he either failed to consider the power of the Lord God of Israel, or he felt that Chemosh was a suitable god to battle

against the Lord. Whatever he was thinking, he had made a miscalculation that will end in disaster for him and his people.

We are done with the verses for today. There has been a lot of information to review and I hope that the passage is beginning to make sense on a typological level. Remember, God has placed these stories in His word to tell us more than the surface story.

Everything is being woven together to tell us details of other things. In the next sermon, we will be able to deduce what those things are and the typology will be carefully explained. Keep in mind that the story of Israel is leading inextricably to the coming Messiah. Above everything else, this is the overarching reason for recording these things.

Once the Messiah came, there was still more to the story because the Lord promised that not only would Israel have a Messiah, but that they would rule with Him someday as a nation. In the interim, the Lord has established His church and we have been selected to carry the message of Jesus to the world.

There is not much of the world left that needs to hear about Jesus, and the times of the Gentiles must be coming to an end. But until it does, we still have business to attend to personally, as a congregation, and as the collective body of Christ.

Let us be active participants in what the Lord has set forth for the church to do. Eventually, our individual spans of time will be over. Collectively, the time of the church will end as well. Until these things come to pass, be sure to love the Lord and cherish the word that tells us of Him.

Closing Verse: *“He who heeds the word wisely will find good,
And whoever trusts in the LORD, happy is he.” Proverbs 16:20*

Next Week: Judges 11:29-33 *It’s not ‘Blah, blah, blah’, but ‘This is swell,’ just wait and see...* (Jephthah, Judge of Israel, Part III) (35th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Jephthah, Judge of Israel, Part II

Now Jephthah sent messengers to the king
Of the people of Ammon, saying words bold and grand
“What do you have against me
That you have come to fight against me in my land?

And the king of the people of Ammon answered the
-----messengers of Jephthah
“Because Israel took away my land when they came up, you see
Out of Egypt, from the Arnon as far as the Jabbok
-----and to the Jordan
Now therefore, restore those lands peaceably

So Jephthah again sent messengers to the king
Of the people of Ammon, and said to him because he did moan
“Thus says Jephthah: ‘Israel did not take away the land of Moab
Nor the land of the people of Ammon

For when Israel came up from Egypt
They walked through the wilderness
As far as the Red Sea
And came to Kadesh facing much distress

Then Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying
“Please let me pass through your land
But the king of Edom would not heed
Instead, Israel was banned

And in like manner they sent to the king of Moab
But he would not consent
So Israel remained in Kadesh
Because these kings would not relent

And they went along through the wilderness
And bypassed the land of Edom and Moab’s land
Came to the east side of the land of Moab
And encamped on the other side of the Arnon
----- at the Lord’s command

But they did not enter the border of Moab
For the Arnon was the border of Moab
Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites
-----King of Heshbon
An appeal to him was their next stab

And Israel said to him, "Please let us pass through your land
-----into our place
But Sihon did not trust Israel to pass through his territory
So Sihon gathered all his people together, encamped in Jahaz
And fought against Israel. You certainly know the story

And the LORD God of Israel delivered Sihon and all his people
Into the hand of Israel, and them they defeated
Thus Israel gained possession of all the land of the Amorites
Who inhabited that country, so they were unseated

They took possession
Of all the territory of the Amorites, every Tom, Dick, and Gordon
From the Arnon to the Jabbok
And from the wilderness to the Jordan

'And now the LORD God of Israel
Has dispossessed the Amorites, none He did omit
From before His people Israel
Should you then possess it?

Will you not possess
Whatever Chemosh your god gives you to possess?
So whatever the LORD our God takes possession of before us
We will possess, so to you I address

And now, are you any better than Balak
The son of Zippor, king of Moab?
Did he ever strive against Israel?
Did he ever fight against them, giving war with us a stab?

While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and its villages
In Aroer and its villages, and in all the cities along

-----the banks of the Arnon, in that clime
For three hundred years
Why did you not recover them within that time?

Therefore I have not sinned against you
But you wronged me by fighting against me, this I bemoan
May the LORD, the Judge, render judgment this day
Between the children of Israel and the people of Ammon

However, things started looking grim
The king of the people of Ammon did not heed the words
-----which Jephthah sent him

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 11:29-33

(JEPHTHAH, JUDGE OF ISRAEL, PART III)

As with all of Judges so far, we will see how the Lord is again using typology in Chapter 11 to reveal to us what is going on in the world.

So far, we have gone through all of redemptive history from the coming of Christ and then to and through the tribulation period. But there are still nuances that remain unresolved in doctrinal matters. Therefore, this passage has been given to help alleviate possible misperceptions that may arise concerning those things.

This occurred in the Joshua sermons as well. Certain things were foreshadowed, but then more passages were used to clarify matters.

It helps resolve the “Yes, but what about that?” scenarios that inevitably arise. The Lord is crossing every i and dotting every t... wait, reverse that, in order to ensure that no gaps in our theology remain. Today’s passage refutes something taught by preacher John Hagee from Texas.

Here are excerpts from an article, “San Antonio fundamentalist battles Anti-Semitism,” which explains his doctrine as detailed in the [Houston Chronicle] from April 30th, 1988 –

“Simple: The man has a mission. He’s out to attack anti-Semitism. He also believes that Jews can come to God without going through Jesus Christ.

“‘I’m not trying to convert the Jewish people to the Christian faith,’ he said. ‘There is nothing in the ‘night to honor Israel’ that does that.

“In fact, trying to convert Jews is a ‘waste of time,’ he said. ‘The Jewish person who has his roots in Judaism is not going to convert to Christianity. There is no form of Christian evangelism that has failed so miserably as evangelizing the Jewish people. They (already) have a faith structure.’

“‘The Jewish people have a relationship to God through the law of God as given through Moses,’ Hagee said. ‘I believe that every Gentile person can only come to God through the cross of Christ. I believe that every Jewish person who lives in the light of the Torah, which is the word of God, has a relationship with God and will come to redemption.’”

“The law of Moses is sufficient enough to bring a person into the knowledge of God until God gives him a greater revelation. And God has not,’ said Hagee, giving his interpretation of Romans 11:25. ‘Paul abandoned the idea (of Jews knowing Christ). In the book of Romans, he said, “I am now going to go to the Gentiles from this time forward.” Judaism doesn't need Christianity to explain its existence. But Christianity has to have Judaism to explain its existence.”

Text Verse: *“For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; ²⁰ and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; ²¹ to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; ²² to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.” 1 Corinthians 9:19-22*

So much for “Paul abandoned the idea (of Jews knowing Christ).” Be sure to read your Bible in context and watch out for the workers of iniquity who fill pulpits throughout the world. You cannot do that unless you know the word.

Such great things as actually knowing what God is doing in the world through redemptive history are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. When I Return In Peace (verses 29-33)

In the previous passage, the king of Ammon rejects Jephthah’s appeal for him to desist from coming against Israel. Because of his response, it next says...

²⁹ Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah,

vathi al yiphtakh ruakh Yehovah – “And was upon Jephthah, Spirit Yehovah.” In Judges 3:10, the Spirit of Yehovah came upon Othniel. In Judges 6:34. the Spirit of Yehovah clothed Gideon. In Judges 15:13, the Spirit will move, or impel, Samson. After that, it will be sent mightily upon him two more times.

In this case, the wording is the same as when the Spirit came upon Othniel and endowed him with the ability to accomplish the challenge before him. The Lord accepted the people’s choice of Judge. Albert Barnes nicely sums things up –

“This was the sanctification of Jephthah for his office of Judge and savior of God’s people Israel. ... The declaration is one of the distinctive marks which stamp this history as a divine history.”

²⁹ (con’t) **and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh,**

vayaavor eth ha’gilad v’eth m’nasheh – “and passed through the Gilead and Manasseh.” This is not referring to movement to battle but to preparation for battle. In other words, Jephthah needed to raise a suitable army, gather provisions, etc. Therefore, he passed through the Gilead and Manasseh to accomplish this. The Gilead would be the tribes of Reuben and Gad, between the Arnon and Jabbok.

Manasseh is the land of northern Gilead and Bashan. It is of note that the Gilead is mentioned 12 times in this chapter but this is the only time it is prefixed by the article – the Gilead.

The Gilead means The Perpetual Fountain. Manasseh means To Forget and From a Debt.

²⁹ (con’t) **and passed through Mizpah of Gilead;**

vayaavor eth mitspeh gilad – “and passed through Mizpeh Gilead.” In this verse, it twice says Mizpeh. In 10:17 and again in 11:34 the Hebrew says “the Mizpah,” with the article. The spelling of the word is the same, but the vowel pointing indicates a different location. Further, it signifies different typology is being conveyed.

Mizpeh Gilead means Watchtower, Perpetual Fountain.

²⁹ (con’t) **and from Mizpah of Gilead he advanced *toward* the people of Ammon.**

u-mi’mitspeh gilad avar b’ne amon – “and from Mizpeh Gilead and passed over sons Ammon.” It is the same word, *avar*, translated as “passed through” in the previous two clauses. However, the intent must be determined from the structure of the Hebrew. Keil says, “עבר (to pass over) with an accusative signifies to come over a person in a hostile sense.”

Jephthah, He Opens, has passed through the lands of Israel’s possession to obtain a suitable army. Now, he has passed over the Ammonites to wage the battle. Ammon means A People.

With the words carefully chosen for each step of the narrative, the next words lead to both victory and personal tragedy...

³⁰ **And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD,**

vayidar yiphtakh neder l'Yehovah – “And vowed, Jephthah, vow to Yehovah.” These words, and what later is tied to them, are disdainfully treated and almost universally condemned by commentators. It is the exception for a commentator to stand upon Jephthah’s words and subsequent actions as being wholly appropriate.

Of this vow, the Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary gives this internally contradictory thought –

“...he made his celebrated vow, in accordance with an ancient custom for generals at the outbreak of a war, or on the eve of a battle, to promise the god of their worship a costly oblation, or dedication of some valuable booty, in the event of victory. Vows were in common practice also among the Israelites. They were encouraged by the divine approval as emanating from a spirit of piety and gratitude; and rules were laid down in the law for regulating the performance. But it is difficult to bring Jephthah’s vow within the legitimate range.”

The Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah. He went through the lands east of the Jordan and gathered his army. What seems apparent is that the battle ahead will be most arduous. If he had an overwhelming force with him, Jephthah would surely have not needed to make a vow.

Instead, he would have simply thanked the Lord for the obvious victory ahead and gone into the battle with confidence. But what lies ahead is a great challenge that he knows only the Lord can handle. Therefore, he makes this vow. It is not one rashly rendered, but carefully contemplated...

³⁰ (con’t) **and said, “If You will indeed deliver the people of Ammon into my hands,**

The words bear emphasis: *vayomar im nathon titen eth b’ne amon b’yadi* – “And says, ‘If giving, gives sons Ammon in my hand.’” The people of Israel have obtained their rightful inheritance. It has been given to them as a possession, and yet, a challenge is made to that inheritance. If Jephthah fails, the possession, and thus the inheritance, will be lost. Therefore...

³¹ then it will be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me,

The words reveal Jephthah's understanding of the omniscience and sovereignty of the Lord: *v'hayah ha'yotse asher yetse midalthe veiti liqrathi* – "And is, the coming which comes from door my house to meet me." A relative pronoun is used, which.

Thus, saying "whatever" is technically correct. And yet, if a dog came out, that would be an unacceptable offering to the Lord according to the law. Therefore, one would assume that Jephthah is thinking of a human.

Further, the word *qirah* means "to meet." If anything, including an animal, was intended, this word would not have been used. It is not a term used concerning animals. Dogs do come excitedly rushing out of the doors to meet people, as is evidenced in my house numerous times each day, but that does not match Jephthah's intent. The words are pointing to a welcoming home of Jephthah by a person...

^{31 (con't)} when I return in peace from the people of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD's,

b'shuvi b'shalom mibne amon v'hayah Yehovah – "in my returning in peace from sons Ammon, and is to Yehovah." The meaning is clear. When Jephthah returns in peace, meaning he has secured the victory over the people of Ammon, the one who comes out of his door to meet him will be the Lord's.

^{31 (con't)} and I will offer it up as a burnt offering."

v'haalithihu olah – "and I have ascended him [or it] – burnt offering." In these words, the YLT says "or" instead of "and." In other words, it will either be dedicated to the Lord, or it will be a whole burnt offering. This would ease the impact of what is being conveyed, but it cannot mean that.

Again, if a dog or a donkey was on his mind, he could not offer it to the Lord. And more, if something was made to be a burnt offering, it would have been given to the Lord. So using "or" as a disjunctive is an illogical translation that destroys the intent of what is being conveyed.

Having said that, it is argued that this would be a violation of the law, something no different than offering a dog. To justify this, scholars cite various verses. For example –

“And you shall not let any of your descendants pass through *the fire* to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I *am* the LORD.” Leviticus 18:21

“When the LORD your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land, ³⁰ take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.’ ³¹ You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.” Deuteronomy 12:29- 31

Using these verses to justify such an opinion is incorrect. These and other such verses are not referring to the same thing. The example in Leviticus is an offering of a living child being burnt to a pagan god. The second is referring to a form of worship of the Lord, emulating the worship of a foreign god.

Jephthah is doing neither. He is promising to make an offering to the Lord of that which comes out of his doors. A few points about this must be considered. There is no hint of the certainty of victory that was seen with Gideon. Jephthah is vowing a life for total victory over an enemy in battle. To not obtain victory would mean death for his entire army.

I believe he has the account of Abraham and Isaac in mind. Therefore, he already knew that if the Lord intended for the person to live and have a substitution as Isaac did, that would occur. He is trusting, in faith, that what the Lord will allow or do is in His providence alone. If He intervened, it would still be as if the vow was accomplished. If He didn't, then His will be done.

One final point is that it is argued that the word *olah*, whole burnt offering, is used twice (1 Kings 10:5 and Ezekiel 40:26) when referring to ascending to the temple, i.e., to worship. Therefore, perhaps this is what is on Jephthah's mind. He would dedicate his daughter as a temple virgin.

This is a poor evaluation of those verses. 1 Kings 10 refers to an entranceway to the temple. Ezekiel 40 refers to steps. Neither is used in the context of what Jephthah is now saying. Jephthah's words are clear and unambiguous, “and I have ascended it – burnt offering.”

Regardless of the seeming rashness of the words, the propriety of what is said, the event as it takes place, or the outcome of what occurs, the intent cannot be misconstrued. Lastly, if the Lord disapproved of his words, He could just as easily have caused defeat instead of granting victory.

³² So Jephthah advanced toward the people of Ammon to fight against them,

vayyaavor yiphtakh el b'ne amon l'hilakhem bam – “And passed through, Jephthah, unto sons Ammon to fight in them.” This restates the narrative from verse 29. Jephthah had passed through the areas stated and had then engaged the battle with Ammon. This concisely reiterates that thought in anticipation of the next words...

³² (con't) and the LORD delivered them into his hands.

vayitnem Yehovah b'yado – “And gave them, Yehovah, in his hand.” The words here are intimately tied into what was said in verses 30 and 31 –

“And vowed, Jephthah vow to Yehovah, and says, ‘If giving, gives **sons Ammon** in my hand.”

“in my returning in peace from **sons Ammon**, and is to Yehovah.”

“And gave them, Yehovah, in his hand.”

The vow was made to Yehovah. The vow's substance is to be decided by Yehovah. The victory will be attained, and the Lord will give Ammon into Jephthah's hand. The vow was accepted by the Lord. And so the Lord Himself will determine the acceptable offering.

³³ And he defeated them from Aroer as far as Minnith—twenty cities—and to Abel Keramim, with a very great slaughter.

vayakem me'aroer v'ad boakha minith esrim ir v'ad avel keramim makah g'dolah meod – “And strikes them from Aroer and until your going in Minnith, twenty city, and until Abel Keramim. Slaughter whopping, very.” It speaks of a total rout of the enemy. It is not what one would expect if the Lord disapproved of Jephthah's vow. Rather, He was with Jephthah and ensured the victory would be absolute.

Aroer means Stripped, Bare, or Naked. Minnith means Enumeration or Apportioned. Abel Keramim means Meadow of the Vineyards.

Twenty, according to Bullinger “is the double of ten, and may in some cases signify its concentrated meaning. But its significance seems rather to be connected with the fact that it is one short of twenty-one, $21 - 1 = 20$; that is to say, if 21 is the three-fold 7, and signifies Divine (3) completion as regards spiritual perfection (7), then twenty, being one short of 21, it would signify what Dr. Milo Mahan calls expectancy.”

^{33 (fin)} **Thus the people of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.**

vayikanenu b'ne amon mipne b'ne Yisrael – “And humbles sons Ammon from faces sons Israel.” The king of Ammon was the aggressor in this matter. He held no valid right to what Israel possessed, and yet he was determined to take back what had once belonged to his people but which was lost through warfare with the Amorites.

The Lord determined that Israel was to retain its possession, and therefore, He worked through Jephthah to ensure it. The Ammonites were humbled before Israel, and the land remained the inheritance of the eastern tribes.

*I will call them My people, who are not My people
And her beloved, who was not beloved
Multitudes worshiping Me 'neath the steeple
But others from My presence will be shoved*

*Though the number of the children of Israel
Be as the sand of the sea
The remnant will be saved, so I tell
Because long ago, they rejected Me*

*I will finish the work that I have started
And cut it short in righteousness
I, the Lord, will cut off those who departed
But those who repent, them I will bless*

II. Pictures of Christ

Jephthah is being given as a type of Christ in this passage. It deals with the land inheritance for those east of the Jordan, and therefore it refers to those who received their inheritance prior to the advent of Jesus in His incarnation. Remember that when the Bible refers to the actual land inheritances of Israel, each detail is giving insights into spiritual inheritances. That has been consistently seen since Numbers.

In the case of this passage, redemptive history has been carefully followed in the Judges sermons. That continued all the way through the tribulation period with Gideon. But now, the Bible is doing what it often does, and it is going back and explaining detail of the larger story previously presented.

Just as Ruth gives detail that occurred during the time of the Judges, this account is explaining detail that occurred prior to and during the tribulation, explaining pertinent information that was previously left unexplained more fully.

Jephthah is introduced (verse 1) as Jephthah the Gileadite, a mighty man of valor, the son of a woman, a harlot. The words indicate He Will Open, the Perpetual Fountainite, a mighty man of valor, the son of a harlot (*zonah* from *zanah*, to be a harlot).

It speaks of Jesus who opens the Perpetual Fountain (the Spirit giving eternal life). The words *gibor khayil*, or mighty valor, are used of Boaz in Ruth 2 who is also a type of Christ. The idea the word conveys is one who is strong and substantial in power, authority, riches, honor, and/or virtue.

Being a son of a harlot could be applied to Christ in both a national sense and a perceived sense. In Jeremiah, for example, Israel and Judah are noted as harlots, this is actually the context of what is being seen in typology –

“The LORD said also to me in the days of Josiah the king: “Have you seen what backsliding Israel has done? She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot [*zanah*]. ⁷ And I said, after she had done all these *things*, ‘Return to Me.’ But she did not return. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. ⁸ Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot [*zanah*] also.” Jeremiah 3:6-8

However, the Jews of Jesus’ time said this to Him, implying that He was the son of a harlot –

“‘You do the deeds of your father.’

Then they said to Him, ‘We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God.’” John 8:41

In this verse, the Sar Shalom Hebrew Bible and the Hebrew New Testament use the word *zenunim*, the plural coming from the same word *zanah*, to be a harlot. The Jews claimed to be legitimate sons but were implying that Jesus, because of His birth (not knowing He was born of God and a virgin) was the son of a harlot.

Still in verse 1, it said, “and Gilead begot Jephthah.” This means “And Perpetual Fountain begot He Opens.” It is a perfect description of Jesus, begotten of the Holy Spirit –

“And the angel answered and said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.’” Luke 1:35

Verse 2 noted that Gilead’s wife bore sons. These would be sons of Israel born under the law, Perpetual Fountain. To understand, one must think of Israel as the means of providing the Fountain, regardless of whether individuals are included in its transmission or not (Ephesians 2:12). The Spirit is the Mode by which one is included.

Right now, Gentiles are brought into the commonwealth of Israel along with Jews. However, not all Jews nor all Gentiles receive it. Israel is Perpetual Fountain, not The Perpetual Fountain (meaning the Holy Spirit). The use or lack of use of the article tells us this.

However, the verse says that when Jephthah’s brothers grew up, they expelled Jephthah. It speaks of the fullness of time when Christ would come –

“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.” Galatians 4:4, 5

This refers to those of Israel under the law. However, at the time of Jesus’ coming, Israel rejected him. Likewise, Jephthah’s brothers said that he would have no inheritance with them, thus rejecting him. Jesus even told the Jews in a parable it would occur –

But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.’ ³⁹ So they took him and cast *him* out of the vineyard and killed *him*.” Matthew 21:38, 39

Verse 3 said that Jephthah (He Opens) bolted from his brothers and dwelt in the land of Tob (Good). The words *erets* (land) and *tov* (good) have been used in Numbers,

Deuteronomy, and Joshua to describe Canaan, a type of the heavenly inheritance. While Israel remained apart from the New Covenant in Christ, with no opening to the Spirit, Jesus has remained in that good land.

While in Tob, it noted that Jephthah gathered to himself “men empties.” In other words, men of no substance. It is the church described by Paul –

“For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*.²⁷ But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;²⁸ and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,²⁹ that no flesh should glory in His presence.” 1 Corinthians 1:26-29

Verse 4 said, “And was from days, and warred sons Ammon with Israel.” It refers to Israel, the Jewish people, apart from Christ because they rejected Him. This is seen in Hosea. It is later repeated by Paul in Romans 9 –

“Now when she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son.⁹ Then *God* said:
‘Call his name Lo-Ammi,
For you *are* not My people,
And I will not be your *God*.’” Hosea 1:9

Israel was cast off as being God’s people. If they are not “My people,” then they are simply “a people.” It is they who have come to war against Israel, meaning those who were of Israel prior to Christ’s coming, and those who came to Christ after His coming.

In other words, there is a spiritual battle where these Jews (not My people because of rejecting Christ) war against those who have come to Christ. Jesus speaks of this time, future to us now, where there are the elect and those who are not the elect.

They not only rejected Christ who fulfilled the law, but they were left without the law. Israel’s temple and its associated rights were destroyed. They simply became a people completely disconnected from God.

The elect refers to those who “went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob.” They said to Jephthah (verse 6) to be their ruler. The elect will come to Jesus for salvation. There is a

battle between those who want Christ as Head and those who do not. This has already been seen in earlier Judges sermons, such as in the Gideon series.

In verse 7, Jephthah notes to the elders of Gilead (Perpetual Fountain, the means of providing the Fountain) that they hated him and expelled him from his father's house. He questioned why they came to him in their time of distress. This is just what Israel did to Jesus, and what they will do to Him. Those who understand who He is will call out to Him.

That is exactly the purpose of the tribulation period. It is for Israel to understand that they need Jesus. And that is just how the leaders of Gilead respond, making it perfectly clear by their choice of words (verse 8): "Thus, now turned unto you." It is because of the distress (Thus) that they realize who Jesus is.

They ask Jephthah to go with them and fight against the people of Ammon and to be head over all inhabitants of Gilead (Perpetual Fountain). There is a spiritual battle between the non-believing Jews and the believing Jews.

Remember, this is east of the Jordan. Therefore, this refers to those who have not come to Christ after His coming. And yet, they are claiming that the same inheritance of Israel that belonged to Israel prior to His coming still belongs to them. Think of it like this –

"We don't need Jesus! Those who received their inheritance before Jesus' coming are saved, right? So why do we need Jesus now? We have the same covenant that those people had! Therefore, we can be saved without Him."

In response, those who now know who Jesus is and that only He can save say, "No way, Jose. We are in this pickle because we rejected Jesus! Those people who were of Israel prior to His coming received the inheritance through faith that He would come. Now that He has come, the Old Covenant is annulled through His work. We need JESUS!"

Verse 9 makes it clear that it is a spiritual battle being referred to, not literal wars being waged during the tribulation. Jephthah said, "If taking you, me, to fight in sons Ammon, and has delivered Yehovah, them, to my face, I, I am, to you to head."

That was not a question as various translations made it. Instead, it was an emphatic assertion, something unnecessary for a real war. Israel, the means of providing the Fountain, is what is being dealt with here.

As such, in verse 10, the elders of Gilead (Perpetual Fountain) say to Jephthah (He Opens) that the Lord would be a witness if they do not do according to his words. Jesus will be the ruler providing the means of the Fountain. It is exactly what Zechariah 13:1 says –

“In that day a fountain shall be opened [*patakh*] for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.”

From there, verse 11 noted that the people made Jephthah their ruler and he went with them. This is exactly what Israel will do for Jesus.

With that, starting in verse 12, the long exchange between Jephthah and the king of Ammon took place, including the proverbial expression, “What to me and to you for come unto me to fight in my land?”

In essence, Jesus says to those who have rejected, and continue to reject, Him, “What do we have in common? I offer grace, but you trust in your own merits. This is My land.” The land, the inheritance, is His, not theirs.

To show that these people are not the Lord’s through either the Old or the New Covenant, verse 13 is given. The king of Ammon (Israel without any inheritance and without God) says that Israel took away his land when they came up out of Egypt “from Arnon, and until the Jabbok and until the Jordan.”

The meaning is that in Israel’s ascending from Egypt (Double Trouble – Man born in sin who cannot redeem himself), they were redeemed and given an inheritance under the law from Rejoicing to Pouring Out, up to the time of the coming of Jesus (the Descender). They were in a state of salvation because of the anticipation of Messiah.

At that time, Israel’s inheritance came through the Mosaic Covenant which was sufficient to save them. Those who did not have faith only have this life but nothing more. That has been true of Israel for the past two thousand years.

In response, Jephthah told the king that Israel didn’t take anything away from them. The inheritance was not theirs to begin with. Instead, they had already lost it in the past. In order to substantiate that, he gave the history lesson of how this land, their inheritance, came into Israel’s possession.

The Lord had meticulously laid out the lands so that Israel had to bypass Edom and Moab (verses 17 & 18). In their request to pass through this particular land, the king of the Amorites, Sihon, came out against them. As was seen in Numbers, Sihon pictured the Antichrist in typology.

That was a necessary picture to show how Israel of the past, before Jesus' coming, could receive an inheritance in the future, after Jesus' coming, and even after the tribulation. Take Daniel, for example. He received his inheritance (Daniel 12:13) in the past, but it will actually be received by him in the future.

This is what this passage is speaking of. However, the claim by Ammon (A People – who are not the Lord's people) is that they have the right to the inheritance apart from this process. Wrong-ola. It is why Jephthah said to the king, "And now, Yehovah God Israel, dispossessed the Amorite from faces His people: Israel. And you, you dispossess him?"

Israel (the Fountain) possessed the land. Ammon (A People, not part of the Fountain) is trying to dispossess Israel who possessed it through faith in the coming Messiah. Again, think of Daniel. If the people of Israel today who rejected Christ could obtain the inheritance in some other way, it means that Christ died for nothing.

The faith of those of Israel in the past would have been worthless. This is the strongest typological note we have yet encountered that those of Israel today, who have rejected Jesus, have no inheritance at all. They are completely excluded from God's salvation.

As I said in the previous sermon, "...the matter in question is possession of the land. Possession signifies an inheritance because it is from the Lord. This is the inheritance of Israel. Therefore, Ammon (A People) has no right to the inheritance."

Verse 24 then identified Ammon with Chemosh which I defined as meaning as According to His Saving. The people of Israel who are without the Lord means they are not "of Israel," just as Paul says in Romans 9:6. Thus, they are following a god just like Chemosh, a god of self. He can't save a thing. This is reflected in Jephthah's taunting words of that verse.

Jephthah continued his examples explaining why Ammon had no right to the inheritance. He then asked why no challenge to the land was made during the previous three hundred years. As noted –

“The number three, therefore, must be taken as the number of Divine fulness. It signifies and represents the Holy Spirit as taking of the things of Christ and making them real and solid in our experience. It is only by the Spirit that we realise spiritual things. Without Him and His gracious operation, all is surface work: all is what a plane figure is to a solid.”

Of the number ten, Bullinger says –

“Completeness of order, marking the entire round of anything, is, therefore, the ever-present signification of the number ten. It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete.”

Also, in the Gideon series, the number three hundred was shown to be a picture of the work of Christ and the cross. In other words, those saved prior to the coming of Christ obtained their inheritance through His coming work, and they still possessed it, even after Christ came and the Jews rejected Him.

It is a way of asking, “If you could have found salvation over the past two thousand years, why haven’t you? You are as dead in your sins today as you were then. Without Me and the cross I endured for you, you are goners. As such, (verse 27), therefore, I have not sinned against you, but you wronged Me by fighting against Me.”

They rejected Jesus and they are still doing wrong by continuing to reject Him. Because of this, Jephthah said that the Lord would judge between the sons of Israel and the sons of Ammon (A People) who are not the Lord’s people.

Verse 29 said, “And was upon Jephthah, Spirit Yehovah.” Isaiah 61 uses the same words concerning this exact event –

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me,
Because the LORD has anointed Me
To preach good tidings to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives,
And the opening of the prison to *those who are bound*;
²To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD,
And the day of vengeance of our God.” Isaiah 61:1, 2

There was the time of the Old Covenant, then the time of Christ's coming, and now is the time of the church age. After that comes the time of the tribulation where all wickedness, including that of those in Israel who have rejected Jesus, will be weeded out.

Jephthah is said to have passed through *ha'gilad*, The Gilead (The Perpetual Fountain), and Manasseh (To Forget/From a Debt). It speaks of the Holy Spirit and the completed work of Christ for His people. Jephthah then passed through Mizpeh Gilead (Watchtower, Perpetual Fountain).

It speaks of the monitoring of the Fountain, which is Israel, the means of providing the Fountain. It is what the people agreed to, making Jesus their Head and giving Him full authority over them as a people. Having gone through those areas, Jephthah then advanced on the people of Ammon.

This battle typologically anticipates the question of whether Jesus is the only way to God, or can A People (Israel of today without Jesus) be saved apart from Him. After that came Jephthah's vow about whatever came out of his doors to meet him would be a burnt offering.

The result of that is coming in the next sermon. However, the Lord accepted Jephthah's proposition, as noted in the words "And gave them, Yehovah, in his hand. And strikes them from Aroer and until your going in Minnith, twenty city, and until Abel Keramim. Slaughter whopping, very."

It speaks of the state of those who rejected Christ (A People). They were slaughtered from the time they were stripped of their land, and they will be until the time of enumerating the saved and the lost at the end of days. The noting of twenty cities shows that this is the expectancy for that time (the number twenty means expectancy).

Noting the town Abel Keramim, Meadow of Vineyards, speaks of all of the cultures who are included in salvation. Vineyards represent the cultural side of humanity. There are various vineyards which are various cultures. A People, who are not "My People," will not be included among those who are a part of what Christ has done.

Thus, the verses ended with, "And humbles sons Ammon from faces sons Israel." It is what Paul says of these Jews in Romans 9 and which will be our closing verse today.

The point of this passage is to reveal the state of the Jews of Israel today. They are just A People like any other people group on earth. They are without Christ and have no hope. Those who continue to cling to rejecting Christ are excluded from the good things coming to the people of the world from God because of Jesus.

The inheritance actually lies ahead, but it is appropriated now in Christ. For those of Israel prior to His coming, that was through the system set up for them through the law of Moses. It was not the law itself that saved them. Rather, they were positionally saved through the future work of Christ.

Since Christ has come, no person can be saved apart from Him. This includes those of Israel who think they have the possession secured because of the past grant of an inheritance through Moses. Such is not the case.

But more tragically, there are supposed Christian preachers and denominations like the RCC who teach that people can be saved apart from Christ. Their doctrine says that Jews of today are included in God's covenant graces through Moses. Because of this, they actually harm any chance of these Jews coming to Christ because they actively do not evangelize them.

Imagine the cost they will pay for this unholy doctrine. John Hagee referred to in the opening is supposedly the great champion of Israel's cause today, and yet he teaches the heresy of dual-covenantalism. The burden of such a proclamation is beyond imagination, and yet, he will carry it unless he repents.

Typology is important. It clears up many muddy waters that have arisen if it is properly interpreted. In the case of today's passage, this is not the first time the issue of whether Jews can be saved through the Law of Moses has been covered. It was minutely detailed in the typology of the book of Joshua.

God is being meticulous to restate such things in advance of Christ's first coming so we can see what He means. When you meet a Jew who doesn't know Jesus, don't withhold handing him or her a tract or sharing the gospel just like you would anyone else. Without Jesus, their end will not be a happy one.

As for next week's sermon. It is a sad story that actually and truly brings contention between various scholarly camps concerning what occurred between Jephthah and his daughter. We will review the details and a conclusion will be provided.

But what I would ask you to do today is to read the passage and ask yourself, “Why did the Lord place it in His word? What is He trying to tell us?” Take time to consider why it is placed immediately after the typology that is seen in today’s explanation. What is the logical result of what occurs because of what was typologically seen here?

If you can think that through, you will realize what is being pictured in those verses. So take time to read that passage and think about what is being conveyed to us by including that story. Next week, you can see if your thoughts match what the words are telling us.

Closing Verse: *“But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, ⁷ nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, ‘In Isaac your seed shall be called.’ ⁸ That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.” Romans 9:6-8*

Next Week: Judges 11:34-40 *Wah wah wah! More story to tell, that’s for shor...*
(Jephthah, Judge of Israel, Part IV) (36th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Gideon, Judge of Israel, Part III

Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah
And he passed through Gilead and Manasseh, all that zone
And passed through Mizpah of Gilead
And from Mizpah of Gilead he advanced toward
-----the people of Ammon

And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD, and said
“If You will indeed deliver the people of Ammon into my hands
Then it will be that whatever comes out
Of the doors of my house to meet me, wherever that lot lands...

When I return in peace
From the people of Ammon, hear now my proffering
Shall surely be the LORD’s

And I will offer it up as a burnt offering

So Jephthah advanced
Toward the people of Ammon, those armed bands
To fight against them
And the LORD delivered them into his hands

And he defeated them from Aroer as far as Minnith
Twenty cities—and to Abel Keramim, the record does tell
With a very great slaughter
Thus the people of Ammon were subdued before
-----the children of Israel

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 11:34-40 (JEPHTHAH, JUDGE OF ISRAEL, PART IV)

As I was typing this sermon, a person in the Veterans Administration, RimaAnn Nelson, published a memo calling for the VJ Day photo known as the Victory Kiss to be removed from all VA medical buildings. She did this despite having no authority to write the memo.

She explained her actions, stating that “it doesn’t foster a more trauma-informed environment that promotes psychological safety.” Her actions have nothing to do with keeping people from psychological trauma. Ironically, this mirrors the main intent of the democrat party of late: to ensure more psychological trauma is brought upon the people of the nation rather than less.

This was simply another communist attempt to destroy any remaining vestige of America’s great heritage. However, the heritage of the nation of Israel is permanently inscribed in the pages of Scripture and it cannot be erased.

Despite the “psychological trauma” that reading the story of Jephthah’s daughter must bring to such people, it is a part of God’s word. Because of this, it will never be erased from history. A vow was made, the Lord brought about the requested victory, and the vow was fulfilled accordingly.

One wonders, “What purpose does this story hold?” If it is not telling us something in typology, it certainly seems like something that could have just been left out of the biblical narrative. But it is, in fact, telling us something more.

Text Verse: *“What shall I render to the LORD*

For all His benefits toward me?

¹³ I will take up the cup of salvation,

And call upon the name of the LORD.

¹⁴ I will pay my vows to the LORD

Now in the presence of all His people.” Psalm 116:12-14

Thankfully, republican lawmakers immediately stepped in and contacted the Secretary of Veteran Affairs over the matter of the Victory Kiss photo. The memo was rescinded. And more, the lawmakers called for the removal of this communist Undersecretary.

That probably will not happen. But at least there was a small victory in the ongoing assault by the communist left to destroy every remaining tradition and value of American heritage and replace it with deviancy and perversion.

The Bible is silent on what will happen to the U.S. However, the state of Israel as a nation is carefully recorded in Scripture. From its inception to present-day times and even through the millennium, Israel will stand because the Lord has covenanted with them.

Despite this, there have been and there will be times of trouble for them. How does the sacrifice of a young virgin daughter anticipate these things? Today we will see. It's all to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Jephthah's Daughter (verses 34-40)

³⁴ When Jephthah came to his house at Mizpah,

va'yavo yiphtakh ha'mitspah el beito – “And comes, Jephthah, the Mizpah, unto his house.” Here the term “the Mizpah” is used as in 10:17 and 11:11. It is not the same location as Mizpeh noted twice in verse 11:29. This is the moment that will decide the outcome of the vow he made to the Lord. The result of that vow is...

³⁴ (con't) there was his daughter, coming out to meet him with timbrels and dancing;

v'hineh vito yotseth liqrato b'tupim u-bimkholoth – “And behold, his daughter coming out to meet him in timbrels and in dances.” This is a common thing, be it in Israel of the past or after any war even today. People rejoice in the victory, even in a Victory Kiss in Times Square. For Israel, it is what Miriam did after the victory of the Lord over Egypt –

“Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took the timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. ²¹ And Miriam answered them:

‘Sing to the LORD,

For He has triumphed gloriously!

The horse and its rider

He has thrown into the sea!’” Exodus 15:20-21

Hundreds of years later, the nation continued to celebrate –

“Now it had happened as they were coming *home*, when David was returning from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women had come out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with musical instruments. ⁷ So the women sang as they danced, and said: ‘Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands.’” 1 Samuel 18:6, 7

In the Psalms, the mighty acts of the Lord continued to be proclaimed in this manner as well, such as in the 68th Psalm, a Psalm that begins with the Lord in battle as a warrior –

“Let God arise,
Let His enemies be scattered;
Let those also who hate Him flee before Him.
² As smoke is driven away,
So drive *them* away;
As wax melts before the fire,
So let the wicked perish at the presence of God.” Psalm 68:1-2

“They have seen Your procession, O God,
The procession of my God, my King, into the sanctuary.
²⁵ The singers went before, the players on instruments *followed* after;
Among *them were* the maidens playing timbrels.” Psalm 68: 24-25

As for Jephthah’s daughter, it says...

³⁴ (con’t) **and she *was his* only child. Besides her he had neither son nor daughter.**

The Hebrew is tender and mournful, anticipating the inevitable exchange that will soon take place: *v’raq hi y’khdah ein lo mimenu ben o bath* – “And except she, only. None to him, from him, son or daughter.” The word *yakhid* is used. It is the same word used to describe Isaac three times in Genesis 22.

As for the masculine word *mimenu*, from him, meaning “other than him (but implying her),” various suggestions have been raised as to why it is in the masculine rather than feminine form. Ellicott sees it as an idiomatic expression. Lange says, “the neutral conception ‘child’ floats before the writer’s mind.” Neither of these seems adequate.

One other suggestion is that it is referring to Jephthah, meaning there were no other children from him. But most agree that this is not what the Hebrew is conveying.

Despite that, the text is clear that this daughter is his only child. John Lange concludes that it would have been totally unexpected to have a virgin daughter come out to meet him, saying, “It never even occurred to him that she might come forth to meet him; for that was usually done only by women (נָשִׁים, Ex. 15:20; 1 Sam. 18:6), not by maidens, who remained within the house; and Jephthah’s daughter was yet a בְּתוּלָה, virgin.”

This doesn’t seem likely based on what it will say later in Judges 21 –

“Therefore they instructed the children of Benjamin, saying, ‘Go, lie in wait in the vineyards, ²¹ and watch; and just when the daughters of Shiloh come out to perform their dances, then come out from the vineyards, and every man catch a wife for himself from the daughters of Shiloh; then go to the land of Benjamin.’”

-Judges 21:20, 21

It doesn’t seem reasonable to suggest that these daughters were anything but virgins. Jephthah made his vow, and it was all-encompassing. The fact that his daughter is the one who came out to meet him may have been surprising and anguishing, but he had to take that into consideration when he made his vow.

³⁵ **And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he tore his clothes,**

vayhi khirotho othah vayiqra eth b’gadav – “And was, in his seeing her, and tears his garments.” Depending on the context, the tearing of a garment is a sign of great distress, anguish, horror, sadness, etc. In this case, it seems to be all of these and more. Jephthah is utterly laid low by what has happened...

³⁵ (con’t) **and said, “Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low! You are among those who trouble me!**

There is the epitome of distress in his words which are emphatically stated: *vayomer ahah biti hakhrea hikhratini v’at hayith b’okhrai* – “and says, “Ahah, my daughter! Bowing, you have bowed me, and you, you became in my troublings.” He first says *ahah*. It is an interjection essentially meaning alas. It expresses a state of woe or pain exclamatorily.

Next, the word translated as bow was used in Judges 5 when Jael wiped out Sisera. When she sent the peg through his skull, it said –

“Between her feet curled, fallen, lain.

Between her feet curled, fallen.

In which curled, there fallen, pulverized.” Judges 5:27 (CG)

Jephthah is as if he has been sucker punched and is completely doubled over in anguish. One can imagine him hardly being able to catch his breath. Finally, the words, “you became in my troublings” is a way of expressing that her very presence before him has debilitated him.

As for the word *akhar*, or trouble, it is used in exceptionally strong situations. For example, Joshua said this to Achan in Judges 7 –

“And Joshua said, ‘Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day.’ So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones.” Joshua 7: 5

This is the type of distress that Jephthah felt in himself over the revelation that he would have to sacrifice his daughter to the Lord.

³⁵ (con’t) **For I have given my word to the LORD, and I cannot go back on it.”**

The emphatic nature of his words continues: *v’anokhi patsithi pi el Yehovah v’lo ukhal la’shuv* – “and I, I opened my mouth unto Yehovah, and no able to return.” The word translated as opened, *patsah*, comes from a primitive root meaning to rend. So far, it has only been used when referring to the earth opening, such as to receive Abel’s blood or to swallow up the households of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

The words he spoke were intentional, and he purposefully opened his mouth. As his words were in the form of a vow, they cannot be taken back. This is explicitly stated in Numbers 30 –

“If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.” Numbers 30:2

What is stated here is not unlike what the psalmist says in Psalm 66 –

“I will go into thine house with burnt-offerings: I will repay to thee my vows
[neder],

¹⁴Which my lips opened [patsah] and my mouth spake in straits to me.”

-Psalm 66:13, 14 (SLT)

Jephthah made a vow when he opened his mouth. Now, his vow of the burnt offering must be accomplished. Completely understanding the situation, and demonstrating the most incredible devotion to the word of her father and his duty to the Lord, she responds...

³⁶ **So she said to him, “My father, *if* you have given your word to the LORD, do to me according to what has gone out of your mouth,**

Adding the word “if” does a disservice to the tenor of her reply: *vatomer elav avi patsithah eth pikha el Yehovah aseh li kaasher yatsa mipikha*– “And says unto him, ‘My father, opened your mouth to Yehovah. Do to me according to which gone from your mouth.’” It is like the response of a king or a nobleman coming from a young virgin. They are words of personal authority over the situation –

“Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, ‘You have appealed to Caesar? To Caesar you shall go!’” Acts 25:12

And more, her words don’t bear any timidity or fearfulness. She fully understands the situation and has no compunction about allowing it to happen, exactly as the situation demands.

As for her next words, they clearly convey her knowledge of the matter and what it means for her. This is unlike innumerable scholars and teachers who waffle on what is conveyed, attempting to somehow change the outcome of her situation...

³⁶ (con’t) **because the LORD has avenged you of your enemies, the people of Ammon.”**

akhare asher asah l’kha Yehovah n’qamoth meoyvekha mib’ne amon – “after which done to you, Yehovah – vengeance from your enemies, from sons Ammon.” The word *asah*, to do, is restated in this clause, after having been used in the previous clause –

*Do to me according to which gone from your mouth.

*...after which done to you, Yehovah – vengeance from your enemies, from sons Ammon.

This young virgin clearly understands the meaning of the vow. Yehovah gave victory over the lives of Jephthah's enemies. She knows that her life is now forfeit because of that. And yet, she humbly acknowledges her sentence without any sort of personal right to protest. Rather, she makes a simple request, one that will in no way affect the matter of the vow that Jephthah has made...

³⁷ Then she said to her father, "Let this thing be done for me: let me alone for two months,

vatomer el aviha yeaseh li ha'davar hazeh harpeh mimeni sh'nayim khodashim – "And said, unto her father, 'To be done to me the word, the this: slacken from me two months.'" The young girl asks nothing inappropriate and nothing that would cause Jephthah to violate his vow.

Rather, she has already firmly and willingly offered herself up to the Lord based on his vow. A two-month reprieve for her to have a suitable time to grieve over the matter was more than acceptable, and it is quite appropriate to the situation. As for how she will use the two months...

³⁷ (con't) that I may go and wander on the mountains

The words are poetic: *v'elkha v'yaradti al heharim* – "and I am walking and descending upon the mountains." The words seem incongruent. One must go up a mountain in order to descend upon it. To lighten the effect, some versions incorrectly state "that I may go up and down upon the mountains" (KJV et al).

Keil says, "that I may go down to the mountains (i.e., from Mizpeh, which stood upon an eminence, to the surrounding mountains and their valleys)." That seems forced concerning the words she chooses. What it appears to be saying is that she is equating her descending upon the mountains with what she next says...

³⁷ (con't) and bewail my virginity, my friends and I."

v'evkeh al bethulay anokhi v'raiti – "and I am bewailing upon my virginities, I and my companions." The word "virginity" is a masculine plural noun, *bethulim*, like the word *mayim*, or water. Water flows downward, descending on mountains and hills. And so she is bewailing the fact that her virginities will never flow –

“If any man takes a wife, and goes in to her, and detests her, ¹⁴ and charges her with shameful conduct, and brings a bad name on her, and says, ‘I took this woman, and when I came to her I found she *was* not a virgin [*bethulim*: virginities],’ ¹⁵ then the father and mother of the young woman shall take and bring out *the evidence of* the young woman’s virginity [*bethulim*: virginities] to the elders of the city at the gate.” Deuteronomy 22:13-15

Her “descending upon the mountains” seems to be a poetic way of saying, “If my virginities will never flow, then I will flow as I wish they did.” Her youthful actions as she walks with her friends as they accompany her in her final months will be a token of her dedication to her father, her nation, and the Lord.

In her words is a new word in Scripture, *rayah*. It signifies a female companion. It is found only here and nine times in the Song of Songs where it refers to Solomon’s darling.

Understanding her request, and probably wishing he could be the one to be with her instead, Jephthah agrees...

³⁸ So he said, “Go.” And he sent her away *for* two months;

vayomer lekhi vayishlakh othah sh’ne khodashim – “And said, ‘Walk.’ And sent her two months.” It would be hard to approve such a request, and it would also be impossible to not do so. Jephthah’s two months would be like Abraham’s three days of turmoil, multiplied by twenty.

As for the number two, it is the number of division or difference. Depending on the perspective, when there are two, there is a first and a last. There is one that begins and one that ends. There is a front and a back. They contrast, and yet they confirm the whole.

³⁸ (con’t) and she went with her friends, and bewailed her virginity on the mountains.

The words bear emphasis: *vatelekh hi v’reotheha vatev’kh al bethuleha al heharim* – “And walked, she, and her attendants, and bewails her virginities upon the mountains.” The hope of every godly Hebrew female was to be ancestor of the coming Messiah. It was a hope that would not be realized in her. This is the reason for bewailing her virginity, even over her death.

Despite this, she has found her own special place in redemptive history along with the other great women of faith that adorn Scripture's pages. Though unnamed, she is remembered for her actions and faith-filled devotion to her father and her people.

She obviously understood that if she could be spared her fate, the Lord would make it happen, just as He did for Isaac. This story would have been well-known. It would certainly take much of the fear out of what lies ahead to know that the Lord could intervene. And if He didn't, she understood that He had his reasons for not doing so.

The verse uses another new word, similar to the one in the previous verse, *reah*. It also signifies a companion, but to show a distinction, I translate it as attendant. It is found only elsewhere in Psalm 45 –

“The princess looks absolutely magnificent, decked out in pearls and clothed in a brocade trimmed with gold.

¹⁴In embroidered robes she is escorted to the king.

Her attendants [*reah*], the maidens of honor who follow her,
are led before you.

¹⁵They are bubbling with joy as they walk in procession
and enter the royal palace.” Psalm 45:13-15 (NET)

Her friends attended to her as she bewailed her virginity for two months...

³⁹ And it was so at the end of two months that she returned to her father, and he carried out his vow with her which he had vowed.

Out of the sake of propriety, the words are reserved and purposefully vague, providing no unnecessary descriptors: *vayhi miqets sh'nayim khodashim vatashav el aviha vayaas lah eth nidro asher nadar* – “And was, from end two months, and returned unto her father, and does to her his vow which he vowed.” The proclamation of the vow by Jephthah is as clear and unambiguous as anything else in Scripture –

“And is, the coming which comes from door my house to meet me, in my returning in peace from sons Ammon, and is to Yehovah, and I have ascended it – burnt offering.” (CG).

It was only at the time of Rabbi Kimkhi, a full millennium after the coming of Christ, that these words were taken to mean anything other than her death. There is no other place

in Scripture where perpetual virginity was some type of class bestowed upon women. But it certainly would have been noted if it were an acceptable allowance or practice.

And more, Scripture elsewhere has noted times when a child would be devoted to the Lord, meaning slain. This includes the obvious example of Abraham and Isaac. But it also was something Saul vowed to perform upon his own son, Jonathan, even if it was not carried out.

Jephthah made a vow, the Lord allowed the events following that vow to take place, and Jephthah did according to the vow he had uttered. And...

³⁹ (con't) **She knew no man.**

It is a Hebrew idiom meaning she was a virgin at the time of her sacrifice: *v'hi lo yad'ah ish* – “And she no knew man.” Of these words, John Lange (as an example of numerous others) states the following –

“Had she been put to death, that fact must here have been indicated in some way. The narrator would have said, ‘and he presented her as a sacrifice at the altar in Mizpah,’ or, ‘and she died, having known no man,’ or some other similar formula.”

There is a problem with this thinking. It is so obvious in fact, that as he continues, he fails to acknowledge that it rests in his own conclusion...

“The truth is, the whole narrative derives its mighty charm only from the mysterious, and at that time in Israel very extraordinary fact, that the daughter of the great hero, for whom a life of brilliant happiness opened itself, spent her days in solitude and virginity. Death, even unnatural, was nothing uncommon. But a life such as Jephthah’s daughter henceforth lived, was at that time unparalleled in Israel, and affords therefore profound instruction, not to be overlooked because issuing from the silence of retirement.”

If this daughter had not been offered as a burnt offering but was instead dedicated to the Lord as a perpetual virgin, living at the temple in that state, the lack of affirming it as such is absolutely no different than failing to state how and when she was offered as a burnt offering. And yet, not even a few extra words, such as “she knew no man all her days” are provided.

The only difference between the two is that Jephthah did not say he would fulfill his vow by offering up a perpetual virgin. He said he would offer her up as a burnt offering.

The proposition is an argument from silence mixed with a necessary manipulation of the intent concerning what has been provided.

But more to the point, she had asked for a two-month reprieve to bewail her virginity. If she was offered up to the Lord as a perpetual virgin, she would not have needed two months to bewail her virginity. She would have had all the remaining days of her life, living in sequestered devotion to the Lord, to do so.

The twisting of the outcome of this passage into something wholly unintended diminishes every aspect of it. It leaves the outcome void of the very purpose for which it is included in Scripture.

³⁹ (con't) **And it became a custom in Israel**

Rather: *vathi khoq b'Yisrael* – “And became statute in Israel.” The word *khoq* comes from *khaqq*, to inscribe or decree. This was a decree or statute that was followed. Whether it was throughout Israel, only east of the Jordan, or only in the immediate area isn't stated, but it was statute. And this statute is based on the act.

It would be the most pointless statute of all if the daughter was only locked up as a virgin. Rather, the statute is one of remembrance to a young girl whose life was vowed as a burnt offering to the Lord by her father for the sake of those threatened by A People who were not of the people of God. Therefore...

⁴⁰ (fin) **that the daughters of Israel went four days each year to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.**

miyamim yamimah telakhna b'noth Yisrael l'thanoth l'bath yiphtakh ha'giladi arbaath yamim ba'shanah – “From days her days, walks daughters Israel to celebrate to daughter Jephthah the Gileadite four days in the year.

In order to completely eradicate any correct meaning at all from the event, Charles François Houbigant translates this verse as, “But this custom prevailed in Israel that the virgins of Israel went at different times, four days in the year, to the daughter of Jephthah, that they might comfort her.”

It is not even a close translation. It is a paraphrase, injected with presuppositions and biases. Why would a statute need to be decreed for such a ridiculous proposition? But

more, why would Jephthah's daughter have asked to bewail her virginity if she was to have people coming to her for the rest of her life to bewail her virginity?

The custom, probably local in scope, was an honorary event for the daughters of the land to remember that Jephthah's daughter willingly agreed with her father that his vow superseded any claim of her own hopes or desires, and even of her life itself.

Also, this is the second and last use of the word *tanah*, celebrate, in Scripture. The first was in Judges 5:11, where the people celebrated the righteous acts of the Lord in the battle against Sisera.

As for the number four, Bullinger defines it, saying –

“It is emphatically the number of Creation; of man in his relation to the world as created; while six is the number of man in his opposition to and independence of God. It is the number of things that have a beginning, of things that are made, of material things, and matter itself. It is the number of material completeness. Hence it is the world number, and especially the ‘city’ number.”

Israel means He Strives With God. Jephthah means He Opens. The Gileadite means The Perpetual Fountainite. Curiously, the name of the daughter is never stated.

*Victory against the foe now calls for a proffering
A life is given up acknowledging His victory
For Jephthah, it is a mournful offering
He wonders to himself, “How can this be?”*

*Why did the Lord allow it to be this way?
He knew what would happen all along
Knowing that on that fateful day
Jephthah's daughter would come forth with a song*

*Surely, the Lord's ways are right
The outcome came by His design that day
Victory over Ammon by the Lord's powerful might
And so Jephthah's vow he did pay*

II. The Virgin Daughter

Here, we have a record of Jephthah's vow being fulfilled according to the providence of the Lord. The entire scenario could have been terminated at one of innumerable times. For example, Jephthah could have lost the battle. The battle could have been won, but Jephthah could have died in it.

It could have been that something or someone else came out of Jephthah's doors to meet him. Or it could have been that Jephthah's daughter immediately refused and ran away or committed suicide. She also could have died from being bitten by a snake or tumbling down the side of a mountain. On and on go the possibilities.

And yet, the battle was won, Jephthah returned home, and his daughter was first out the door to meet him. Therefore, she was offered to the Lord as a burnt offering.

The battle was won against Ammon, A People. They are the enemies of the people of God. Specifically, in typology, these people of God being on the east side of the Jordan picture those who were saved during the time under the law, meaning before the coming of Christ.

They are the people of God who anticipated Christ's coming. However, A People, those who are not God's people (a reflection of those referred to by Paul in Romans 9), are attempting to obtain an inheritance they have no right to. As seen, they picture those who have rejected Jesus but still claim to be God's people.

Once Christ came, the people of God, My People, are those who have come to Christ in faith, whether Jews or Gentiles. A People have no right to the inheritance, and yet they have battled to obtain it. Jesus, He Opens, is the Perpetual Fountainite. He is the One who opens the Spirit to those of faith.

The vow of Jephthah is to devote his virgin daughter as a burnt offering to ensure the salvation of the people of God. Who is the virgin daughter? It is the tribe of Judah, a term applied to them several times in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Lamentations. (See Isaiah 37:22, Jeremiah 14:17, Lamentations 1:15, etc.).

In essence, Jesus is speaking: "If you will give me the victory of saving the inheritance for those who were of faith under the law, I will offer up my virgin daughter (Judah)."

In verse 34, Jephthah came to his house at the Mizpeh, the Watchtower. Jesus came to Jerusalem, the place where the people of God watched for the coming of their Messiah.

His daughter recognizes him and comes out to meet him with timbrels and dances.
Judah recognized their Messiah. They came out to meet Him –

“And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread *them* on the road. ⁹ Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying:
‘Hosanna to the Son of David!
“Blessed *is* He who comes in the name of the LORD!”
Hosanna in the highest!” Matthew 21:8, 9

Verse 34 continues with the note that his daughter is his only child. But there is a gender discord in the word *mimenu*, from him, meaning “other than him.” It is referring to Israel, by this time in history summed up by the term Jew (from Judah) –

“O daughter of my people,
Dress in sackcloth
And roll about in ashes!
Make mourning *as for* an only son, most bitter lamentation;
For the plunderer will suddenly come upon us.” Jeremiah 6:26

In Jeremiah, the Lord uses the term daughter but then implores them to mourn as an only son. It matches what the typology is conveying perfectly. In verse 35, Jephthah is in great distress when his daughter comes joyously dancing to greet him. Jesus, likewise, mourned over Jerusalem –

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, but you were not willing! ³⁸ See! Your house is left to you desolate; ³⁹ for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed *is* He who comes in the name of the LORD!’” Matthew 23:37-39

Jephthah’s daughter sealed her own fate by coming out to meet her father. Judah sealed their own fate by coming out to meet Jesus. They openly acknowledged Him as their Savior. But the leaders of Jerusalem, the Watchtower, failed to do so.

They had become A People to God, even though they were God’s people, His virgin daughter. To save the people of God, the Lord was willing to allow His daughter to be sacrificed. This doesn’t mean as an atonement but as a pleasing aroma. Something that satisfies.

If God were to allow the Jewish people who had rejected Jesus to be saved, it would mean that Jesus' atoning sacrifice was pointless. There must be something that gives. In the case of Jephthah's battle, it was his virgin daughter. In the case of God's people, it meant that He would have to give up on His people.

Jephthah's daughter was the price to save God's people. The Jews who rejected Jesus are the price of securing those who came to Him under the law. This price includes the final seven years of the law, known as the tribulation period. Any who fail to come to Christ will be a part of this process of release.

Jephthah acknowledged that he had opened, *patsah*, his mouth to the Lord, and he could not go back on it. Jesus likewise opened His mouth to the Lord, as prophesied in Psalm 66 –

"I will go into Your house with burnt offerings [*olah*];
I will pay You my vows [*neder*],
¹⁴ Which my lips have uttered [*patsah*]
And my mouth has spoken when I was in trouble." Psalm 66:13, 14

The words of this psalm nearly mirror Jephthah's state and words. It is a messianic psalm about God's kingship to the nations. It reveals the gospel of Christ. The point of focus here concerns those of Israel who were under the law but who are brought into the family of God through the work of Christ.

The virgin daughter accepts that the vow must be paid and never argues against it. This shows that without Jesus, there is no salvation. If God did not let go of the virgin daughter, Judah, none would be saved. Therefore, the exchange is made –

*Do to me according to which gone from your mouth.

*...after which done to you, Yehovah – vengeance from your enemies, from sons Ammon.

The daughter must be given up because of the victory over A People. Judah must be given up because victory over those who have rejected Jesus has taken place.

Therefore, the daughter asks for two months (verses 37 & 38) to wander on the mountains. As has been seen many times, a mountain is a lot of something gathered. It is synonymous with a large but centralized group of people.

Her descending on the mountains means on many large groups of people. It speaks of the message going out to the Jews beyond Israel. Paul, speaking of the Jews hearing the message writes –

“But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘LORD, who has believed our report?’ ¹⁷ So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
¹⁸ But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed:
‘Their sound has gone out to all the earth,
And their words to the ends of the world.’” Romans 10:16-18

The request is a reprieve for two months, the number of division or difference. This indicates two groups, those who believe and those who fail to believe. There is salvation and there is condemnation. They contrast, but they confirm the totality of the Jews.

However, that time had to come to an end. The Jews were given the timeline in Daniel 9. Jesus told them it would come in forty years (when referring to the sign of Jonah). The temple was destroyed and A People who are not God’s people were exiled.

They will be given seven more years to come to Christ during the tribulation. Those who come to faith will be saved, and those who do not will perish.

Verse 39 said that at the end of the two months, she returned, and her father carried out the vow he had made. Saying “she knew no man” means the daughter, standing as representative of Jephthah’s vow, had no husband. Judah, without Christ, remains unmarried.

Some must be given up for others to be saved. The Lord covenanted with Judah that they would be a people before Him forever. But this does not mean all of them. The people of God are people of faith. This was alluded to by Jesus in His parables.

Those who were of faith before the cross during the time of the Mosaic Covenant were only saved based on the coming fulfillment of the law in Christ. There can be no end around for those who have rejected Him. This is pictured by Ammon, A People, coming against the people of God to obtain an inheritance to which they are not entitled.

They picture those who want the inheritance after Christ’s coming, but based on the law that was only given to anticipate Christ. With Christ’s completion of the law, it is no longer a tool acceptable to bring people to God.

Judah, the virgin daughter, had to be given up in order to secure the true people of God from all people. Christ, pictured by Jephthah, He Opens, was the One who brought this about.

The final verse noted that the daughters of Israel went four days each year to celebrate the daughter of Jephthah. Four speaks of man in his relation to the world as created. To celebrate this daughter is to celebrate what God has done in Christ.

It is the righteous acts of the Lord that brought about the victory over A People. Without Jesus, none would be saved. The Lord had to give up on Judah to bring about the salvation of many. This is what occurred. This thought is probably best summed up in the words of Zechariah –

“‘And it shall come to pass in all the land,’
Says the LORD,
‘*That* two-thirds in it shall be cut off *and* die,
But *one*-third shall be left in it:
⁹I will bring the *one*-third through the fire,
Will refine them as silver is refined,
And test them as gold is tested.
They will call on My name,
And I will answer them.
I will say, “This *is* My people”;
And each one will say, “The LORD *is* my God.”’” Zechariah 13:8, 9

Judah must go through the fire for the people to be saved. As contradictory as that sounds, that is how it is. The word *olah*, or burnt offering, is translated by the Greek Septuagint and the New Testament Greek as *holokautóma*, a holocaust.

That is exactly what A People who are not God’s people have experienced. It is what will be finalized in the tribulation period. Jesus is the remedy to this. He gave up on His virgin daughter to save His virgin daughter. When it says that the daughters of Israel celebrated Jephthah’s daughter, it is a celebration of their faith in the providence of God’s Messiah.

Jephthah’s daughter was a woman of faith in the Lord. Thus, she will be raised at the resurrection. Those of Judah who are of faith will also be raised because of the work of Christ. Those who are not of faith in God’s Messiah, Jesus, will be a part of the eternal holocaust that lies ahead.

God used this story from Israel's past to show us details of what has been and what lies ahead for the Jewish people. But the same truth applies to every one of us. God sent His Son into the world to save sinners. As all have sinned, all need Jesus. It is those who accept this premise and believe who will be saved.

There are no end-arounds given. This passage in Judges 11 clearly shows us this, even if it is referring to the people of Israel under different circumstances than we today find ourselves during the dispensation of grace. Those who remained under the law after Jesus came are not a part of God's salvation. What all people need is to trust in Jesus. This is the key to your being reconciled to God.

Closing Verse: *"I will pay my vows to the LORD
Now in the presence of all His people,
¹⁹In the courts of the LORD's house,
In the midst of you, O Jerusalem.
Praise the LORD!" Psalm 116:18, 19*

Next Week: Judges 12:1-7 *With this one, that's all there is to tell, ain't no jive...*
(Jephthah, Judge of Israel, Part V) (37th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Judges 11:34-40 (Jephthah, Judge of Israel, Part IV)

When Jephthah came to his house at Mizpah
There was his daughter, coming out to meet him with timbrels
-----and dancing, rejoicing over the slaughter
And she was his only child
Besides her he had neither son nor daughter

And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he tore his clothes
And said, "Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low!
-----This I must admit
You are among those who trouble me!
For I have given my word to the LORD, and I cannot go back on it

So she said to him, "My father, if you have given your word

-----to the LORD
Surely, then, He has known
Do to me according to what has gone out of your mouth
Because the LORD has avenged you of your enemies
-----the people of Ammon

Then she said to her father, "Let this thing be done for me
Let me alone for two months, and here is why
That I may go and wander on the mountains
And bewail my virginity, my friends and I

So he said, "Go"
And he sent her away for two months to roam the vicinity
And she went with her friends
And on the mountains bewailed her virginity

And it was so at the end of two months
That she returned to her father according to the plan
And he carried out his vow with her
Which he had vowed. She knew no man

And it became a custom in Israel
That the daughters of Israel went
Four days each year
The daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite to lament

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 12:1-7 (JEPHTHAH, JUDGE OF ISRAEL, PART V)

The linguistic challenge set before the Ephraimites in today's story is something we all would fail at, depending on the language. Unless you are practiced, there are some sounds that are just not possible for you to utter.

For instance, the "sh" sound is not easy for Danes. Some American Indian tribes lack it as well. An internet search said that Greek, Icelandic, Latin, Maori, Finnish, and Spanish have only a "ch" sound. The position of the tongue is what makes such sounds possible. They take practice.

The test in today's passage is meant to identify if someone belongs to a particular group of people. It is said that during World War II, one way of identifying German spies in American ranks was to ask questions about baseball stars. The Germans didn't follow baseball closely and were easily found out.

However, the British didn't follow baseball either and in David Niven's *The Moon's a Balloon*, Niven (who served with the commandos in WWII) says that he was queried concerning who won the '43 World Series. His response was, "I don't know but I starred in Bachelor Mother with Ginger Rogers." This helped him thread the needle.

In another example, John Lange notes, "When, during the Flemish war, the insurrection against the French broke out, May 25, 1302, the gates were guarded, and no one was suffered to pass out, except such as were able to say, 'Scilt ende friend,' which words no Frenchman could pronounce."

Text Verse: *"Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? ⁶I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. ⁷So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. ⁸Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor." 1 Corinthians 3:5-8*

If you want to embarrass yourself, go to a foreign country, or try to identify with foreign language speakers here in the US. I attended a Korean church for several years. They only spoke in Korean. Therefore, it was necessary to learn Korean. They have some really difficult sounds. To me, learning to read it was way easier than trying to speak it.

Apparently, one of the hardest languages to speak is Icelandic. However, a savant, gifted in such things, was challenged to learn to speak it in one week. He did. You can watch that on YouTube.

God divided the languages for His purposes. Those divisions continue even today as people move, isolate, etc. When I lived in Malaysia, there were little pockets of Indians, first brought from India when the tea plantations were planted. They later settled in little villages.

Their dialects changed so much over the years that their language is complete gibberish to the Indian population that stayed together in the larger cities.

There is no end to the amount of diversity that various languages of the world have in relation to other languages. As a nice hint for you, if you are ever wanting to win a free dinner in Japan, just ask a non-English speaking Japanese person to say refrigerator. 😊

Great things, such as diversity of speech are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. You Sould've Said Shibboleth (verses 1-7)

The next events are based on what occurred in the previous chapter. The king of Ammon challenged Israel for their inheritance. Jephthah told him why he had no right to it. The king refused to listen, and so Jephthah engaged him in battle. The narrative of Judges 11:29-33 said –

“Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh, and passed through Mizpah of Gilead; and from Mizpah of Gilead he advanced *toward* the people of Ammon. ³⁰ And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD, and said, ‘If You will indeed deliver the people of Ammon into my hands, ³¹ then it will be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the people of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD’s, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering.’ ³² So Jephthah advanced toward the people of Ammon to fight against them, and the LORD delivered them into his hands. ³³ And he defeated them from Aroer as far as Minnith—twenty cities—and to Abel Keramim, with a very great slaughter. Thus the people of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.”

It is based on those events that it next says...

¹ Then the men of Ephraim gathered together, crossed over toward Zaphon,

vayitsaeq ish ephrayim vayaavor tsaphonah – “And cries man Ephraim, and crosses over Zaphon-ward.” The idea of crying is that of someone yelling out to alert the people, mustering them for battle.

As for the word *tsaphonah*, it can mean either “northward” or “toward Zaphon.” The latter would probably be the case. It is a city east of the Jordan noted in Joshua 13:27. Zaphon means North, but also Concealed because the north is the hidden direction in the northern hemisphere.

Ephraim means Twice Fruitful and Ashes.

^{1 (con’t)} and said to Jephthah, “Why did you cross over to fight against the people of Ammon, and did not call us to go with you?”

vayomru l’yiphtakh madua avarta l’hilakhem bivne amon v’lanu lo qaratha lalekheth imakh – “and says to Jephthah, ‘Why crossed over to fight in sons Amon and to us no called to go with you?’” A battle has been won. Ephraim did not participate in it. and they were overcome with jealousy. It is the same wicked spirit they displayed in Chapter 8 when Gideon had gone to war against the Midianites –

“Now the men of Ephraim said to him, ‘Why have you done this to us by not calling us when you went to fight with the Midianites?’ And they reprimanded him sharply. ² So he said to them, ‘What have I done now in comparison with you? Is not the gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? ³ God has delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. And what was I able to do in comparison with you?’ Then their anger toward him subsided when he said that.” Judges 8:1-3

Gideon’s humility alone kept things from getting out of hand. Ephraim’s jealousy over the events between him and his brother are once again on full display...

^{1 (con’t)} We will burn your house down on you with fire!”

beithkha nishroph alekha ba’esh – “Your house burning upon you in the fire.” The meaning is capital punishment. It is a phrase used again in Judges 14:15 in the passage

about Samson and a Philistine woman. That punishment was actually carried out in Judges 15:6. It was used as a form of suicide in 1 Kings 16:18 as well.

² And Jephthah said to them, “My people and I were in a great struggle with the people of Ammon;

The sense of the Hebrew is lost: *vayomer yiphtakh alehem ish riv hayithi ani v’ami uvne amon meod* – “And says, Jephthah, unto them, ‘Man strife was I and my people, and sons Ammon exceedingly.’” Jephthah places himself as a warrior at a particular time for a particular purpose. He was challenged along with his people and he arose to meet the challenge...

² (con’t) and when I called you, you did not deliver me out of their hands.

va’ezaq etkhem v’lo hovoshatem oti miyadam – “and crying, you, and no saved me from their hand.” In verse 1, a man of Ephraim cried to wage war against his brother and the tribe responded, but when his brother cried to him for help, they failed to show up and assist in the battle.

Nothing of this request is recorded in Chapter 11, but it is apparent from Jephthah’s words that the call was made. Ephraim was either too pusillanimous or too arrogant to assist his own brother in the struggle he faced...

³ So when I saw that you would not deliver *me*, I took my life in my hands and crossed over against the people of Ammon;

Rather: *va’ereh ki en’kha movoshia va’asimah napshi b’khapi va’ebrach el bene amon* – “And seeing when you not saving, and setting it, my soul, in my palm, and crossing it, unto sons Ammon.” Jephthah says “palm” rather than “hand.” Though similar in meaning, the hand signifies power and/or authority. The palm (and sole) signifies possession and/or the state of something.

The meaning is that because of Ephraim’s lack of assistance, Jephthah decided to go it alone. He set his soul into a state of peril, crossed over, and faced Ammon alone. One can think of something precious and brittle being set in the palm. Without care, it could tumble out and crash to the floor, shattering it. But he was unwilling to have the challenge against the inheritance harmed because of Ammon’s invalid claim...

³ (con’t) and the LORD delivered them into my hand.

vayitnem Yehovah b'yadi – “and gives them, Yehovah, in my hand.” Here, instead of palm, he says hand. Ammon was delivered into the power of Jephthah. Noting that it was Yehovah who decided the matter, it shows that Jephthah’s actions were just and that the Lord approved of his decision to press forward alone.

It is unknown what tone he used, whether belligerent or conciliatory, but these words probably riled them up even more. Whether intended to instigate or not, it meant that they failed to participate in the Lord’s battle. But because it was the Lord’s battle, Jephthah asks...

^{3 (con’t)} **Why then have you come up to me this day to fight against me?”**

v’lamah alithem elay ha’yom ha’zeh l’hilakhem bi – “And why ascending unto me, the day, the this, to fight in me?” Depending on where they are located, this could be a verbal poke at Ephraim. If they were at a higher elevation, then it would be appropriate to acknowledge the elevation. However, some scholars place Zaphon near the Jordan.

If so, it would seem more likely Jephthah would say, “Why have you crossed over to me?” Thus, to say ascend, may be his way of showing supremacy over them. Again, without hearing the tone of his voice, one can only speculate on his words.

One other possibility is that the word ascend could be used in a military sense because attackers are said to “go up” to battle when besieging a city. Cities are normally at locations where they can be defended from above the armies gathered against them. This may be the best option because of the next words...

⁴ **Now Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead and fought against Ephraim.**

vayiqbots yiphtakh eth kal anshe gilad vayilakhem eth ephrayim – “And gathers, Jephthah, all men Gilead, and fights Ephraim.” Jephthah is from the half-tribe of Manasseh east of the Jordan. Ephraim is situated west of the Jordan. The name Ephraim, however, is often used inclusively of the half-tribe of Manasseh west of the Jordan. At times, it is also called the House of Joseph.

Jephthah has mustered troops from his half of Manasseh (He Forgets/From a Debt) who occupy Gilead (Perpetual Fountain) and engaged the western tribe. The reason is next explained...

^{4 (con’t)} **And the men of Gilead defeated Ephraim,**

vayaku anshe gilad eth ephrayim – “And strikes men Gilead, Ephraim.” Some try to find fault in the text. The Pulpit Commentary says, “The English version of these somewhat obscure verses is obviously wrong, and devoid of sense.” They do this because the words seem out of place. Any noted slaying of the Ephraimites comes in the next verse. Further...

⁴ (con’t) **because they said, “You Gileadites *are* fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites *and* among the Manassites.”**

ki amru p’lite ephrayim atem gilad b’thokh ephrayim b’thokh m’nasheh – “for said ‘Fugitives Ephraim, you, Gilead, in midst Ephraim and in midst Manasseh.’” Of these words, Cambridge and the Pulpit Commentary are completely befuddled, as if they are incomprehensible. It’s hard to understand why though.

Those of Ephraim (west of the Jordan) are saying to Jephthah, who is from Manasseh east of the Jordan, that the Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim and Manasseh who reside west of the Jordan, as if they didn’t want to share of life in Canaan with them and fled from them.

But this is wholly incorrect. The Gileadites had settled west of the Jordan, receiving their inheritance from Moses before Israel crossed the Jordan. However, they always considered themselves as a part of Israel. That is exactly why Joshua 22 is recorded.

After the land of Canaan was secured, the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh (here called the Gileadites based on Numbers 26:29, etc.) returned to their inheritance east of the Jordan. As they returned, they built the great and impressive altar as a witness, testifying to the fact that they were also the people of the Lord.

The tribes west of the Jordan saw the altar, freaked out because they thought it was for idolatry, and came ready for battle against the eastern tribes. At that time, however, the eastern tribes responded to them –

“Then the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh answered and said to the heads of the divisions of Israel: ²² “The LORD God of gods, the LORD God of gods, He knows, and let Israel itself know—if *it is* in rebellion, or if in treachery against the LORD, do not save us this day. ²³ If we have built ourselves an altar to turn from following the LORD, or if to offer on it burnt offerings or grain offerings, or if to offer peace offerings on it, let the LORD Himself require *an account*. ²⁴ But in fact we have done it for fear, for a reason, saying, ‘In time to

come your descendants may speak to our descendants, saying, “What have you to do with the LORD God of Israel? ²⁵ For the LORD has made the Jordan a border between you and us, *you* children of Reuben and children of Gad. You have no part in the LORD.” Joshua 22:21-25

This is exactly what has happened. Jephthah accredited the battle to the Lord, saying that He had given Ammon into his hand. The implied response, which is here repeated in the text, was, “You Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites and among the Manassites.”

It is a way of saying, “You have no part in us. You are fugitives from us and the Lord couldn’t be with you. We are the people of the Lord.” The altar stood as a witness that this was not so, but that was ignored by these western brothers of theirs.

Remembering that the altar clearly pictured Christ, the passage makes complete sense. Because of the offensive accusation, the Gileadites mustered and attacked. Ephraim obviously retreated towards home because it next says...

⁵ The Gileadites seized the fords of the Jordan before the Ephraimites *arrived*.

vayilkod gilad eth mabroth ha’yarden l’ephrayim – “And seizes, Gilead, fords the Jordan to Ephraim.” The meaning of “to” is “against.” They secured the fords of the Jordan (the Descender) against any possible passage by the Ephraimites in order to return to their inheritance in Canaan...

^{5 (con’t)} And when *any* Ephraimite who escaped said, “Let me cross over,” the men of Gilead would say to him, “Are you an Ephraimite?” If he said, “No,”

The words are ironic in the extreme: *v’hayah ki yomru p’lite ephrayim eevorah vayomru lo anshe gilad ha’ephraim atah vayomer lo* – “And became when says fugitives Ephraim, ‘I crossing over,’ and says to him, men Gilead, ‘The Ephraimite, you?’ And says, ‘No.’”

This is where the confusion by those scholars mentioned above comes from. The same word is used now that was used in verse 4 –

“for said ‘Fugitives [*palyit*] Ephraim, you, Gilead, in midst Ephraim and in midst Manasseh.”

“And became when says fugitives [*palyit*] Ephraim...”

These scholars think it is talking about the same people. In fact, it is an ironic twist of words. Those of the western tribes accused those of the eastern tribes of being fugitives. Now, the western tribes are the fugitives. They are trying to escape back to their own land, having been trounced by Jephthah.

Joshua 22 is the key to comprehending what is going on. These retreating fugitives were seized and asked if they were from Ephraim...

⁶ then they would say to him, “Then say, ‘Shibboleth’!” And he would say, “Sibboleth,”

Of these words, John Lange, unfortunately, says, “What ‘Shibboleth’ meant, is of minor importance.” *vayomru lo emar na shibboleth vayomer siboleth* – “And says to him, ‘Say, I pray, Shibboleth.’ And says, ‘Sibboleth.’” There is a single letter difference between the two. The first letter is either *shin* (shhh) or *samekh* (sss).

Shibboleth comes from *shobel*, a flowing skirt, or a train. That comes from an unused root meaning to flow. Shibboleth signifies both a flowing stream and an ear of grain (as it grows out in a flowing manner). It is also used in Zechariah 4 when referring to an olive branch –

“And I further answered and said to him, ‘What *are these* two olive branches [*shibale*] that *drip* into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden *oil* drains?’” Zechariah 4:12

Saying branches there seems a bit forced. Rather, one can think of the olive streams flowing forth and dripping into receptacles.

In this verse in Judges, the Jordan is flowing from God, just as a grain is given the increase by God (see the text verse) and as the flowing of the fatness of the olive is metaphorically used of God’s religious privilege in Romans 11 (see our closing verse). God is the Source of each.

In the change of the letter from *shin* to *samekh*, the root word is changed. It is now identical in spelling to a word, *siblah*, as it is used six times in Exodus –

“Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens [*siblah*]. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Raamses.”

-Exodus 1:11

“Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens [*siblah*].” Exodus 2:11

“Then the king of Egypt said to them, ‘Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people from their work? Get *back* to your labor [*siblah*].’⁵ And Pharaoh said, ‘Look, the people of the land *are* many now, and you make them rest from their labor [*siblah*]!’” Exodus 5:4, 5

“Therefore say to the children of Israel: ‘I *am* the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens [*siblah*] of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.’⁷ I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens [*siblah*] of the Egyptians.’” Exodus 6:6, 7

Both words, *sibboleth* and *siblah*, are derived from *sabal*, to bear (a heavy load). The reason for the change is next given...

⁶ (con’t) **for he could not pronounce *it* right.**

The words “could not” may or may not be ultimately correct and they don’t properly convey the meaning: *v’lo yakhin l’daber ken* – “And no established to speak thus.” The word *kun* means to be erect, but that is applied in numerous ways. In this case, their lips and tongue were not established through use to properly pronounce a “sh” sound.

Because of their failure to fruitfully formulate the word, being found to not vocalize it validly, and not enouncing it with eloquence or pronouncing it with precision, the Gileadites probably chuckled out “Awww, shucks,” while the Ephraimites may have responded, “Oh, soot!”

⁶ (con’t) **Then they would take him and kill him at the fords of the Jordan.**

vayokhazu otho vayishkhatuhu el mabroth ha’yarden – “And grasps him, and slaughters him, unto fords the Jordan.” It seems like a harsh thing to do to one’s brother. After all, this is the kind of thing the Lord looked down on Edom for –

“For violence against your brother Jacob,
Shame shall cover you,
And you shall be cut off forever.” Obadiah 1:10

However, the accusations and arrogance against these western inhabitants were insufferable, intolerable, insupportable, unacceptable, unendurable, and unbearable, and so the wrath of the Gileadites was taken out on them.

⁶ (con't) **There fell at that time forty-two thousand Ephraimites.**

vayipol ba'eth ha'hi me'ephrayim arbaim ushnayim aleph – “And falls in the time, the it, from Ephraim, forty and two thousand.” Of this, Cambridge arrogantly proclaims, as if they had any clue concerning the matter, “Obviously an exaggeration.”

The number itself is a derivative of forty-two and ten. Forty-two is one of the most interesting numbers of all. It is closely associated with the antichrist. Bullinger sums up the number saying –

“Being a multiple of seven, it might be supposed that it would be connected with spiritual perfection. But it is the product of six times seven. Six, therefore, being the number of Man, and man's opposition to God, forty-two becomes significant of the working out of man's opposition to God.”

⁷ **And Jephthah judged Israel six years.**

vayishpot yiphtakh eth Yisrael shesh shanim – “And judged, Jephthah, Israel, six years.” For a guy that is so prominent in Scripture and who accomplished so much, six years is not a very long time.

It may be, however, that he was selected to lead the people at a later time in his life. Or he may have died of a broken heart over the offering of his daughter. Without more information, all we can do is speculate.

Of the number six, Bullinger says, “it has to do with man; it is the number of imperfection; the human number; the number of MAN as destitute of God, without God, without Christ.” He also notes –

“Six, therefore, is the number of labour also, of man's labour as apart and distinct from God's rest. True, it marks the completion of Creation as God's work, and therefore the number is significant of secular completeness.”

⁷ (fin) **Then Jephthah the Gileadite died and was buried among the cities of Gilead.**

vayamath yiphtakh ha'giladi vayiqaver b'are gilad – “And died, Jephthah the Gileadite. And buried in cities Gilead.” His full name is given. Jephthah the Gileadite means He Opens, the Perpetual Fountanite. Of him, it says he was buried “in cities Gilead.”

The curious expression, using the plural instead of the singular has precedent elsewhere in Scripture, such as Genesis 19:29. In this case, it is a purposeful way of not giving the name of the city. Thus, typology is being maintained.

*Here is a challenge for you
And you'd better get it right
A simple thing I'll ask you to do
And then, things will turn out alright*

*A question that will reveal your doctrine
The answer is one that will affect your soul
A wrong answer, and you will be done in
Are you ready? Cue the drumroll*

*Who is Jesus to you?
What is it about Him that you proclaim?
What is it that you think you must do?
When speaking out His glorious name?*

*Speak your shibboleth wisely this day
Sould you fail, you'll be swept away*

II. Pictures of Christ

Verse 1 began by showing the passage is dealing with Ephraim, Twice Fruitful and Ashes. It speaks of the work of Christ being effective for both Jews and Gentiles, securing His people through His afflictions, symbolized by the ashes. Thus, these people claim to accept Christ's completed work.

Despite this, they head *tsaphonah*, meaning either toward the north or toward Zaphon, which means North. Either way, the north is the hidden direction in the northern hemisphere as the sun moves toward or away from it depending on the time of year. Thus, it signifies Concealed. Something is hidden that will be revealed.

To make the point about what is being pictured, and what will be seen as we continue, the Greek word that the Bible uses is the adjective *kruptos*, hidden. That is derived from the verb *kruptó*. It is the etymological root of our modern word crypto. The adjective is used in “ians concerning what we are seeing now. It signifies something concealed –

“But we have renounced the hidden [*kruptos*] things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. ³ But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴ whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. ⁵ For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus’ sake. ⁶ For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” 2 Corinthians 4:2-6

Jesus used the verb form, alerting the people to their need to pay heed to His instruction, but He knew they would keep it willfully concealed from themselves –

Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, ⁴² saying, ‘If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things *that make* for your peace! But now they are hidden [*kruptó*] from your eyes.’” Luke 19:41, 42

The Ephraimites next ask Jephthah (He Opens) why he went to fight against the people of Ammon (A People) but didn’t call them. The battle against Ammon, as seen, pictured the Jews who, after Christ’s work, tried to take the inheritance through law observance instead of coming to Christ. It is they who were defeated.

Now, these Ephraimites are asking why they weren’t called. As they are from west of the Jordan, they signify those who have come after Christ’s incarnation. They say they will burn down Jephthah’s house with fire. They intend to destroy He Opens, meaning Jesus and His being the only path to salvation.

Jephthah then notes (verse 2) that he was, in fact, a man of strife against Ammon (A People – the Jews trying to obtain the inheritance without Jesus), he and his people. Again, that pictures Jesus and His believers in a battle against the false doctrine of law observance to obtain salvation.

So duplicitous and pernicious is this infection that we see the cunningness of it in the words of verse 2, “and crying, you, and no saved me from their hand.” They were, in fact called, but they refused to respond.

Such people claim one thing, but they do another. How many teachers say they believe in God’s grace while they secretly (or even openly) teach law observance?

In verse 3, Jephthah notes that in being rejected by Ephraim, he set his soul in his palm. For the sake of grace, Jesus placed His life in a state of peril. He was unwilling to have the challenge against Him marred by those who hold to the law.

The thought is beautifully and exactly expressed in the 22nd Psalm, a psalm about Jesus on the cross –

“Deliver Me from the sword [חרב HRV (*kherev/Khorev* – the law)],
My precious *life* from the power of the dog.” Psalm 22:20

In placing His precious life in His palm, Jesus prevailed. As it said, “and gives them, Yehovah, in my hand.” He is the Victor!

Next, Jephthah asks, “And why ascending unto me, the day, the this, to fight in me?” Jesus is in the exalted position. Why anyone would ascend against Him is incredible to imagine, but people do it every day of the week and twice on Saturday. There is no end to the attempts to undermine His authority.

Therefore, verse 4 says, “And gathers, Jephthah, all men Gilead, and fights Ephraim.” Jesus, He Opens, and all the men of Gilead, Perpetual Fountain (meaning those sealed with the Spirit because of the work of Christ), go to battle against Ephraim.

Ephraim in this case signifies any Jew or Gentile who claims Jesus after the cross, and yet who still teaches law observance. This will be clearly seen. Remember, they have crossed the Jordan. They are in the land of the inheritance prior to Christ’s coming.

Those with Jephthah prevail (verse 4) because they have the Lord on their side. The law observers make the claim that they are the ones who are right and that the Gileadites are fugitives. However, despite being east of the Jordan (prior to Christ’s coming), they are the ones in right standing with the Lord.

As such, they not only struck the Ephraimites in battle, but they also seized the fords of the Jordan (Christ, the Descender) to keep them from returning to any sort of inheritance they thought they had west of the Jordan.

In holding the fords, these church-age-supposed-Christian-law-observers are asked if they are of Ephraim. Ironically, they are now called the fugitives. If they answered yes, then no other explanation was needed.

However, if they said “No,” then they were subjected to a laughable little linguistic litmus test. They would say to him (verse 6) “Say, I pray, Shibboleth.” It signifies to flow. It is something that was seen to flow from God in each of its uses.

It is a picture of God’s grace that flows from God in Christ. However, these lifeless lackluster losers couldn’t say shibboleth, could they? They lacked the grace of God and lived without the loquaciousness to proclaim salvation by grace alone through faith alone. Instead, they said, Sibboleth.

They remain under the burdens of Egypt (man under sin), never coming to the grace of God in Christ. They continue to bear the heavy load of law upon them. In their case, it is not only the burden of Adam’s sin, but the imputation of Mosaic sin as well.

Of them, the words *v’lo yakhin l’daber ken* – “And no established to speak thus” are quite appropriate. They can almost speak about the grace of God. They claim it, but the very first hint of their speech, the *samekh* instead of the *shin*, betrays them, just as the very first part of their spiritual being, law over grace, betrays them.

Because of their failure to proclaim shibboleth (Christ’s grace) correctly, they were taken and killed at the fords of the Jordan (the Descender, Jesus). The meaning is plain, poignant, painfully pitiful, and perfectly clear: those (supposedly) in the church after Christ’s coming who hold to law observance will never go through Christ and into their supposed inheritance.

The text noted that forty-two thousand fell. It is beautifully and exactly described by Bullinger –

“Being a multiple of seven, it might be supposed that it would be connected with spiritual perfection. But it is the product of six times seven. Six, therefore, being the number of Man, and man's opposition to God, forty-two becomes significant of the working out of man’s opposition to God.”

The law is completely opposed to the grace of God in Christ. As for being antichrist, that is explained by John –

“Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. ²³Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.”

-1 John 2:22, 23

“For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ *as* coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.” 2 John 1:7

One could certainly argue this doesn't apply to law observance. It is speaking of the denial of the Father/Son relationship, specifically meaning the incarnation of Christ (coming in the flesh). However, that would be incorrect.

What does the gospel say? Christ died for our sins. Christ was buried. Christ rose again. To teach law observance is an implicit denial of the deity of Christ. If we must work in order to be right with God, it means that what Jesus did was insufficient to save us.

But if Jesus is the fulfillment of the law and the One who ends sin, then He must be God. John's words logically point to the doctrine of law observance for salvation as a denial of the deity of Christ and the Father/Son relationship of Christ.

Stated another way, if the hope is to be in fellowship with God the Father, and yet Jesus didn't accomplish that, then there is no Father/Son relationship as the Bible proclaims. Jesus explicitly states this in John 14 –

“Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, “Show us the Father”?’ ¹⁰Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. ¹¹Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.”

-John 14:9-11

Jesus is God. To say that one must observe the law (which He fulfilled) to be saved denies this truth. Thus, to rely on the law after the completion of His work is the spirit of the antichrist, denying the Father/Son relationship.

Verse 7 noted that Jephthah judged Israel for six years. Jesus accomplished the human work of man before entering His rest, exactly as Bullinger describes in the number –

“Six, therefore, is the number of labour also, of man's labour as apart and distinct from God's rest. True, it marks the completion of Creation as God's work, and therefore the number is significant of secular completeness.”

Finally, it said that Jephthah (He Opens) the Gileadite (the Perpetual Fountainite) died and was buried “in cities Gilead.” To avoid marring the typology, this is all it said. The meaning is that Jesus, the Giver of the Spirit rested from His labors and now is in the city (plural for the singular) Perpetual Fountain. He is in the city of God where His people will someday join Him.

This account was a necessary addition to what we have already seen. The previous account showed that those who came to God before Jesus came but who had faith under the Law of Moses, obtained their inheritance.

It will not be compromised, however, by those of Israel or the church who reject Christ after His incarnation.

This account, though similar, identifies a different group of people. They claim that they are of the inheritance after Christ's coming, using Jesus as a mere tool in their arsenal of law observance. Think of the Judaizers of Paul's time. Think of the Seventh Day Adventists. Think of Hebrew Roots Movement adherents.

Despite their proclamations, they implicitly deny the sufficiency and, thus, the deity of Christ through their doctrine and conduct. These had to be addressed separately from those of the previous passage because they are a separate, even if similar, category.

It may seem that these pictures of Christ deal an inordinate amount with law observance, as if other things should be seen in typology. This is totally incorrect. It is a main issue dealt with in Scripture. It is the introductory thought presented to man in Genesis 2, and it is the last thought presented to man in Revelation 22.

It is the main issue in Paul's epistles, taking up a large majority of what he says, and almost the entire book of Galatians deals with salvation by grace, not law. It is the key point to understanding the gospels as well, even if it doesn't appear that way on the surface.

Jesus is dealing with Israel under the law in the gospels. He is preparing the world for grace through His life and through His proclamations, but Israel is being instructed under the law about those things. If the issue of law observance is not cleared up, no other matters can be properly searched out.

The giving of the Spirit? Dealing with law must come first. Sharing the gospel? One can only do that if he understands grace, not law. Each aspect of our relationship with Christ is only possible because He has first dealt with the law.

He cannot be our mediating High Priest if we observe the law. The law already has a priestly system in place for that. What we need to do is to trust in the grace of God in Christ, first and foremost. This is, once again, the lesson that is taught in this passage that would be otherwise completely unnecessary to include in Scripture.

What possible difference does this passage make otherwise? Even if the battle had temporary effects for Israel, it has none now. But it is a part of God's eternal word. Therefore, we are being taught an important, eternal lesson about what God is doing, what pleases Him, and what He expects from His people. Faith! Have faith in the full, final, finished, and forever work of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Closing Verse: *"And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, ¹⁸do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you."*

-Romans 11:17, 18

Next Week: Judges 12:8-15 *Get it on; get in the zone; your mind will be blown... it's so swell* (Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon, Judges of Israel) (38th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Jephthah, Judge of Israel, Part V

Then the men of Ephraim gathered together
Crossed over toward Zaphon, and to Jephthah said
"Why did you cross over to fight
Against the people of Ammon leading them as their head?"

And did not call us to go with you, so we inquire?
We will burn your house down on you with fire!”

And Jephthah said to them, “My people and I were
In a great struggle with the people of Ammon in these lands
And when I called you
You did not deliver me out of their hands

So when I saw that you would not deliver me
I took my life in my hands, understand?
And crossed over against the people of Ammon
And the LORD delivered them into my hand

Why then have you come up to me, how can it be?
This day to fight against me?

Now Jephthah gathered together
All the men of Gilead and against Ephraim fought
And the men of Gilead defeated Ephraim
Because they said words that were distraught

“You Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim (say your last rites)
Among the Ephraimites and among the Manassites”

The Gileadites seized the fords of the Jordan
Before the Ephraimites arrived
And when any Ephraimite who escaped said
“Let me cross over,” thus he was deprived:

The men of Gilead would say to him
“Are you an Ephraimite?” (If so, you’ll meet your death!)
If he said, “No,”
Then they would say to him, “Then say, ‘Shibboleth’!”

And if he would say, “Sibboleth”
For he could not pronounce it right
Then they would take him and kill him at the fords of the Jordan
There fell at that time forty-two thousand of the Ephraimite

And Jephthah judged Israel six years
Then Jephthah the Gileadite died
And was buried among the cities of Gilead
A humble man, lacking any pride

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 12:8-15 (IBZAN, ELON, AND ABDON, JUDGES OF ISRAEL)

In previous Judges sermons, we have seen pictures of what is coming upon Israel, and indeed the whole world, in the tribulation period. That was especially on display in the story of Gideon.

However, the narrative went back in time and gave us a look into the work of the antichrist during the tribulation period through the story of Abimelech.

Tola and Jair then gave insights into the coming millennium. But the ongoing narrative again backed up in the next passage to provide further detail into the time of Israel without Christ. This was a necessary step to lead to an understanding of who is and who is not right with God.

Clarity is needed to understand who of Israel would enter the millennium. In other words, there are believers before the time of Jesus who will enter, such as Daniel. They were saved under the time of the law, but not everyone under the time of the law was saved.

Likewise, the people after the coming of Christ who hold to the law could say, “We are doing what they were doing and we will be saved.” But that is incorrect. This was clearly revealed in the sermons about Jephthah.

Each account has been given to provide insights into redemptive history and to have those who look into these things solidify their theology concerning proper doctrine during various dispensations.

With Jephthah complete, a picture similar to that of Tola and Jair appears again in today’s verses.

Text Verse: *“Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, ‘Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?’*

¹⁴ And I said to him, ‘Sir, you know.’

So he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵ Therefore they are before

the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them.” Revelation 17:13-15

Israel today is A People who are not God’s people, except in regard to His future reacceptance of them. That was clearly and unambiguously seen in the sermons on Jephthah.

So the question is, what is it that makes any people the people of God? The answer is faith. But more than that, it is properly directed faith. Those who were under the law before Jesus’ coming were saved by faith in God’s provision at that time.

Since Christ’s coming, man is saved by faith in God’s provision of Jesus Christ. One cannot back up to the law and say, “I am going to be saved by God’s provision of the Law of Moses.” No! It didn’t save at that time, except as it anticipated Christ, and it cannot save at all now – in any way, shape, or form because Christ has come and fulfilled it. The time of the law is done.

Jephthah cleared that up. Now, we come to the results of that typology in the naming of three Judges of Israel. The passage is filled with wonderful hints of what God has ahead in history. Please enjoy the pictures to come. They are a magnificent part of God’s superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. They Judged Israel (verses 8-15)

The narrative now turns to three judges whose combined time of judging Israel comprises a mere eight verses. They are not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture, so this is all that we have to go on.

Unlike Jephthah, all three of these judges are located west of the Jordan. Each of them is said to be “after him,” so there is a chronological aspect to them. However, it does not logically follow that they judged in order with the other events and judges later noted, such as Samson. They simply judged after Jephthah and after one another.

That they come after Jephthah chronologically is seen in the opening words of our passage today...

⁸After him, Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel.

vayishpot akharav eth Yisrael ivtsan mi'beithlakhem – “And judges, after him, Israel, Ibzan from Bethlehem.” This judge, Ibzan, judges after the time of Jephthah. The location of his judgeship is said to be Bethlehem, but it is not necessarily Bethlehem in Judah.

In Judges, Bethlehem is noted nine times. Seven of those times, it specifically notes Bethlehem Judah to define which Bethlehem. This is also true of the opening words of Ruth which occurred during the time of the judges. Only after it was specifically defined twice as Bethlehem Judah is the word Judah omitted.

Josephus says that it is Bethlehem Judah, but his writings are not always reliable. They need to be considered as mere possibilities, not as adamant proofs. Also, due to the closeness of spelling between Ibzan and Boaz, some Jewish commentaries state it is the same person. However, the Hebrew spelling is not that close. The names are derived from different roots.

Taking this to a ludicrous extreme, however, Cambridge says, “His city was probably not the Beth-lehem in Judah, because the Bk of Judges is not concerned with Judah.” Judah is mentioned over twenty times in Judges. Samson’s judgeship, which is the next major section coming in the book of Judges, has dealings with Judah.

There isn’t definitive proof either way, but the lack of noting Judah after Bethlehem may indicate another Bethlehem, probably that noted in Joshua 19, is being referred to. That Bethlehem was within the borders of Zebulun which lies to the north of Judah and west of the Jordan and the Sea of Galilee in Canaan.

Having said all that, a couple of points should be considered. The first is that arbitrarily trusting commentaries without verifying what they say is not a sound approach to learning what is being conveyed in Scripture.

The second is that whether this is in Judah or Zebulun, it is irrelevant to what is needed to understand the typology being conveyed. In fact, we can deduce that by stating the tribe it would mar whatever typology needs to be drawn from the passage.

Of the name Ibzan has several possibilities: Their Whiteness, literally, Their Tin as White (Jackson’s dictionary); Great Fatigue (Jones’); Splendid (Young’s); or, using the same root as Young’s, *ebets* (to gleam or conspicuous), it could mean Gleam, Illustrious, Conspicuous, etc.

Bethlehem means House of Bread (*lekhem*), but without the vowel pointing it is identical to the verb meaning war (*lakham*). Thus, it has a secondary meaning of House of War (Battle). The connection between the two is that in battle, it is as if those being killed are consumed like food. Of him, it next says...

⁹ He had thirty sons.

v'hi lo sh'loshim banim – “And is, to him, thirty sons.” He is noted just after Jephthah who had no surviving children, at least as recorded in the narrative. A son in Scripture can have a multitude of significations, but the main sense of being a son is that of identity of character or nature.

Of the number of sons, Bullinger says –

“THIRTY being 3 x 10, denotes in a higher degree the perfection of Divine order, as marking the right moment. CHRIST was thirty years of age at the commencement of His ministry, Luke 3:23. JOSEPH, His type, was the same age, Genesis 41:46. DAVID also, when he began to reign, 2 Samuel 5:4.” E.W. Bullinger

In their lives, both Joseph and David were types of Christ. Along with Ibzan’s thirty sons, it next says...

^{9 (con’t)} And he gave away thirty daughters in marriage, and brought in thirty daughters from elsewhere for his sons.

u-sh'loshim banoth shilakh ha'khutsah u-sh'loshim banoth hevi l'banav min ha'khuts – “and thirty daughters sends the outside-ward. And thirty daughters came to his sons from the outside.” The idea of daughters in Scripture carries a similar connotation to that of sons for people and things that are feminine. It conveys the idea of identity of character or nature.

Here, the contrast between Jephthah and Ibzan is strikingly set forth for us to see. Jephthah’s only child, his daughter, was sacrificed as an offering to the Lord for the victory realized in battle. She remained unmarried. On the other hand, Ibzan has thirty daughters he gave away in marriage and he gained thirty daughters-in-law through marriage to his sons.

Of this, Ellicott says, “Implying polygamy, wealth, and state.” Actually, none of these is implied. He may have outlived or divorced many wives. He may have been rich or poor. And he may have lived in the most modest of conditions.

Ellicott then states, “The only reason for recording the marriage of his sons and daughters is to show that he was a great man, and sought additional influence by intermarriages with other families.” But we have already shown another reason, which is that his life is set in complete contrast to his predecessor.

In other words, we must be careful to not insert what the text is silent on, and we must not assume we know everything that is being conveyed. Any speculation should always be noted as such. Specific words are provided by the Lord, but as simple as they are, they may carry more intent than we realize. Of Ibzan, it next says...

⁹ (con’t) **He judged Israel seven years.**

vayishpot eth Yisrael sheva shanim – “And judges, Israel, seven years.” Seven is the number of spiritual perfection. Bullinger continues to define it, saying –

“In the Hebrew, seven is shevah. It is from the root savah, to be full or satisfied, have enough of. Hence the meaning of the word ‘seven’ is dominated by this root, for on the seventh day God rested from the work of Creation. It was full and complete, and good and perfect. Nothing could be added to it or taken from it without marring it. Hence the Shavath, to cease, desist, rest, and Shabbath, Sabbath, or day of rest. ... It tells of that eternal Sabbath-keeping which remains for the people of God in all its everlasting perfection. In the creative works of God, seven completes the colours of the spectrum and rainbow, and satisfies in music the notes of the scale. In each of these the eighth is only a repetition of the first. Another meaning of the root [Shava] is to swear, or make an oath. It is clear from its first occurrence in Genesis 21:31, ‘They swore both of them,’ that this oath was based upon the ‘seven ewe lambs’ (vv 28,29,30), which point to the idea of satisfaction or fulness in an oath. It was the security, satisfaction, and fulness of the obligation, or completeness of the bond, which caused the same word to be used for both the number seven and an oath; and hence it is written, ‘an oath for confirmation is an end of all strife.’”

¹⁰ **Then Ibzan died and was buried at Bethlehem.**

vayamath ivtsan vayiqaver b’veithlakhem – “And dies, Ibzan, and buried in Bethlehem.” The time he was a judge was seven years. But his age at death is left unstated. He could

have become judge at ninety and died at ninety-seven. The details of his life, though sparse, are carefully recorded.

¹¹ After him, Elon the Zebulunite judged Israel.

vayishpot akharav eth Yisrael elon hazvuloni – “And judges, after him, Israel, Elon the Zebulunite.” The words “after him” can mean immediately after him or at some point after him. It also does not negate someone else judging at the same time. Elon is a judge of Israel after the time of Ibzan. The name Elon comes from *elon*, a terebinth or oak. Jones’ dictionary defines it as Magnificent Oak.

However, *elon* is derived from *ayil*, a ram. That in turn comes from *ul*, to be strong. Thus, Young’s defines it as either Oak or Strong.

Zebulun means Glorious Dwelling Place.

Even less is said of him than of his predecessor...

¹¹ (con’t) He judged Israel ten years.

vayishpot eth Yisrael esher shanim – “And judges, Israel, ten years.” These five words sum up his time as judge. Ten, according to Bullinger signifies –

“Completeness of order, marking the entire round of anything, is, therefore, the ever-present signification of the number ten. It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete.”

¹² And Elon the Zebulunite died and was buried at Aijalon in the country of Zebulun.

vayamath elon hazvuloni vayiqaver b’ayalon b’erets zevulun – “And dies, Elon the Zebulunite. And buried in Aijalon in land Zebulun.” There appears to be a play on words here based on the Hebrew spelling of the name and his burial location –

אלון
אֵילֹן

Other than the additional letter *yod*, the spelling is identical. And there is a reason for them being so similar. Aijalon comes from *ayyal*, a deer. Hence, it signifies Place of the

Deer. However, that also comes from the same root as *elon*, which is *ul*, or strength. Hence, Place of Strength is not out of line.

Noting that Aijalon is in the country of Zebulun is to distinguish it from another location with the same name recorded in the territory of Dan.

To close out the chapter, one more judge is introduced...

¹³ After him, Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite judged Israel.

vayishpot akharav eth Yisrael avdon ben hilel hapirathoni – “And judges, after him, Yisrael, Abdon son Hillel the Pirathonite.” Again, the words “after him” can mean immediately after him, or at some point after him. It also does not negate someone else judging at the same time. Abdon is a judge of Israel after the time of Elon.

The name Abdon comes from *abad*, to work or serve. It is variously defined as Servile, Hard Slavery, etc. However, the *on* (*vav-nun* couple) at the end of the name is often used as a locative or personified structure. Therefore, it can mean Place of Work or Working One.

Hillel comes from *halal*, generally translated as praise. It is also variously translated as glory, boast, etc. It means Praise (of God), Praised Greatly, Praise, He has Praised, etc.

Pirathon is variously defined as Just Revenge, Peak, Top, or Height. However, Abarim says –

“Here at Abarim Publications we surmise that the town and both the judge and the mighty-man were named after a method of social formation that also sits at the heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and which would make Israel a “kingdom of kings” (Daniel 2:44, 1 TIMOTHY 6:14-15, REVELATION 5:10, 17:14), namely by the joining of autonomous people without compromising anybody’s freedom and autonomy and in fact adding to it (GALATIANS 5:1). Our name means [Town] Of The Confederation, and since the early Scriptures respect Egypt as ancestral (rather than reject it as some mere fruitless oppressor), our name even means Place Of The Little Pharaohs.”

Of Abdon, it next says...

¹⁴ He had forty sons and thirty grandsons,

v'hi lo arbaim banim u-shloshim b'ne banim – “And is, to him, forty sons and thirty sons’ sons.” The number forty is defined by Bullinger, saying –

“It is the product of 5 and 8, and points to the action of grace (5), leading to and ending in revival and renewal (8). This is certainly the case where forty relates to a period of evident probation. But where it relates to enlarged dominion, or to renewed or extended rule, then it does so in virtue of its factors 4 and 10, and in harmony with their signification.”

As this is speaking of an enlarged dominion and extended rule, it should rather be defined by four, the number of material creation, and ten, the number of completeness of order. It would thus refer to completeness of order in the material creation.

Thirty was previously defined.

Of these progenies, it next says...

¹⁴ (con’t) **who rode on seventy young donkeys.**

rokhvim al shivim ayarim – “riding upon seventy donkey-colts.” This is not unlike Jair in Judges 10 who was said to have thirty sons who rode on thirty donkeys.

The word translated as donkey is *ayir*. It is a colt, a young donkey. The word comes from *ur*, to rouse oneself or awaken. The connection is that of raising (bearing) a burden. This type of donkey pictures ruling status. This is seen in Zechariah –

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your King is coming to you;
He is just and having salvation,
Lowly and riding on a donkey,
A colt [*ayir*], the foal of a donkey.” Zechariah 9:9

As with Jair, this is equivalent to saying, “seventy who ruled.”

The number seventy, as defined by Bullinger, “signifies perfect spiritual order carried out with all spiritual power and significance. Both spirit and order are greatly emphasised.”

Concerning Abdon, it says...

¹⁴ (con't) **He judged Israel eight years.**

vayishpot eth Yisrael sh'moneh shanim – “And judged, Israel, eight years.” Of this number, Bullinger says, “It is 7 plus 1. Hence it is the number specially associated with Resurrection and Regeneration, and the beginning of a new era or order.” With this short description complete it next says...

¹⁵ (fin) **Then Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the mountains of the Amalekites.**

vayamath avdon ben hilel hapirathoni vayiqaver b'pirathon b'erets ephrayim b'har amaleqi – “And dies, Abdon, son Hillel the Pirathonite. And buried in Pirathon, in land Ephraim, in mount the Amalekite.” The chapter ends with these words.

The name Ephraim means Twice Fruitful and Ashes.

Amalek is derived from *am*, people, and *malaq*, to nip or wring off the head of a bird with or without severing it from the body. Thus, they are The People Who Wring Off. They are those who are disconnected from the body and strive to disconnect the body.

As has been seen many times, a mountain is a lot of something gathered. It is synonymous with a large but centralized group of people. There has not been a lot of surface information in these accounts. However, because typology is being conveyed, a lot can be gleaned from them.

*Ibzan came after Jephthah to show us some stuff
Then came Elon to show us some more
But these two weren't quite enough
And so came Abdon, to show us the score*

*Three judges over Israel
Three men who anticipate the coming Christ
What a marvelous thing that their lives tell
Showing us how pleasing God is priced*

*It doesn't come by works of the law
It isn't found in arrogant pride*

*Remember the things you heard and saw
Come to Jesus and stand on His side*

*Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! In Him the victory
All hail our Lord Jesus there before the glassy sea*

II. Pictures of Christ

The account of these three judges comes after that of Jephthah. This tells us that any typology is to be taken sequentially after what was said in the narrative of Jephthah, regardless as to whether the times of these judges is chronologically sequential or not.

Jephthah's battle was against Ammon, A People. That battle anticipates the people of Israel who reject Christ during this dispensation. They have no inheritance among the redeemed of the Lord.

That included the narrative of Jephthah's daughter being sacrificed which indicated the price God was willing to pay to secure true believers in Christ during this dispensation. Those who believe will be saved while those who do not will be eternally separated from God.

The first seven verses of this chapter showed that anyone of this dispensation who relies on the law for salvation, assuming he can be saved through it, will also be eternally separated from God. The law cannot save. It only brings condemnation. Only Jesus can save.

The first judge introduced after Jephthah is Ibzan of Bethlehem. He anticipates Jesus, Splendid (Illustrious, etc.) from Bethlehem, the House of Bread. He is Splendor of God and the Bread of Life. Saying he has thirty sons refers to the sonship that comes through Him and which is ultimately revealed "at the right moment."

There is a time when the sonship of His people or the rejection of His people will be fully realized. The thirty daughters going out and the other thirty daughters coming in for his sons anticipate the inheritances of His people.

The word inheritance is feminine in both Hebrew (*nakhalah*) and Greek (*kléronomia*). At the right moment in time, those who reject Him will have their inheritances sent out while those who are His will have their inheritances brought in.

Saying Ibzan judged Israel seven years signifies the spiritual perfection of those saved. As Bullinger noted, the root signifies satisfied or have enough. And more, Bullinger noted the connection to rest, something that is finally granted to those who are saved, as well as the satisfaction of an oath, something that comes through the covenant promises which are finally realized.

Ibzan's death closes out the typology. Stating that he was buried in the same place he came from is a confirmation of the typology concerning Christ being the Bread of Life that feeds His people eternally.

After Ibzan, Elon the Zebulunite is mentioned. He is Strong, the Glorious Dwelling Place-ite, referring to Jesus who is from heaven. He judged Israel ten years. It speaks of the totality of the millennium, marking completeness of order of the dispensation. Nothing is wanting and the entire cycle is complete.

Saying that Elon the Zebulunite was buried in Aijalon in Zebulun is a way of saying that Jesus, the Man from heaven, retains His strong position at the end of the millennium that He possessed at the beginning of it. Thus, it reflects the state of those who possess the millennium in Christ.

After Elon came Abdon, son of Hillel, the Pirathonite. Translated, it speaks of Jesus: Working One, son of Praise, the Confederationite. Jesus, the Working One, is the One who accomplished all the work necessary for man to be reconciled to God.

He is the Son (meaning His character and nature) of Praise and the One who brings together as one every tribe, tongue, and nation, on earth "by the joining of autonomous people without compromising anybody's freedom and autonomy and in fact adding to it" (Abarim). As it says in Revelation 5 –

“And they sang a new song, saying:
‘You are worthy to take the scroll,
And to open its seals;
For You were slain,
And have redeemed us to God by Your blood
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,
¹⁰ And have made us kings and priests to our God;
And we shall reign on the earth.’” Revelation 5:9, 10

The millennium will be filled with those who accepted Christ, both Jew and Gentile from everywhere, when it is populated after the tribulation. That includes both those who survived through the tribulation as well as those who will reject the mark of the beast –

“And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection.

⁶ Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” Revelation 20:4-6

This period is defined in the words concerning the forty sons and thirty grandsons. As noted, because this speaks of enlarged dominion and extended rule, it is to be defined by four, the number of material creation, and ten, the number of completeness of order.

The number, therefore, refers to completeness of order in the material creation. This is exactly what is contemplated in the thought of the millennium, meaning the final thousand years of man in the redemptive narrative.

The number thirty signifies the perfection of Divine order as marking right moment. The dispensational plan is complete with the ending of the millennium. Every word of the provided typology leading up to this point has carefully and precisely marked out all that is going on in the redemptive narrative from the time of the law through the completion of the millennium.

To fully reveal this, the two numbers are combined when noting the seventy donkeys. It reveals the “perfect spiritual order carried out with all spiritual power and significance. Both spirit and order are greatly emphasized” (Bullinger).

As noted, the type of donkey here pictures ruling status. That could not be more perfectly summed up than with the words of Revelation 20:6, they “shall reign with Him a thousand years.”

Of Abdon, Working One, it says he judged eight years. That exactly describes the completion of the millennium, the seventh dispensation. It refers to regeneration and the beginning of a new era or order. This is just what lies ahead after the millennium –

“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. ² Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God. ⁴ And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.’ ⁵ Then He who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’ And He said to me, ‘Write, for these words are true and faithful.’”

-Revelation 21:1-5

The final verse of the chapter referred to Abdon’s death and where he was buried. It is a beautifully fitting end to this narrative –

“And dies, Working One, son of Praise, the Confederationite. And buries him in Confederation in the land of Twice Fruitful/Ashes in mount the People Who Wring Off.”

Exodus 17 ended with the words –

“And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-LORD-Is-My-Banner; ¹⁶ for he said, “Because the LORD has sworn: the LORD *will have* war with Amalek from generation to generation.” Exodus 17:15, 16

Jesus, because of the afflictions of His work (Ashes) became Twice Fruitful, gathering people from Jews and Gentiles despite the constant ongoing battle with the legalism of law observance. His work alone has defeated Amalek once and forever.

From Christ’s comprehensive, consummate, complete, and continuously effective work, there will be a heavenly confederation from every people group on the planet, hailing the Lamb of God for all eternity.

Without any manipulation at all, but simply reading the provided information gathered from these verses, it has revealed exactly what has been going on throughout the entire redemptive narrative since Judges 1.

Each step has carefully and meticulously provided doctrine to lead Israel to an understanding of what God in Christ is doing. As Gentiles today are included in the commonwealth of Israel, it is inclusive of us as well.

In this section, the three Judges combined reigned for a total of twenty-five years. The total is purposeful. It sums up the millennium dispensation. Each separate period bears its own signification. However, this total does as well –

“TWENTY-FIVE being the square of five (5^2 or 5×5), expresses the essence of the signification of five, i.e. grace, whether used alone or occurring as a factor in larger numbers.” Bullinger

The meaning is that whether before the coming of Christ or after His coming, and even through the millennium, man is saved solely by the grace of God in Christ. But there is more. Because these three narratives are linked to Jephthah’s rule by the words “after him,” the total, thirty-one years, has its own relevance.

“THIRTY-ONE The Hebrew expression of this is I), El, the name of God, and its signification as a number or factor would be Deity.” Bullinger

Without needing to stretch this at all, and because all four of these Judges clearly and unambiguously picture Christ, it is a resounding note to us that Jesus Christ is God.

As noted previously, to say that one must observe the law (which Jesus fulfilled) in order to be saved is an implicit denial of the truth that Jesus is God. Thus, to rely on the law after the completion of His work is the spirit of the antichrist, meaning denying the Father/Son relationship.

A battle is being waged, a spiritual battle, that is being worked out in literal human history, including worldwide battles that are prophesied to happen in the future. Every step of this process is given to refine and purify those who will come to God through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

No person can be saved apart from His work. This is what the Bible says. Let us pay heed to the message, put ourselves and our pride aside, and let us trust – wholly and completely – in Jesus Christ alone. He can (and He will 😊) save. Hooray for Jesus!

Closing Verse: *“They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; ¹⁷for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd*

them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” Revelation 17:16, 17

Next Week: Judges 13:1-14 *Fun a ton! His story is so swell...* (Samson, Judge of Israel, Part I) (39th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon, Judges of Israel

After him, Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel
He had thirty sons, that's several tons
And he gave away thirty daughters in marriage
And brought in thirty daughters from elsewhere for his sons

He judged Israel seven years, certainly enjoying them
Then Ibzan died and was buried at Bethlehem

After him, Elon the Zebulunite judged Israel
He judged Israel ten years, sure was fun
And Elon the Zebulunite died
And was buried at Aijalon in the country of Zebulun

After him, Abdon the son of Hillel
The Pirathonite judged Israel
He had forty sons and thirty grandsons
Who rode on seventy young donkeys. What a story to tell!

He judged Israel eight years
Then Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died
And was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim
In the mountains of the Amalekites. From there, he will make
-----his transformation ride

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard

Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 13:1-14

(SAMSON, JUDGE OF ISRAEL, PART I)

The timing of the events of Samson's life spoken of in today's passage is debated. Some place it chronologically after the last account which ended Judges 12.

There was Jephthah and then three judges after him. Ibzan judged seven years. Elon judged ten years. And Abdon then judged eight years. Each of them said "after him," meaning the preceding judge. As such, John Gill says –

"...forty years: which according to Josephus (f) are to be reckoned from the death of the last judge, and the time of Samson's birth; or rather from some time after the death of Jephthah, particularly taking in the two last years of Ibzan, when the Ephraimites having been weakened through the slaughter of them by Jephthah, might encourage the Philistines to break in upon them; from which time to the birth of Samson were twenty years, and twenty more may be allowed before he could begin to deliver Israel out of their hands; so that the oppression lasted forty years."

On the other hand, Keil says –

"Not only the birth of Samson, but the prediction of his birth, also fell, according to Judges 13:5, within the period of the rule of the Philistines over Israel. Now, as their oppression lasted forty years, and Samson judged Israel for twenty years during that oppression (Judges 15:20; Judges 16:31), he must have commenced his judgeship at an early age, probably before the completion of his twentieth year; and with this the statement in Judges 14, that his marriage with a Philistine woman furnished the occasion for his conflicts with these enemies of his people, fully agrees.

"The end of the forty years of the supremacy of the Philistines is not given in this book, which closes with the death of Samson. It did not terminate till the great victory which the Israelites gained over their enemies under the command of Samuel (1 Samuel 7). Twenty years before this victory the Philistines had sent back the ark which they had taken from the Israelites, after keeping it for seven months in their own land (1 Samuel 7:2, and 1 Samuel 6:1).

"It was within these twenty years that most of the acts of Samson occurred. His first affair with the Philistines, however, namely on the occasion of his marriage, took place a year or two before this defeat of the Israelites, in which the sons of Eli were slain, the

ark fell into the hands of the Philistines, and the high priest Eli fell from his seat and broke his neck on receiving the terrible news (1 Samuel 4:18). Consequently Eli died a short time after the first appearance of Samson.”

Text Verse: *“And she shall be saved through the childbearing, if they abide in faith, and love, and sanctification, with lucidity.” 1Timothy 2:15 (CG)*

Keil’s thoughts are more closely aligned with the actual chronology than Gill. But the point is specifically that the text does not say “after him.” There is nothing to suggest that the account is chronologically after Judges 12. This is also despite the unfortunate rendering of the NKJV which begins Judges 13 with the word “again.” As always, carefully consider what the words are saying, and be willing to check with various translations to verify.

As for the text verse, it seems appropriate to the sermon because the mother of Samson bears the responsibility of the instructions given in the passage. And if Israel needs a judge to save them, then it logically follows that if he succeeds, she will participate in the results of his efforts.

As for Paul’s words of 1 Timothy 2, they are complicated and highly debated, but they do not mean that a woman is saved by her personal works of childbearing. So, ladies, don’t fret over that 😊.

The passage today is, like all of God’s word, filled with wonderful insight into what is on His mind. So let’s get into it. Great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. A Nazirite to the God (verses 1-7)

¹ Again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD,

It does not say “again.” The words have become familiar to us: *vayosiphu b’ne Yisrael laasoth hara b’ene Yehovah* – “And added, sons Israel, to do the evil in eyes Yehovah.” It is identical to the opening clause of Judges 3:12, Judges 4:1, and Judges 10:6. It is as if there is a divine scale or counter being added to with every evil act. And it isn’t just evil but “the evil.” Saying this adds stress to the words.

To say “again” in the translation causes the mind to think that the events being conveyed are after the previous account. I will unpack reasons against this in a minute. For now, this is the eighth and last time that this statement about “the evil” will be seen in Judges, but it will continue throughout the Old Testament, especially in the books of Kings and Chronicles.

For example, the word *ra*, or evil, is used nineteen times in Judges, but eight times it includes the article *ha’ra*, the evil, when referring to the people’s conduct before the Lord. As here, each time it says the evil was done *b’ene Yehovah*, or “in eyes of Yehovah.” The offense is personal in the relationship between the people and the Lord.

In Judges, the article *ha* is always used in relation to the conduct of the sons of Israel, meaning the people collectively. However, later, when kings rule the land, that same term will usually refer to the conduct of the king, he being the one to do “the evil.”

Thus, during the time of the Judges, the Lord is the ultimate leader of the people. It is the judge, the Lord’s temporarily appointed leader, who is called to bring the people back from doing “the evil.” Once the kingdom is established, it is the king himself who causes the people to err or who brings them back to the Lord.

Israel means He Strives with God. As for this instance of doing “the evil,” it next says...

^{1 (con’t)} **and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.**

vayitnem Yehovah b’yad plishtim arbaim shanah – “And gave them, Yehovah, in hand Philistines forty years.” In return for the evil they have committed, the Lord sends corrective measures intended to humble them and get them to return to Him.

The name Philistine comes from *palash*, signifying to roll in the dust as an act of mourning. It can take on several meanings, including Grievors, Burrowers, or Weakeners.

The number forty is defined by Bullinger as “a period of probation, trial, and chastisement—(not judgment, like the number 9, which stands in connection with the punishment of enemies, but the chastisement of sons, and of a covenant people).”

And more, he says, “It is the product of 5 and 8, and points to the action of grace (5), leading to and ending in revival and renewal (8). This is certainly the case where forty relates to a period of evident probation.”

An unusual aspect of what is said here is that normally when Israel does evil in the eyes of the Lord, it directly says that the children of Israel are then subjugated by whatever enemy. That then results in Israel crying out to the Lord for deliverance.

From there, the Lord hears and responds according to the situation. However, that is not stated here. Instead, it simply introduces the narrative concerning the one who will come to judge and deliver the people. However, this lack of any note of repentance appears to have already been dealt with in Chapter 10 –

“So the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and into the hands of the people of Ammon. ⁸From that year they harassed and oppressed the children of Israel for eighteen years—all the children of Israel who *were* on the other side of the Jordan in the land of the Amorites, in Gilead. ⁹Moreover the people of Ammon crossed over the Jordan to fight against Judah also, against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim, so that Israel was severely distressed.” Judges 10:7-9

It appears that as in Judges 2, these words of Judges 10 were given to anticipate what was ahead not only for the tribes east of the Jordan but also west of the Jordan.

Israel sins against the Lord and so the enemies, both the Philistines (west) and Ammon (east), harass and oppress Israel. The words went from being from the east of the Jordan (vs. 8) to being west of the Jordan (vs. 9). Likewise, the narrative in the following chapters follows that pattern.

We saw Jephthah in Chapters 10-12, east of the Jordan. After that came Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon, all west of the Jordan. Now, the ongoing narrative continues west of the Jordan.

The words from Judges 10 above also refer to war “in Judah and in Benjamin and in house Ephraim.” Because Ephraim is later used synonymously with the northern tribes of Israel, it appears that the narrative is saying that the ongoing spiritual war in Israel extends from the time before Christ, to the time of His coming, and through to the time of the divided spiritual state of Israel after that.

Thus, the crying out to the Lord noted in Judges 10 is inclusive of both the narratives that follow, meaning those tribes east of the Jordan and now the tribes west of the Jordan. In order to relieve the affliction of those west of the Jordan, the Lord does something different by initiating the narrative of the judge from infancy rather than from adulthood.

Therefore, it seems likely that the narrative of Samson's time as judge is included in the statement concerning Israel doing "the evil" in the eyes of the Lord in Judges 10:6 and that Judges 13:1 is a repeat of that.

If so, the narrative of Samson's birth recorded in Judges 13, which obviously precedes his time of deliverance, occurs before or during, not after the forty years. As such, it would then mean that God is anticipating those forty years when Samson is old enough to judge Israel. Because of this, it would tie Judges 10 and Judges 13 together with these words –

"So the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and into the hands of the people of Ammon." Judges 10:7

"For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines." Judges 13:5

The issues east of the Jordan, including those with Ammon, were dealt with in Judges 10:17-12:7. Now, the issues west of the Jordan are dealt with from Judges 12:8 and after. However, Samson's time as Judge starts in Judges 14:1. Judges 13 is, therefore, given in anticipation his time as judge.

With the birth of Samson noted, Judges 15:20 will say, "And he judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines." Samson's time will begin deliverance from the Philistines, but it will continue through the time of King Saul and into the reign of David. Thus, the introduction of Samson begins with...

² Now there was a certain man from Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah;

vayhi ish ekhad mitsrah mimishpakhath ha'dani ushmo manoakh – "And is man, one, from Zorah, from family the Danite. And his name Manoah." The words are like those which begin the selection of the final judge, Samuel.

Of the word family, it is used almost synonymously with the word *shevet* or tribe elsewhere in the narrative. Dan is a small tribe, consisting of only the family of Shuham, the only named son of Dan, as is recorded in Numbers 26:42.

Zorah (Tsorah) was originally named under the allotment to Judah in Joshua 15:33. However, it is also named under the allotment of Dan in Joshua 19:41. It is named Tsor'a today and is about 15 miles west of Jerusalem and just a bit north of the Valley of Elah where David slew Goliath.

The name comes from either *tsirah*, a collective word meaning hornets, or *tsaraath*, leprosy. Thus, it literally means either Hornet(s) or Leprosy. However, both are a type of affliction because the hornet is metaphorically used as an instrument of war, driving out enemies. For example, this is seen in Exodus 23 –

“I will send My fear before you, I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come, and will make all your enemies turn *their* backs to you. ²⁸ And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before you.” Exodus 23:27, 28

Therefore, this location may be metaphorically named Affliction or Afflicter. Dan means Judge. Manoah means Rest or Quiet. However, Abarim comically comments on him, “It seems obvious from the story that Manoah is physically and mentally like a bag of potatoes, and always in the wrong place at the wrong time. In this context his name means Lazy One or Sloth.” Manoah is mentioned eighteen times, seventeen in this chapter and once in Chapter 16, noting his tomb. Of him, it says...

² (con't) **and his wife was barren and had no children.**

The words form a pleonasm (a literary tool where more words than are necessary, called for, essential, or needed are used to convey meaning, intent, purpose, and design, and thus they give, furnish, impart, and provide emphasis, stress, importance, weight, and significance): *v'ishto aqarah v'lo yaladah* – “And his wife barren, and no borne.” The introduction of these words is given to show God's sovereignty over the situation. The same barren state was true of Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Hannah, and Elizabeth (mother of John the Baptist).

This wife's name is not given during the narrative. She is only referred to as Manoah's wife or Samson's mother.

³ **And the Angel of the LORD appeared to the woman**

vayera malakh Yehovah el ha'ishah – “And appears, Messenger Yehovah, unto the woman.” Rabbi Levi Ben Gershom attempts to align this messenger with Phinehas,

probably to deny the obvious, that the Lord appeared in the form of a man. But the account will leave no doubt that this is the second member of the Godhead.

This is reflected, for example, in the words of Malachi, where the same word, *malakh*, or messenger, is used to refer first to John the Baptist and then Jesus –

“Behold, I send My messenger [*malakh*],
And he will prepare the way before Me.
And the Lord, whom you seek,
Will suddenly come to His temple,
Even the Messenger [*malakh*] of the covenant,
In whom you delight.
Behold, He is coming,
Says the LORD of hosts.” Malachi 3:1

³ (con’t) **and said to her, “Indeed now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son.**

vayomer eleha hineh na at aqarah v’lo yaladat v’harith v’yaladt ben – “and says unto her, ‘Behold, I pray, you barren and no borne. And conceived, and borne son.’” Nothing is said of the age of either parent or how long this state of barrenness lasted. But it is apparent that it was long enough that it was considered as her permanent state.

Thus, the proclamation is recorded to show that the child to be born will be a part of God’s unfolding plan in the restoration of Israel. For now, directions concerning the child are given...

⁴ **Now therefore, please be careful not to drink wine or *similar* drink, and not to eat anything unclean.**

v’atah hishamri na v’al tishti yayin v’shekhar v’al tokhli kal tame – “And now, watching, I pray, and not drinking wine or blinko drink, and no eating all unclean.” The details here are given in accordance with, but not all-encompassing of, the stated restrictions of the Nazirite recorded in Numbers 6.

In other words, even though the restrictions of the Nazirite are implied here, this is a shorter explanation of what is generally expected of the Nazirite. The mother is being included in the restriction because the child receives his nutrition in the womb from the mother. Thus, the mother is to separate herself to ensure his separation.

⁵ **For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son.**

ki hinakh harah v'yoladt ben – “For, behold, pregnant, and borne son.” The words not only demonstrate the hand of the Lord in the process, but also the directive hand of the Lord. He is not merely opening the woman’s womb, but He is directing what type of child will be born, a son. And more...

^{5 (con’t)} **And no razor shall come upon his head,**

u-morah lo yaaleh al rosho – “and razor, no comes upon his head.” Here is a new and rare word, *morah*, razor. It will be seen twice in relation to Samson and once at the announcement of the coming birth of Samuel. It is derived from *mur*, to change or exchange. The obvious connection is that when one uses a razor, there is a change in appearance, something I am quite opposed to personally.

A razor removes hair, thus making a change. It explains the word’s root. Hair in the Bible signifies awareness, but in particular it speaks of the awareness of sin. As sin comes through a violation of the law, it is the law itself that introduces and brings about the imputation of sin.

Paul explains this, saying that “by the law *is* the knowledge of sin” (Romans 3:20), and “sin is not imputed when there is no law” (Romans 5:13). And again –

“But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all *manner of evil* desire. For apart from the law sin *was* dead. ⁹I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. ¹⁰And the commandment, which *was* to *bring* life, I found to *bring* death.” Romans 7:8-10

At this point, one can already deduce that the life of Samson, though a historical judge of Israel who delivered the people from the Philistines, will be a typological representation of some sort of interaction with the law. Therefore...

^{5 (con’t)} **for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb;**

ki n'zir elohim yihyeh ha'naar min ha'baten – “for Nazirite God becomes the lad from the womb.” The word is *nazir*. It is not the same as a Nazarene, meaning someone from Nazareth. Rather, the word comes from the verb *nazar*, “to separate.” Thus it signifies separation or consecration.

It was used to describe Joseph who was separated, or distinguished, above his brothers (Genesis 49:6 & Deuteronomy 33:16). It was also used two times in Leviticus 25 when referring to the untended vines of the Sabbath and Jubilee years.

The word was used quite a few times in both its noun and verb forms in Numbers 6 when describing the Nazirite and what was expected of him.

It is used twice in the Samson narrative concerning his life and conduct, and it will be seen in Lamentations 4 and twice in Amos 2. The Lamentations and Amos references give the sense of law violation resulting in woe for Israel.

As for using this word to describe Joseph, he was a type of Christ, but he was not a Nazirite. And so the word goes so far, but no further. The untrimmed vines during the sabbath year observances would have a special appearance reflecting their consecrated status. As the Nazirite was untrimmed in hair, the vines were untrimmed of their clusters.

In regard to Christ, he was separated among His brothers, like Joseph, but the intent of the Nazirite vow which is explained here has nothing directly to do with the life and conduct of Christ. He could drink wine, He could cut His hair, etc.

Understanding this state is important. Israel was set apart as God's people, but they were not Nazirites. The priests were set apart to minister the law for Israel, the separated people, but they were not Nazirites. Only when the priests were conducting their priestly duties in the tabernacle were they not to drink wine. Other than that, no restriction was placed upon them.

Likewise, priests were not to touch corpses under certain circumstances, and when they did, they became defiled. The high priest was never to defile himself with the dead. The Nazirite was like the priests in some ways, but different in others. He was to never drink wine or ever be in the presence of the dead.

The Nazirite could not mediate or officiate at the altar. And yet, he appears to have been a type of a living, moving altar to the Lord. He yielded himself to the Lord and the uncut hair on his head is the visible representation of his being set apart in this manner.

During Samson's life, however, he will have a lot of contact with the dead, at least in the sense of him being the slayer. The Nazirite of Numbers 6, however, says this –

“And if anyone dies very suddenly beside him, and he defiles his consecrated head, then he shall shave his head on the day of his cleansing; on the seventh day he shall shave it.” Numbers 6:9

Lots of people will die suddenly around Samson, and yet, he remained a Nazirite to the Lord. Only when his hair was cut did the Lord depart from him (Judges 16:20). When the hair, the awareness of sin, was removed from him, that is when his time of calamity came upon him. As for his mission...

⁵ (con’t) **and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.”**

v’hu yakhel l’hovoshia eth Yisrael miyad plishtim – “And he begins to save Israel from hand Philistines.” The words mean that Samson is to be a part of the process of defeating the Philistines. As noted already, that process will continue after him.

Thus, he follows in the footsteps of Shamgar who “killed six hundred men of the Philistines with an ox goad” (Judges 3:31), but this is a new time of affliction that must be dealt with. Samson begins that process. Upon hearing this news of a son...

⁶ **So the woman came and told her husband, saying, “A Man of God came to me,**

Rather: *vatavo ha’ishah vatomer l’ishah l’mor ish ha’elohim ba elay* – “And came, the woman, and tells to her husband, to say, ‘Man, the God, came unto me.’” Using the article, the God, is expressive and refers to the one true God in relation to man. It is used to reveal those who are in a right relationship with Him, or to contrast those who are not in a right relationship with Him.

In this case, the term “Man the God” indicates that this person is a prophet (like Moses and others who are so designated). As such, he is obviously in a right standing with God. He has spoken a prophecy about a matter with conviction and assurance that it will come to pass.

This designation, “the God” will be used six times in the Samson narrative. Five of them will be in Judges 13. The last time is where it will say, “And calls, Samson, unto Yehovah, and says, Adonai Yehovah, remember me, I pray, and strengthen me, I pray, surely the once this – the God – and I will avenge vengeance one from two my eyes from Philistines!” Judges 16:28 (CGT).

Thus, the life of Samson is introduced into the narrative by a Man of the God, who we will find out is the Lord God, and it will end in a petition to the Lord God. Of Him, she says...

⁶ (con't) **and His countenance *was* like the countenance of the Angel of God, very awesome;**

u-marehu k'mareh malakh ha'elohim nora meod – “And his appearance according to appearance Messenger the God – affrighting, very.” We are not told in what manner he was frightening. It could have been His physical person, His dazzlingly white garments, a combination of both, etc. Whatever it was that affrighted her, she accepted that He was truly a Man of the God and thus the words of His message were certainly going to come to pass.

⁶ (con't) **but I did not ask Him where He *was* from, and He did not tell me His name.**

v'lo shiltihu ey mizeh hu v'eth sh'mo lo higid li – “And no asked him where from this, He. And His name, not declared to me.” The reticence to ask such a question would be natural even under normal circumstances. However, in this case, it would be presumptuous.

The Man was terrifying to the sight and authoritative in His words. If he didn't tell her where He was from, she knew He purposefully didn't do so. Thus, asking would be out of the question. And more, He refrained from even identifying Himself. Therefore, she let that line of questioning alone as well.

⁷ **And He said to me, ‘Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. Now drink no wine or *similar* drink, nor eat anything unclean, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death.’”**

vayomer li hinakh harah b'yoladt ben v'atah al tishti yayin v'shekhar v'al tokhli kal tumah ki n'zir elohim yihyeh ha'naar min ha'beten ad yom moto – “And says to me, ‘Behold, pregnant, and borne son. And now, no drinking wine or blinko drink, and no eating all unclean. For Nazirite Elohim shall be, the lad, from the womb until day his death.”

She omits the note about her being barren and not having borne. Instead, she immediately states that she will be pregnant and will have a son. They are words of faith that the message was believed as it was received.

As for the words, “from womb until day his death,” they are more complete than what was stated. So they are either a logical assumption by the woman, or the text simply didn’t record all that was said. The words are like those of Luke 1 –

“But the angel said to him, ‘Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. ¹⁴ And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. ¹⁵ For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb.’” Luke 1:13-15

*A Nazirite to God he shall be
From his mother’s womb even unto his death
He will bring about great victory
Even till his final breath*

*You shall carefully heed what I have said
All that the woman has been told, she shall do
She may eat her daily bread
But not eat or drink those things that I tell you*

*He is set apart and consecrated to Me
All his life will be devoted to ‘the God’
This is his rule of life, so shall it be
All his days on this path he shall trod*

II. And the God Listened (verses 8-14)

⁸ Then Manoah prayed to the LORD, and said, “O my Lord, please let the Man of God whom You sent come to us again and teach us what we shall do for the child who will be born.”

vayetar manoakh el Yehovah vayomar bi Adonai ish ha’elohim asher shalakhta yavo na od elenu v’yorenu mah naaseh lanaar hayulad – “And prays, Manoah, unto Yehovah, and says, ‘Oh me, Adonai, Man the God whom sent, coming, I pray, again unto us, and teach us what doing to the lad, the bearing.”

Manoah prays to Adonai, meaning Yehovah, but calling Him Lord. He has accepted that his wife's words were accurate and that they are true and reliable. But he desires to know more than the few words that have been conveyed.

As for the use of the participle, "the bearing," it seems to imply that she is either already pregnant or that he is asking for instruction while she is so that they are prepared when the son is born. As for his request and the obvious implication that the Lord hears and responds to prayers according to His purposes...

⁹ And God listened to the voice of Manoah, and the Angel of God came to the woman again

vayishma ha'elohim b'qol manoakh vayavo malakh ha'elohim od el ha'ishah – "And hears, the God, in voice Manoah. And comes Messenger the God again unto the woman." Instead of coming to Manoah, the Messenger comes again to the unnamed wife.

This may be because if the Messenger appeared to Manoah, he would have simply asked instructions and not gone out to get his wife. However, by coming to the woman, she would be sure to go to her husband, knowing he had prayed and wanted this visit from Him. This is because it notes...

⁹ (con't) as she was sitting in the field; but Manoah her husband was not with her.

v'hi yovosheveth ba'sadeh u-manoakh ishah en imah – "And she sitting in the field, and Manoah, her husband, not with her." The word *yashav* means to sit, but that more than often means to dwell, settle, abide, etc. The field, in Scripture, generally typifies the world. That is seen in Jesus' parable of the wheat and the tares where He says, "The field is the world" (Matthew 13:38).

As she sits in the field, her husband, Manoah, is elsewhere. Therefore...

¹⁰ Then the woman ran in haste and told her husband, and said to him, "Look, the Man who came to me the *other* day has just now appeared to me!"

vatmaher ha'ishah vatarats vataged l'ishah vatomer elav hineh nirah elay ha'ish asher ba bayom elay – "And hastens, the woman, and runs, and declares to her husband, and says unto him, 'Behold, appeared unto me, the Man who came in the day unto me.'"

Without any conversation recorded between the Messenger and the woman, she runs to her husband with a sense of urgency. As for her words to him, she says *bayom*, “in the day.” It speaks of a day in general, not the specific day nor specifically of the same day.

What matters now is that the Messenger has reappeared to her and she has run to her husband to retrieve him.

¹¹ So Manoah arose and followed his wife.

vayaqum vayelexh manoakh akhare ishto – “And arises, and walks, Manoah, after his wife.” It’s notable that the words form a sort of pun. Walking implies action, but the man’s name is specifically stated rather than simply saying “he.” Thus, it literally says, “And arises, and walks, Rest, after his wife.” He was idle, either sitting or lying when she came to him. Now he has gone to meet the Man.

¹¹ (con’t) When he came to the Man,

vayavo el ha’ish – “And comes unto the Man.” As noted, the account will reveal that this Man is the Lord. But more than that, without any ambiguity, it also acknowledges that He is a Man. The text itself notes it, not merely as a speculation from Manoah.

**¹¹ (con’t) he said to Him, “Are You the Man who spoke to this woman?”
And He said, “I *am*.”**

vayomer lo ha’atah ha’ish asher dibarta el ha’ishah vayomer ani – “And says to Him, ‘The You, the Man, who spoke unto the woman?’ And says, ‘I.’” Manoah (and thus the text in typology) refuses to give the name of his wife. Her person, other than the fact that she is his wife, is completely ignored by him and by the text.

As for the Man, He confirms to Manoah that He is, in fact, the same Man who came before. Therefore...

¹² Manoah said, “Now let Your words come *to pass*! What will be the boy’s rule of life, and his work?”

The words are complicated: *vayomer manoakh atah yavo d’varkha mah yihyeh mishpat ha’naar u-maasehu* – “And says, Manoah, ‘Now comes your words. What becomes

judgment the lad and his work?” Saying “words” in the plural is a way of saying that everything the Man has spoken is one thought.

They comprise a single promise that will be fulfilled. Therefore, Manoah asks about the expectations of the boy, and what he will do. Manoah is curious about the coming son’s role as a person in regard to what he does.

Some translations and scholars say the words give the sense of Manoah asking what the parents are to do in relation to the child. That appears to be what is conveyed by the next words. However, even if Manoah is asking about the son’s role, the Messenger simply defaults to His original words...

¹³ So the Angel of the LORD said to Manoah, “Of all that I said to the woman let her be careful.

vayomer malakh Yehovah el manoakh mikol asher amarti el ha’ishah tishamer – “And says, Messenger Yehovah, unto Manoah, ‘From all which said unto the woman, watching.’” What is important to the Messenger is neither what the parents are to do to or for the boy, nor what the boy will be and do.

Rather, what matters is what the woman is to do in relation to the boy. It is a huge difference that stands out markedly in the text.

¹⁴ She may not eat anything that comes from the vine,

mikol asher yetse migephen ha’yayin lo tokhal – “From all which comes from vine, the wine, no eating.” Eating from the “vine, the wine” means grapes, raisins, grape skins, grape seeds, and anything else that could be eaten.

In the Bible, the vine symbolizes the basic expression of a thing. The basic expression of a wine vine is that it comes from a vineyard. Vineyards represent the cultural side of humanity. There are various vineyards that represent various cultures. Vineyards produce grapes, or cultural expressions, and these are mixed together through a mashing process to produce wine.

In the Bible, wine symbolizes the merging together of these expressions into a result. The thing that ought to happen can happen, symbolized by wine. It is as if an act of reasoning is occurring, and an intended result is realized. She is not only told to stay away from eating anything from the wine vine, but also...

14 (con't) **nor may she drink wine or *similar* drink, nor eat anything unclean.**

The words include a jussive: *v'yayin v'shekhar al tesht v'khal tumah al tokhal* – “And wine and blinko drink not shall drink, and all uncleanness not eating.” The Lord prohibits her from wine, but he also again notes *shekhar*, blinko drink, meaning very strong drink. The word comes from *shakhar*, to be drunk. It is almost always used negatively. It is also typically cited in conjunction with *yayin* (wine) as it is here.

Shekhar was not to be drunk by a priest while performing his duties, by the Nazirite during his time of separation to the Lord, and Solomon notes that it is not for kings to drink *shekhar* (Proverbs 31:4). As those each imply separation to the Lord, then it can be inferred that *shekhar* is typical of being closely in fellowship with others. This is certainly the case in Deuteronomy 14 –

“And you shall spend that money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen or sheep, for wine or similar drink [*shekhar*], for whatever your heart desires; you shall eat there before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your household.” Deuteronomy 14:26

However, this fellowship with others should not be at the exclusion of the Lord who was to be the focus of the pilgrim feasts.

Finally, the woman is explicitly instructed to not eat anything unclean. That which is unclean was forbidden by the law, but there were rituals for when something was eaten that should not have been. The point here is that there should never be a time when mistakes were made and uncleanness entered her mouth.

14 (fin) **All that I commanded her let her observe.”**

kol asher tsivitiha tishmor – “All which commanded her, watching.” As noted already, this is the rule set forth. The rule for Samson was that no razor was to come upon his head, but the specific conduct here relates to his mother because of the child she will bear.

The verses for today must end. The final verses of the chapter will be analyzed next week. For sure, typology is being conveyed in what is being said. Specific wording has caused us to slow down as we read and consider carefully what is being presented.

But this is actually how we should always consider the word as we read it. Take your time, contemplate what is presented, and ask the text questions as you go. If you are

just completely stumped, it doesn't hurt to pray to God and ask, "What are you telling us, Lord?"

It may be that the passage is not yet ready to be revealed by Him. Or it may be that someone has already figured it out and He will lead you to the right sermon or commentary that accurately explains what is said.

As you listen or read, however, don't just agree with what is presented. Consider what is said, ask the Lord about it, and be ready to move on, even if the ideas seem appealing at first.

Above all, remember that this word is ultimately telling us the story of God in Christ. Keep looking for Him. He is there and He will come out of the text at the right time when God is ready for the words to be revealed.

Closing Verse: *"Come, you children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD." Psalm 34:11*

Next Week: Judges 13:15-25 *He's the one, doing things so swell, it's true...* (Samson, Just of Israel, Part II) (40th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Samson, Judge of Israel, Part I

Again the children of Israel did evil
In the sight of the LORD. In doing good, they were in arrears
And the LORD delivered them into the hand
Of the Philistines for forty years

Now there was a certain man from Zorah
Of the family of the Danites, yes those men
Whose name was Manoah
And his wife was barren and had no children

And the Angel of the LORD appeared to the woman
And said to her, "Indeed now, for you something fun

You are barren and have borne no children
But you shall conceive and bear a son

Now therefore please be careful not to drink
(Pay attention to what I mean)
Wine or similar drink
And not to eat anything unclean

For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son
And no razor shall come upon his head, understand?
For the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb
And he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the Philistines' hand

So the woman came and told her husband
Saying, "A Man of God came to me. Yes, He did come
And His countenance was like the countenance
Of the Angel of God, very awesome

But I did not ask Him where He was from, just the same
And He did not tell me His name

And He said to me, 'Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son
Now drink no wine or similar drink, nor eat anything unclean
For the child shall be a Nazirite to God
From the womb to the day of his death is what I mean

Then Manoah prayed to the LORD, and said
"O my Lord, please let the Man of God whom you sent
Come to us again and teach us
What we shall do for the child who will be born, our instruction
-----he can augment

And God listened to the voice of Manoah
And the Angel of God came to the woman again to confer
As she was sitting in the field
But Manoah her husband was not with her

Then the woman ran in haste
And told her husband, and said to him in excited glee

“Look, the Man who came to me the other day
Has just now appeared to me!

So Manoah arose and followed his wife
When he came to the Man, he said to Him
“Are You the Man who spoke to this woman?”
And He said, “I am.”

Manoah said, “Now let Your words come to pass!
What will be the boy’s rule of life, and his work?”
So the Angel of the LORD said to Manoah
“Of all that I said to the woman let her be careful
-----these responsibilities you shall not shirk

She may not eat anything that comes from the vine
Nor may she drink wine or similar drink, from this
-----she shall not swerve
Nor eat anything unclean
All that I commanded her let her observe

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 13:15-25 (SAMSON, JUDGE OF ISRAEL, PART II)

The day I typed this sermon, I actually broke three fingers and two keyboards in my excitement. It was a painful and costly session of sermon typing, but it was definitely worth the pain and the expense. April Fool's! That didn't happen.

But this sermon is exciting, nonetheless. Chapter 13 is filled with pictures of Jesus from beginning to end. The main point of the passage is to both implicitly and expressly reveal His deity. In fact, what is being pictured would make no sense at all without understanding this.

Therefore, the narrative reveals it in multiple ways, one after another. Some of it requires a thorough knowledge of Scripture while some of it requires faith that God's incarnation is an actual possibility. In believing in the latter and possessing the former, the narrative today comes alive.

Text Verse: *"The remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob,
To the Mighty God [el gibor]." Isaiah 10:21*

An explanation of the choice of this text verse will be forthcoming. For now, we can prepare ourselves for entry into today's verses by accepting that with God, all things are possible, although this does not mean all things in the absolute sense.

For example, God cannot violate His own nature. He is righteous and that aspect of Him must be upheld. He cannot violate His righteousness by overriding it with His love. The two must work in perfect harmony with each other.

God cannot violate what is logical. He cannot make a 3 that is a 2. He cannot make a square that is a triangle. Those things would be illogical. God is logical. That is evidently on display throughout His creation. There is order and harmony, not chaos and dissonance.

Remember this. What we are presented in Scripture is a revelation of who He is. As such, and because man is fallen, there is the need for reconciliation of that which is in tension between God's attributes and His logical nature in regard to fallen man.

Such truths as this, and how these things are resolved, are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. We Have Seen God (verses 15-25)

¹⁵ Then Manoah said to the Angel of the LORD, “Please let us detain You, and we will prepare a young goat for You.”

Manoah’s words contain two cohortatives. They are also unusually stated, probably forming an ellipsis: *vayomer manoakh el malakh Yehovah natsrah na othakh v’naaseh l’phanekha g’di izim* – “And says, Manoah, unto Messenger Yehovah, ‘We shall detain, I pray, You. And shall do to your face kid goats.’”

The surrounding words are similar to what was said by Gideon in Judges 6, thus demonstrating that this would have been something people would be accustomed to doing –

“Then he said to Him, ‘If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who talk with me. ¹⁸ Do not depart from here, I pray, until I come to You and bring out my offering and set *it* before You.’

And He said, ‘I will wait until you come back.’

¹⁹ So Gideon went in and prepared a young goat, and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot; and he brought *them* out to Him under the terebinth tree and presented *them*. ²⁰ The Angel of God said to him, ‘Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay *them* on this rock, and pour out the broth.’ And he did so.” Judges 6:17-20

Gideon realized who he was talking to, meaning the Lord. That is not as certain with Manoah. Exactly what is on Manoah’s mind is hard to determine. Barnes says, it “seems to indicate some suspicion that his visitor was more than human.” This seems unlikely based on the next verse.

The Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary says, “not as the Lord, but as what he imagined him to be, not even an angel (Jud 13:16), but a prophet or merely human messenger.” This seems more likely, but then there is the issue with the wording.

The words “And shall do to your face kid goats” are probably elliptical and mean, “And shall do (prepare and offer) before you a kid of the goats.” Therefore, it is either an

offering of a meal or the offering of a sacrifice. As for the *gedi izzim*, or “kid goats,” *gedi* comes from an unused root signifying to cut off. *Izzim* means goat, coming from the word *azaz*, or prevail.

¹⁶ And the Angel of the LORD said to Manoah, “Though you detain Me, I will not eat your food. But if you offer a burnt offering, you must offer it to the LORD.”

vayomer malakh Yehovah el manoakh im tatsreni lo okhal b'lakhmekha v'im taaseh olah l'Yehovah taalenah – “And says, Messenger Yehovah, unto Manoah, ‘If detaining Me, no eating in your bread. And if offering burnt offering, to Yehovah you must ascend it.’”

Because of the progression of thought, some scholars think this is not the Lord at all. For example, the Pulpit Commentary says –

“The angel, perhaps perceiving that Manoah was in doubt as to who he might be, had a holy dread lest he might offer the kid to him, just as the angel whom St. John was about to worship said, “See thou do it not” (Revelation 22:9); and Barnabas and Paul ran in among the people of Lycaonia to restrain them from offering sacrifice to them (Acts 14:14-18).”

This is not correct. In Genesis 18, the Lord (YHWH) appeared to Abraham. It was He and none other, and Abraham knew it. In Judges 6, the Messenger of the Lord, who is the Lord, appeared to Gideon. The fact that He was not merely a man but the Lord God was elicited out of Gideon so that when he made His offering, he knew he was presenting it to the Lord.

Here, however, it is the Messenger of the Lord, meaning the Lord incarnate, but Manoah does not yet know it. The text has identified him as such, but only for our benefit. In Judges 6, the same terminology was used, *malakh Yehovah*, but neither the reader nor Gideon knew it at first.

Here, because of the progression of biblical revelation, the reader knows who He is based on Judges 6, but Manoah must learn what we have already come to know...

¹⁶ (con’t) (For Manoah did not know He *was* the Angel of the LORD.)

ki lo yada manoakh ki malakh Yehovah hu – “For not knew, Manoah, for Messenger Yehovah, He.” The point of these words is that we know it’s Jesus (Tee hee, shhhh, it’s a secret!), but Manoah is not yet aware.

Manoah has asked to make an offering to this Person. His intent concerning the offering is what we cannot fully determine: a meal, a burnt offering to Him even though he doesn't know He is the Lord (something that would be inappropriate – because offerings are only to be made to the Lord), or an offering to the Lord on behalf of the Man who is there before him.

Whatever Manoah is thinking, the Messenger has expressly told him that He would not partake of the meal but it was to be offered to the Lord alone. This is like what Jesus said to the rich man in Matthew 19 –

“So He said to him, ‘Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good but One, *that is*, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.’”

-Matthew 19:17

Jesus was not saying He is not God. He is making a point about going around calling people good. Only God is good. The Messenger is not saying He is not the Lord God. He is ensuring that such an offering is to be made to the Lord God alone. Manoah just does not yet know that this Messenger is the Lord God.

¹⁷ Then Manoah said to the Angel of the LORD, “What is Your name,

vayomer manoakh el malakh Yehovah mi sh’mekha – “And says, Manoah, unto Messenger Yehovah, ‘Who Your name?’” The wording seems peculiar. It is like mixing two thoughts together, “Who are you and what is your name?” The word *mi*, who, is used. It is similar to *mah*, or what. The difference is that *mi* asks of the person, *mah* asks of the nature or quality.

What happens here is similar to what transpires in John 7 and again in John 9 –

“‘But look! He speaks boldly, and they say nothing to Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is truly the Christ? ²⁷ However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from.’ ²⁸ Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying, ‘You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. ²⁹ But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me.’”

-John 7:26-29

The people didn't know who Jesus was. To them, He was just someone they were aware of in a general way. This is where Manaoh is right now. He knows this guy is a prophet or something, but he doesn't know His true identity. Thus, he asks for it...

17 (con't) that when Your words come to *pass* we may honor You?"

ki yavo divrekha v'kibd'nukha – “for comes your words, and we honor You.” The thought is that by knowing the person through the name, Manoah and his wife would know the nature or quality of the person. Thus, they could suitably honor him. This is seen elsewhere, such as –

“And they came to Balaam and said to him, ‘Thus says Balak the son of Zippor: “Please let nothing hinder you from coming to me; ¹⁷ for I will certainly honor you greatly, and I will do whatever you say to me. Therefore please come, curse this people for me.”’” Numbers 22:16, 17

Likewise, Saul gave a gift suitable to the office of prophet to Samuel in 1 Samuel 9. These and other such examples speak of the person as well as the nature of the person. In response to Manoah's request, the Messenger declines to answer according to the person and instead answers according to the nature...

18 And the Angel of the LORD said to him, “Why do you ask My name, seeing it is wonderful?”

vayomer lo malakh Yehovah lamah zeh tishal lishmi v'hu peli – “And says, to him, Messenger Yehovah, ‘Why this asking to My name? And it Wonderful.’” The Messenger uses an adjective, *pili* or *pali*, found only here and in Psalm 139:6. Keil states that the word is to be taken in the absolute sense – “absolutely and supremely wonderful” and thus “as a predicate belonging to God alone.” Speaking of the omniscience of the Lord, David said –

“*Such* knowledge is too wonderful [*pili*] for me;
It is high, I cannot *attain* it.”

The word comes from the same root as the noun *pele* (not the soccer player) that is used to describe the coming Messiah in Isaiah 9 –

“For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;

And the government will be upon His shoulder.
And His name will be called
Wonderful [*pele*], Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6

As the state of the name defines the quality or nature of the person, we are given an insight into who this Person is, meaning in His being, by the response. This can be logically deduced from the other descriptors of Isaiah.

For example, He is called *el gibor*, Mighty God. The only other use of that descriptor is in the next chapter of Isaiah and which was our Text Verse today. In Isaiah 10, the Mighty God is specifically said to be the Lord (YHVH). Manoah is about to find out that this person is the Messenger of the Lord and that the Messenger of the Lord is the Lord incarnate. His nature and His name are impenetrable...

¹⁹ So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering, and offered it upon the rock to the LORD.

vayiqakh manoakh eth g'di ha'izim v'eth ha'minkhah vayaal al ha'tsur l'Yehovah – “And takes, Manoah, kid goats and the present, and ascended it upon the rock to Yehovah.” As Gideon presented his offering upon the rock in accord with the word of the Lord, so does Manoah. The rock has become an altar upon which a burnt offering is made.”

The *minkhah*, present, is derived from an unused root meaning to apportion. The *tsur*, rock, is seen numerous times in the Bible to refer to the Lord as the Rock. The last time it is seen is in Habakkuk where it is used in just that manner –

“Are You not from everlasting,
O LORD my God, my Holy One?
We shall not die.
O LORD, You have appointed them for judgment;
O Rock [*tsur*], You have marked them for correction.” Habakkuk 1:12

The word comes from a primitive root meaning to cramp. Thus it means to confine, be an adversary, to besiege, fortify, and so forth. The application is based on the surrounding narrative.

¹⁹ (con't) And He did a wondrous thing while Manoah and his wife looked on—

The words are complicated due to the verbal structure: *u-maphli laasoth u-manoakh v'ishto roim* – “and wonderfuling to doing, and Manoah and his wife seeing.” The verbal root of the adjective translated as “wonderful” is used, *pala*. It signifies to distinguish. Being a participle form of the verb calls for distinguishing. But to form an alliteration on the previous word, I have coined a new word, wonderfuling.

The One whose being is Wonderful is the Wonder Worker...

²⁰ it happened as the flame went up toward heaven from the altar—the Angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar!

v'hi baaloth ha'lahav meal ha'mizbeakh ha'shamaymah vayaal malakh Yehovah b'lahav ha'mizbeakh – “And is, in ascending the flame from upon the altar the heavens-ward, and ascends Messenger Yehovah in flame the altar.” It is a bit varied from the description when Gideon presented his offering to the Lord in Judges 6. However, the overall picture is similar.

In these words, the rock is described as an altar. The offering has sanctified it as such. The word *mizbeakh*, altar, comes from *zavakh*, to slaughter for sacrifice. In Judges 6, the action of the Lord confirmed what Gideon had already deduced, which was that He was, in fact, the Lord. In this account, the action of the Lord is enlightening for Manoah and His wife. It is something that they are just now learning...

²⁰ (con't) When Manoah and his wife saw *this*, they fell on their faces to the ground.

u-manoakh v'ishto roim v'yi plu al p'nehem artsah – “And Manoah and his wife seeing. And falling upon their faces groundward.” As with Gideon, the reaction is one of reverential fear. In their case, they were overwhelmed by the event and simply fell to the ground with their faces looking down.

²¹ When the Angel of the LORD appeared no more to Manoah and his wife, then Manoah knew that He *was* the Angel of the LORD.

v'lo yasaph od malakh Yehovah l'hera'oh el manoakh v'el ishto az yada manoakh ki malakh Yehovah hu – “And no added again, Messenger Yehovah, to appear unto Manoah and unto his wife. Then knew, Manoah, for Messenger Yehovah He.”

The absence of the presence of the Messenger is instructive. By not returning, He has both proven who He is, meaning the Lord (YHVH) and that He has accepted their

offering, thus He is the Lord (YHVH), to whom the offering was made. These events provide them with a twofold assurance that He is the Messenger of the Lord who is the Lord. That is made explicit to us in the next words...

²² And Manoah said to his wife, “We shall surely die, because we have seen God!”

vayomer manoakh el ishto moth namuth ki elohim rainu – “And says, Manoah, unto his wife, dying we shall die, for God have seen!” The words are quite informative when taken with the other seven uses of *elohim*, or God, in the chapter –

“For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God [*elohim*] from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.’

⁶ So the woman came and told her husband, saying, ‘A Man of God [*ha’elohim*] came to me, and His countenance *was* like the countenance of the Angel of God [*ha’elohim*], very awesome; but I did not ask Him where He *was* from, and He did not tell me His name. ⁷ And He said to me, ‘Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. Now drink no wine or *similar* drink, nor eat anything unclean, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God [*elohim*] from the womb to the day of his death.’”

⁸ Then Manoah prayed to the LORD [YHVH], and said, ‘O my Lord [*Adonai*], please let the Man of God [*ha’elohim*] whom You sent come to us again and teach us what we shall do for the child who will be born.’

⁹ And God [*ha’elohim*] listened to the voice of Manoah, and the Angel of God [*ha’elohim*] came to the woman again as she was sitting in the field; but Manoah her husband *was* not with her.”

“And says, Manoah, unto his wife, dying we shall die, for God [*elohim*] have seen!”

Both before and after these verses, the term *malakh Yehovah*, Angel Yehovah, is used by the narrator. The Man who is in a right relationship with God (as discerned from the article, “the” God, who is Yehovah), is the Angel of the Lord. This Angel of the Lord is now said to be recognized by Manoah as God.

The words are inescapably telling us that Yehovah, who is God, has appeared as a Man. The same truth was previously seen in Judges 6 with Gideon. Manoah understands what was expressed by the Lord in Exodus 33:20, that “no man shall see Me, and live.” Therefore, he now assumes that they will die...

²³ But his wife said to him, “If the LORD had desired to kill us, He would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering from our hands, nor would He have shown us all these *things*,

vatomer lo ishto lu khaphets Yehovah la’hamithenu lo laqakh miyadenu olah u-minkhah v’lo heranu eth kal eleh – “And says to him, his wife, ‘If desired, Yehovah, to kill us, not took from our hand burnt offering and present, and not shown us all these.”

Manoah’s wife was able to reason out the situation, whether she understood the matter or not. The Lord said what would come to pass and He had done so in the form of a Man. Nothing changed except that He confirmed who He was to them through the acceptance of the offerings and His wondrous deed that accompanied it.

Just because they realized who the Man was in His nature or quality, it did not change who He is in His being, meaning His Person. He was, and He is, the Lord God.

²³ (con’t) nor would He have told us *such things* as these at this time.”

v’khaeth lo hishmianu kazoth – “And, according to the time, not caused us to hear according to this.” The phrase is unusual but well stated. She is saying that He appeared at a particular time to reveal a particular matter that was in accord with His plans and purposes. It would make no sense for Him to kill them after He had explained what those plans entailed, both for them and for the son they would have.

²⁴ So the woman bore a son and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him.

vateled ha’ishah ben vatiqra eth sh’mo Shimshon vayigda ha’naar vaybarkhenu Yehovah – “And bears, the woman, son. And calls his name Samson. And grows, the lad, and blesses him, Yehovah.” Just as prophesied, so the words of the Messenger came to pass.

Samson comes from *shemesh*, the sun. The *vav-nun* extension that ends his name either localizes or personifies it. Thus, his name means Sun Man, Place of the Sun, or something similar. In this case, he seems to be anticipating both. He is the Sun Man because he is the Place of the Sun.

In 1 Samuel 12:11, Samson is called B’Dan. The meaning is “In Dan.” He is of the tribe of Dan. Because Zorah was listed as a town under both Judah and Dan in the book of Joshua, he was probably called B’Dan as a form of nickname or appellative.

It appears that the words of the Messenger were on her mind, when choosing his name, especially on what he would do, not the Nazirite status he would hold. As He said, “he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.” Perhaps she heard or knew the words of Deborah –

“Thus let all Your enemies perish, O LORD!
But *let* those who love Him *be* like the sun [*shemesh*]
When it comes out in full strength.” Judges 5:31

^{25 (fin)} **And the Spirit of the LORD began to move upon him at Mahaneh Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.**

vatakhel ruakh Yehovah l'phaamo b'makhaneh dan ben tserah u-ben Eshtaol – “And begins, Spirit Yehovah, to tap him in camp Dan, between Zorah and between Eshtaol.” These words anticipate the coming narrative where Samson is impelled to take vengeance on the Philistines through events that occur.

There are no visions from the Lord recorded during his time of being judge. Also, there is no communication between Samson and the Lord as with some of the other judges. As Samson is a Nazirite, the connection between him and the Spirit of the Lord occurs through his hair in particular.

As for how this is realized, the word *paam* signifies to tap and thus to beat regularly. One can think of the beat of an anvil as it is struck in regular fashion. As the events arise, his spirit, which is in connection with the will and Spirit of the Lord, arises in him and stirs him.

Mahaneh Dan means Camp of Dan and thus Camp of the Judge or Camp of Judgment.

Eshtaol is listed by Strong's under the root *shaal*, to ask for or inquire. Thus, he defines it as Entreaty. However, Sergio noted that the word Eshtaol without the vowel points which were added much later, would say Bride of God, Wife of God, Woman of God, etc.

The one word means any of these based upon the context. Notice the spelling of Woman of Valor (*esheth khayil*) from Proverbs 31:10 and its similarity to this word (*esheth el*) –

אשתחיל
אשתאל

Only the later vowel pointing defines pronunciation and meaning.

*Who is the Man who is before us?
What is it that He has come to do?
Is this our Savior, our Lord Jesus?
How can we know if such is true?*

*What wondrous thing will He do
So that we can know His name and nature?
How can we know what is true?
What is the extent of defining His nomenclature?*

*Oh God! How great You are, our heads are spinning
To see and understand all that You have done
You have prepared a body since the beginning
The incarnation of Your Son*

*We long to know more about Jesus
And all the wonders He has done for us*

II. Pictures of Christ

Like Chapter 6, this chapter is an introduction into the life of Israel's next Judge. As the Samson narrative is west of the Jordan, it can be logically deduced that it is typologically specifying details of history after Christ's coming. Time will tell if that is correct.

Verse 1 noted the evil committed by Israel and that they were delivered into the hand of the Philistines forty years. Samson's time as judge falls within that time, but the period will extend to the time of David when he meets the Philistines in battle.

The forty years defines this as a time of chastisement on Israel, the covenant people "and points to the action of grace (5), leading to and ending in revival and renewal (8)."

Verse 2, if translated according to the meaning of the names, would say, "And is man, one, from Affliction from family the judge, and his name Rest." Manoah (Rest) is mentioned 17 times in this chapter. Bullinger says –

“SEVENTEEN stands out very prominently as a significant number. It is not a multiple of any other number, and therefore it has no factors. Hence it is called one of the prime (or indivisible) numbers.

What is more, it is the seventh in the list of the prime numbers. The series runs 1[2], 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, etc. ... seventeen being the seventh of the series, it partakes of and intensifies the significance of the number seven. Indeed, it is the combination or sum of two perfect numbers—seven and ten—seven being the number of spiritual perfection, and ten of ordinal perfection.

Contrasted together the significance of these two numbers is clear; and when united in the number seventeen we have a union of their respective meanings, viz., spiritual perfection, plus ordinal perfection, or the perfection of spiritual order.” Note: 1 is not a prime number but 2 is. Hence, I added and bracketed it.

The name of Manoah’s wife is not provided throughout the Samson narrative. She is either called “the woman” or noted as Manoah’s wife. Manoah represents a type of rest provided by God that was lost at the fall of man. Man was put [*yanakh*] in the garden. It implies he was rested there, not to labor, but to worship and serve the Creator.

However, in his disobedience, that was taken from him. Manoah anticipates the restoration of rest that will be provided through Christ. His wife, “the woman” typifies the anticipation of Christ, the Seed. Thus, Samson is a type of Christ –

“And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her Seed;
He shall bruise your head,
And you shall bruise His heel.” Genesis 3:15

To her (verse 3), the Messenger of Yehovah appears. She is barren, but He announces she will conceive and bear a son. As such, she is instructed (verse 4) to refrain from wine and blinko drink (*shekhar*) and from eating anything unclean. This is because the child will be a Nazirite to God all his days.

Her keeping from wine and *shekhar* is an intentional directive. She is to remain separate from extra-cultural alliances (wine) and close fellowship with others (*shekhar*). It speaks of the purity of the line leading to Jesus. Each person in His genealogy is carefully selected by God to be there. That is seen in the words of Hebrews 10:5, “a body you have prepared for Me.”

This process extended to her son in the words (verse 5) that no razor, *morah*, was to come upon his head. Hair signifies an awareness, especially an awareness of sin. Jesus was always aware of sin and refrained from it. He was to be the offering for sin. Jesus was never to change (symbolized by the razor) His appearance from being the sinless replacement for Adam and his seed.

He was set apart (as a Nazirite is set apart to God) for this purpose. This is noted in Psalm 22:10 and elsewhere. The Philistines, the Weakeners, anticipate those who weaken others spiritually. The mission of Samson is to destroy those who afflict Israel. Jesus came to defeat sin and then those who spiritually afflict the people of God.

Verses 6-9 recapped what occurred indicating to Manoah that the birth of the child had been prophesied. The precise use of the words the God, Messenger Yehovah, etc. were carefully laid out to indicate that the Messenger is, in fact, the incarnate Lord. He is appearing in His own history, directing events that lead to His incarnation.

In verse 9, the woman is sitting in the field and her husband, Rest, is not with her. It is a picture of the unsettled state of mankind anticipating the coming of Christ.

Verse 10 noted that the woman went to her husband and told him of the Man who came to her in “the day.” It was a general time in the past when the promise was made. It points to the announcement of the coming Messiah in Genesis 3.

Then Rest arose and walked after his wife. The promise of man’s rest follows the seed of the woman until the time when rest will be realized in Christ. This is exactly detailed in the book of Hebrews where it speaks of God’s rest that is provided in Christ as taken from the words of David in Psalm 95:11. A time of rest for God’s people is prophesied when His people believe in the Messiah.

In coming to “the Man,” Manoah (Rest) acknowledges that the words of the Messenger will come to pass. He asks, “What becomes judgment the lad and his work?” In essence, “What is the role of the Messiah and what will he do?”

Rather than answering the question, He reiterates the responsibility of the woman. God is directing the history of Jesus’ genealogy to lead to the Messiah, keeping “the woman,” meaning His genealogy pure and set apart. Both the Hebrew and the Greek words concerning genealogy (generations) are feminine.

The generations of Christ from the time of Adam until His birth are carefully recorded, showing the set-apart nature of the woman (His line) all along. The Messenger specifies that she is not to eat anything that comes from the vine.

The vine symbolizes the basic expression of a thing. The purity of God's expression alone is what is pictured here. It explains the reason for the minuteness of the stories of those who are noted as entering into Jesus' genealogy.

Verse 15 noted Manoah's (Rest's) request to prepare a "kid goats" for the Messenger. The word *gedi*, or kid, comes from a root signifying to cut off. There is the sense of finality, or a matter being decided (cut off). The word, *izim*, signifies goats. It is the term used for the sin offering, including the one mandated on the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16:5.

Taken together, the symbolism is the cutting off of sin by the goat of atonement, anticipating Jesus who was the fulfillment of the Day of Atonement goat sacrifice. It is what finishes the matter of sin. This confirms how Rest is provided through the coming work of Christ –

"Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

-Matthew 11:28

"For we who have believed do enter that rest." Hebrews 4:3

In verse 16, the Messenger notes that He will not eat of the offering, but it is to be made to the Lord. This anticipates Christ's human life being offered to Yehovah as a satisfaction for sin. Manoah didn't realize that the Messenger (God in Christ) is that propitiatory offering, as indicated by the final clause of verse 16.

Verse 17 then had Manoah (Rest) ask, "Who Your name?" He wants to know the person, the being, of the Man so that he can honor Him when His words come to pass. The Messenger's response, "And it Wonderful," did not give a name and thus did not reveal the Person. Instead, it revealed the nature.

As Keil noted, the adjective used to describe Him is "as a predicate belonging to God alone." The Messenger is the Lord God. How do you honor the Person? By acknowledging His character. He is the God/Man –

“For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, ²³ that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.” John 5:22, 23

The point is that only in honoring the Man Jesus who is God, does one honor God the Father.

Verse 19 is filled with anticipations of Christ, “And takes, Manoah, kid goats and the present, and ascended it upon the rock to Yehovah.” Manoah anticipates the restoration of Rest provided by Christ. The kid goats anticipates the cutting off of sin through the offering of Christ. The *minkhah*, present, anticipates God in Christ’s apportioning Himself as an offering for His people.

The ascending of the offering to Yehovah anticipates God’s acceptance of Christ, the offering. The rock anticipates Christ who is the Rock, the Altar, who is Himself the altar of God –

“We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. ¹¹ For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. ¹² Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.”
-Hebrews 13:10-12

From my Hebrews 13:10 commentary –

“There are various ideas about what ‘the altar’ in the New Covenant signifies. Some say it is the cross of Christ. Some say it is the table where believers participate in the Lord’s Supper. Some say it is Christ Himself. However, the idea of the altar is that of symbolizing everything associated with the work of Christ in one unified concept. Just as the offering upon the brazen altar signified the offering of the people, the food of the priests, access through the door of the Tent of Meeting, the symbolic restored relationship with God, etc., so the entire picture of life in Christ and full restoration with God, is gathered up in one thought called the ‘altar.’”

Understanding these types, the Messenger was said to be “wonderfuling to doing,” as He ascended in the flame of the altar that rose toward heaven. It speaks of the exhaustive, endmost, all-encompassing, and eternal work of Christ, the God/Man –

“By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.” Hebrews 10:10

From there, the reaction of Manoah and his wife and the subsequent verses were given as a confirmation of the deity of the Man. The point is that Christ is proven to be God through His work. And more, as our closing verse will note, even though we behold God in the Person of Christ, we can do so without dying.

Verse 24 gave the name of the son, Samson, Place of the Sun. The name anticipates the words of prophecy concerning Christ from Malachi –

“But to you who fear My name
The Sun of Righteousness shall arise
With healing in His wings;
And you shall go out
And grow fat like stall-fed calves.” Malachi 4:2

Samson anticipates Christ, the great Righteous Judge of Israel. But more specifically, He anticipates the Word of God in Christ.

With that, the narrative ended with, “And begins, Spirit Yehovah, to tap him in camp Dan, between Zorah and between Eshtaol.” Literally stated, “And begins, Spirit Yehovah, to tap him in Camp Judge, between Affliction and between Bride *of* God.”

Zorah, Affliction, reflects the state of believers waiting to be glorified. Several verses indicate this, such as –

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory, ¹⁸ while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.” 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

The dual meaning of Eshtaol, which includes Entreaty, then looks to the believer’s life while afflicted in Christ. The believer entreats the Lord for relief from the affliction such as what Paul did –

“Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. ⁹ And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” 2 Corinthians 12:8, 9

The Weakeners who afflict are on one side while the Bride who entreats the Lord is on the other, and Judge’s Camp is right in the middle.

With this introductory look into the coming life of Samson, having set the stage for what lies ahead, we will close with the reminder – which is quite evident from the narrative today – that Jesus Christ is the Subject and the Point and Purpose of Scripture.

He is being anticipated and revealed in innumerable facets of who He is through prophecy, typology, and explanations of His coming. From the first page of Scripture to the last, it is all about God in Christ who is Jesus the Lord.

As this is so, be sure to have your relationship with Him set. Life is short and eternity... not so much. You want to be ready for what lies ahead while you have the time.

Closing Verse: *“For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ.” 2 Corinthians 4:6*

Next Week: Judges 14:1-14 *Under the gun, but still doing well, wait and see...* (Samson, Judge of Israel, Part III) (41st Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Samson, Judge of Israel, Part II

Then Manoah said to the Angel of the LORD, so he did do
“Please let us detain You, and we will prepare
-----a young goat for You

And the Angel of the LORD said to Manoah
“Though you detain Me, I will not eat your food
-----according to My word

But if you offer a burnt offering, you must offer it to the LORD
(For Manoah did not know He was the Angel of the LORD)

Then Manoah said to the Angel of the LORD
“What is Your name, that when Your words come to pass
-----we may honor You?”
And the Angel of the LORD said to him
“Why do you ask My name, seeing it is wonderful? Yes it’s true

So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering
And offered it upon the rock to the LORD, yes upon
And He did a wondrous thing
While Manoah and his wife looked on

It happened as the flame went up toward heaven from the altar—
The Angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar!
When Manoah and his wife saw this
They fell on their faces to the ground – veneration
-----like in the psalter

When the Angel of the LORD appeared no more
To Manoah and his wife
Then Manoah knew
That He was the Angel of the LORD, remembering that all his life

And Manoah said to his wife
“We shall surely die, because we have seen God!”
But his wife said to him
Finding his words odd...

“If the LORD had desired to kill us
He would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering
-----from our hands (now to make a rhyme...)
Nor would He have shown us all these things
Nor would He have told us such things as these at this time

So the woman bore a son and called his name Samson
And the child grew, and the LORD blessed him
-----not in part but in whole

And the Spirit of the LORD began to move upon him
At Mahaneh Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 14:1-14 (SAMSON, JUDGE OF ISRAEL, PART III)

In the verses of the passage today, it appears Samson is pulling a fast one on the Philistines. At least, that is how I have always taken it. Imagine someone finding a turtle shell filled with a hornet's nest and making up a riddle about it.

That would be a really tough riddle to solve unless you knew the context. In fact, most people posed with such a riddle would say you were cheating because there is no common reference to know what is being asked.

However, there are a couple of possible explanations for why this is not necessarily the case with Samson's riddle. As I didn't go searching for more, there could be plenty of other things that might make such a riddle less difficult than it seems.

This is not unlike the word itself. When you first pick it up, it seems mysterious, even baffling. One Jew who wrote a book about his time reading the Bible and trying to observe everything required in the books of Moses said something like, "This book must be the word of God. Otherwise, it makes no sense at all."

That is how many in the church read the word today. They claim to believe it is the word of God, and yet they state that it is incomprehensible to them.

However, when one looks at the word through the lens of Christ, it eventually makes complete sense.

Text Verse: *"But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. ¹⁵ But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. ¹⁶ Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away."*

-2 Corinthians 3:14-16

There are problems with many who attempt to interpret the Bible, even when Jesus is the lens by which they do so. One of the problems is a lack of knowing the word sufficiently to understand the context. Another is having an incorrect understanding of the word, even if a passage is known.

People have a tendency to insert their beliefs into typology, even if what they think is incorrect. I was curious about a couple of verses in this passage and did a search on possible interpretations. Some were so outlandish that they left the realm of possibility behind.

Some had a general feel for what is going on, but they misapplied many of the details being conveyed. This is the case with a lot of older scholars. They don't understand the dispensational model and so they shove unrelated ideas into areas where they don't belong.

In the end, we all need to carefully consider what we hear and then evaluate if it makes sense or not. Checking with several sources can help weed out improbable options as you remind yourself about things that you have learned.

Consider what you are presented with, enjoy the participation in God's word, but be careful not to simply accept what you hear at face value. We have gray matter in our heads for a reason. Use it wisely and judiciously.

In the end, when we look carefully, we will always see that great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. She Pleases Me Well (verses 1-6)

We had the introduction of Samson in Chapter 13 but the actual narrative of his life begins here in Chapter 14. Judges 13 ended, saying –

“So the woman bore a son and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him. ²⁵ And the Spirit of the LORD began to move upon him at Mahaneh Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.” Judges 13:24, 25

With that remembered, Chapter 14 begins with...

¹ Now Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines.

vayered Shimshon timnathah vayar islah b'timnathah mib'noth plishtim – “And descends, Samson, Timnah-ward. And sees woman Timnah-ward from daughters Philistines.” The narrative of Samson's life jumps right into a note about women. From

here, it will be a constant and main theme of his existence, driving him along the path of his life.

Timnah was a town that lay on the northern border of the tribe of Judah. It was assigned to Judah in Joshua 15:10, but then it is designated as a city of Dan in Joshua 19:43.

This city is probably the same as noted in Genesis 38 in the story of Judah and his daughter-in-law Tamar. If the same location, it is noted twelve times in the Old Testament in Genesis, Joshua, Judges, and 2 Chronicles.

However, in Joshua 15 and 2 Chronicles, it is spelled Timnah. All other times, it says Timnathah, meaning either Timnah-ward (in the direction of) or “her Timnah” (showing possession). Today, the location is known as Tel Batash, an archaeological site lying along the Soreq Valley about 4 miles northwest of the popular tourist site Beth Shemesh.

As for the words “and descends,” this indicates that he dwelt in an area elevated above Timnah. In Genesis, however, Judah is said to have ascended to Timnah. Thus, if it is the same location, Judah dwelt in an area lower in elevation. Otherwise, two different locations might be indicated.

The fact that he went to Timnah indicates that there was at least a sense of harmony between Israel and the Philistines. This is more evident from the note about seeing a daughter of the Philistines. Samson is interested.

Samson’s name comes from *shemesh*, the sun. The *vav-nun* extension that ends his name either localizes or personifies it. Thus, his name means Sun Man, Place of the Sun, Sun-like, Sunlight, or something similar. Jones’ says Splendid Sun.

Timnah (Heb: Thimnathah) means Allotted Portion.

The Philistines means the Weakeners or something similar.

²So he went up and told his father and mother,

vayaal vayaged l’aviv u-l’imo – “And ascends, and declares to his father and to his mother.” Samson is said to ascend from Timnah to where he resided with his parents at Mahaneh Dan, located between Zorah and Eshtaol, as noted earlier. He has something on his mind that his parents would be involved in...

² (con't) **saying, “I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines;**

vayomer ishah raiti b'thimnathah mib'noth plishtim – “and says, ‘Woman, I saw, in Timnah-ward from daughters Philistines.’” Samson has eyes for a Philistine woman. Although she is not of Israel, she is also not one of those forbidden to be intermarried with as indicated in Deuteronomy 7 –

“When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, ² and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them *and* utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. ³ Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. ⁴ For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly. ⁵ But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their *sacred* pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire.” Deuteronomy 7:1-5

The Philistines were not natives of the land, and thus not under the ban. Despite not being of Israel, there is room for Samson to act in this manner without violating the law, even if the spirit and intent of the law would be to stay away from foreign women in Canaan. As such, he petitions his mom and dad...

² (con't) **now therefore, get her for me as a wife.”**

v'atah q'hu othah li l'ishah – “And now, take her to me to wife.” Arranged marriages were common in Israel at the time, and they still occur in cultures and countries today. Deuteronomy 7:3 noted, “You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son.”

This pertains to the list of seven nations noted there, but the point is that it was cultural to arrange marriages for a son still living in the house. There would normally be an agreed upon dowry which the parents would pay. That is seen, for example, in Genesis 34 –

“Then Shechem said to her father and her brothers, ‘Let me find favor in your eyes, and whatever you say to me I will give. ¹² Ask me ever so much dowry and

gift, and I will give according to what you say to me; but give me the young woman as a wife.’” Genesis 34:11, 12

It continued on after the time of Samson as well –

“Then Saul said, ‘Thus you shall say to David: ‘The king does not desire any dowry but one hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to take vengeance on the king’s enemies.’ But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. ²⁶ So when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to become the king’s son-in-law. Now the days had not expired; ²⁷ therefore David arose and went, he and his men, and killed two hundred men of the Philistines. And David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full count to the king, that he might become the king’s son-in-law. Then Saul gave him Michal his daughter as a wife.” 1 Samuel 18:25-27

This is what Samson is petitioning for. His eyes are on the Philistine woman and he wants her as wife. His parents are the ones who are to secure her for him through an arrangement with her parents and the payment of any dowry that is expected.

³ Then his father and mother said to him, “*Is there no woman among the daughters of your brethren, or among all my people,*

The words are masculine singular even though mom is included: *vayomer lo aviv v’imo haen bivnoth akhekha u-b’khal ami ishash* – “And says to him, his father and his mother, not in daughters your brothers and in all my people woman?” Their obvious disappointment in Samson’s choice of women is highlighted.

The father, using an argument known as *a minore ad maius*, from lesser to greater, first notes the daughters of your brothers, meaning, “of the tribe of Dan.” He then says, “in all my people,” as a way of saying, “out of all of Israel.” In essence, he is saying, “Out of all of the tribe of Dan, there isn’t a woman you like? How about from all the women of Israel? Not one? How can it be...”

^{3 (con’t)} that you must go and get a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?”

ki atah holekh laqakhath ishash miplishtim haarelim – “For you walking to take woman from Philistines, the foreskinned?” Samson descended to the area of Timnah when he could have walked in any direction in Canaan where Israelites were. Instead, he walked

down toward Timnah and down in his choice of women, selecting one from the foreskinned Philistines!

The word here is *arel*, foreskin. Rather than “uncircumcised,” which is an explanation, the father gives the descriptor, calling them “the foreskinned.” It is a sign of reproach that was exactly addressed in Genesis 34:13, 14 –

“But the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father, and spoke deceitfully, because he had defiled Dinah their sister. ¹⁴ And they said to them, ‘We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised, for that *would be* a reproach to us.’”

Even though this is dealing with a woman, she is the product of a union of the foreskinned. Her culture reflects that state in the thinking of the people of Israel. John Gill says, “Ben Gersom observes, that their Rabbins say he made her a proselyte first, though he did not acquaint his parents with it.”

That is a false assertion on the surface. First, the point is that she is a product of the foreskinned Philistines. But more, if she had been converted, Samson would have argued that point and the text would have assured us that it was so. Further, such an assertion misses the entire point of the narrative, as will be seen.

There is another reason that this attraction has come about. It is first noted by Samson and will be further clarified in the next verse. For now...

³ (con’t) **And Samson said to his father, “Get her for me, for she pleases me well.”**

vayomer Shimshon el aviv othah qakh li ki hi yash’rah b’enay – “And says, Samson, unto his father, ‘Her taking to me. For she leveled in my eyes.’” The reason why Samson wants her is because he is enticed by her. The word *yashar* that he uses forms an idiomatic expression which is similar to what we might say in English.

It means to be smooth or straight. As such, that is then used to figuratively signify things such as pleasing, right, good, upright, esteemed, and so forth. But to take the word literally and in the perfect aspect of the verb, she was leveled in his eyes.

We talk in a similar way by saying, “She is right on the level to me.” The girl looked right in whatever way Samson was attracted to women and so he has petitioned for his parents to act on his behalf...

⁴ But his father and mother did not know that it was of the LORD—

Only the Peshitta and the ISV translate these words in the way I do: *v'aviv v'imo lo yadu ki me'Yehovah hi* – “And his father and his mother no knew for from Yehovah, she.” All other translations say that the feminine word *hi* should be translated as “it,” and thus, “it was from the Lord.”

However, translating it that way must look forward to the feminine word “occasion” of the next clause. Rather, it is looking back to the words of the previous verse – *ki hi yash'rah b'enay* – “For she leveled in my eyes.” Here is how the ISV translates this –

“Meanwhile, his father and mother did not know that she was from the LORD.”

Probably, translators, following innumerable scholars’ comments, don’t want to give the sense that the Lord would choose a Philistine for Samson and so they translate this as “it,” meaning a matter that the Lord is dealing with, instead of “she” having been chosen by the Lord to attract Samson.

As for the content of this clause, when the Lord first appeared to his mother, He said –

“For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.” Judges 13:5

This turn of events must have made them question that assertion by the Lord. Here he was raised as a Nazirite to God, and yet he is seeking to marry a girl who isn’t even of the covenant people. This probably had them completely conflicted in their hearts and minds. One can think of the prophecy that was spoken to Mary –

“And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. ³³ And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”
-Luke 1:31-33

Later, she heard the prophecy of Simeon –

“For my eyes have seen Your salvation
³¹ Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,

³² A light to *bring* revelation to the Gentiles,
And the glory of Your people Israel.” Luke 2:30-32

That was immediately followed up with these words –

“Behold, this *Child* is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against ³⁵ (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.” Luke 2:34, 35

Whether Mary remembered these things or not, the same state of mental confusion must have ruled her thoughts that here run through the minds of Samson parents. Despite this, we are informed that this was of the Lord...

⁴ (con’t) **that He was seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines.**

There is a question about who “he” is referring to. Is it the Lord or Samson: *ki toanah hu m’baqesh miplishtim* – “for opportunity He seeking from Philistines.” The NKJV assumes it is the Lord because they capitalize He. I agree with this. The nearest masculine antecedent is the Lord, not Samson.

The Lord is using the girl to whom Samson is attracted as the efficient cause to incite Samson to act against the Philistines. In the words is a new and rare noun, *ta’annah*, opportunity. This is the first of two times it will be seen. The second is in Jeremiah 2:24 when referring to the time of copulation of a wild donkey –

“A wild donkey used to the wilderness,
That sniffs at the wind in her desire;
In her time of mating [*ta’annah*], who can turn her away?
All those who seek her will not weary themselves;
In her month they will find her.” Jeremiah 2:24

The state of Samson at this time is not unlike that of the wild donkey. He is fixated on his desire and who can turn him away from it? The Lord is using this opportunity to cause Samson to act against the Philistines. This is then exactly explained in the next words...

⁴ (con’t) **For at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.**

uvaeth ha'hi plishtim moshlim b'yisrael – “and in the time, the it, Philistines ruling in Israel.” Judges 10 noted that Israel did evil in the eyes of Yehovah and His anger burned against them. Therefore, He delivered them into the hands of their enemies, including the Philistines. This is the time that is being referred to.

Chapters 11 and 12 dealt with Jephthah east of the Jordan. That was followed by the chronological rules of Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon, all of which were explained regarding the typology.

Samson now returns to the thought of Judges 10 and deals with matters west of the Jordan where the Philistines were mentioned as those from whom the Lord had delivered Israel. The people cried out to Him as was noted in Judges 10:15, 16. Samson has been chosen to initiate their deliverance. It is with a Gentile woman that he begins this...

⁵ So Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother, and came to the vineyards of Timnah.

vayered Shimshon v'aviv v'imo timnathah vayavou ad karme thimnathah – “And descended, Samson and his father and his mother, Timnah-ward. And comes until vineyards, Timnah-ward.” In order to secure the bride for Samson, his parents accompany him in his descent toward Timnah where it says that they came to the vineyards in the area of Timnah.

As a reminder from Chapter 13, the vine symbolizes the basic expression of a thing. The basic expression of a wine vine is that it comes from a vineyard. Vineyards represent the cultural side of humanity. There are various vineyards that represent various cultures. As for being in this area, along comes a shocker...

^{5 (con't)} Now to his surprise, a young lion came roaring against him.

v'hineh k'phir arayoth shoeg liqrato – “And behold! Whelp lions roaring to meet him.” It is likely that Samson was ahead of his parents, as most youth usually are. He was checking things out and having an adventure while they ambled along at their own pace.

At some point near the vineyards, out came this lion. As it was roaring to meet him, it was set to attack. The lion is described with two words. The first is a new word, *k'phir*. It is derived from *kaphar*, to cover over, pacify, make atonement, disannul, pardon, etc. Strong's sees the connection as probably his mane covering him.

The second word is *ari*, a lion. That comes from *arah*, to gather or pluck, as in the sense of violence. As for what the lion represents, Genesis 49 gives the sense of kingship along with possessing land and taking kingdoms by force. This is one of many varied descriptions of a lion. The devil is equated with a lion by Peter.

Another new word in this verse is *shaag*, to roar. The roar is equated to lions, but it is also equated to the roar of the Lord, of a psalmist, or even enemies. As for this lion, he should have chosen other prey...

⁶ And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him,

vatitslakh alav ruakh Yehovah – “And surges upon him, Spirit Yehovah.” Here, the Spirit of Yehovah is said to have surged upon Samson. The word is *tsalakh*. It comes from a primitive root signifying to push forward. Thus, it surged or rushed upon him...

⁶ (con’t) and he tore the lion apart as one would have torn apart a young goat, though *he* *had* nothing in his hand.

vayshasehu k’shasa ha’gedi umumah ein b’yado – “And rends him according to rending the kid. And, anything, naught in his hand.” The word translated as rend signifies to split, tear, divide, etc. In Leviticus, it speaks of the divided hooves of animals. With nothing but his bare hands, Samson grabbed the lion and tore it apart.

The point of this statement seems to be that Samson went down toward Timnah looking for love, not a battle. He had no weapon. And more, the Philistines would not have allowed him to have a weapon, as it says in 1 Samuel 13. Any work on Israeli iron implements was done by the Philistines.

The *gedi*, or kid, to which the lion is compared is a word that comes from a root signifying to cut off. The use of the definite article, the kid, appears to be a way of emphasizing the event. Thus, there was as little resistance to his tearing apart this powerful lion as there would be to anyone else tearing apart a little goat.

⁶ (con’t) But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done.

v’lo higid l’aviv u-l’imo eth asher asah – “And no declared to his father and to his mother what done.” These words anticipate the verses ahead, but they do not explain them. The explanation may be that he didn’t want to boast, he didn’t want his parents to fear, he thought nothing of it because of the power he possessed, or some other reason.

*What is it that weakens the faith of men
Who would be so brash as to do such a thing
We have been told time and again
Salvation is a gift, let that message ring*

*We cannot earn what is given for free
Trying to do so isn't very nice
In fact that can only make God angry
Because He through Jesus paid the full price*

*Let us learn the lesson of grace
And accept the gift without attaching a thing
To do otherwise is a total disgrace
And only the wrath of God will that bring*

II. Sweet (Verses 7-14)

⁷ Then he went down and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well.

The same word as in verse 3 is seen here in the imperfect aspect: *vayered vaydaber laishah vatishar b'ene Shimshon* – “And descends, and speaks to the woman. And levels in eyes Samson.” From the vineyards, he continued on to meet the girl with his parents. Before, he only saw her, but now he speaks to her. She looked right to him, but after speaking to her, she continues to level in his eyes. Nice grouping.

⁸ After some time, when he returned to get her,

vayashav miyamim l'qakhtah – “And returns, from days, to take her.” The amount of time is unknown and could extend to a year or more. This tells us that she was betrothed to him. The parents made an agreement, it was settled, and he came at the agreed-upon time to collect his wife. On the way down...

^{8 (con't)} he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion.

vayasar liroth eth mapeleth ha'aryeh – “And veers to see fallen the lion.” The word *sur* is used. It means to turn aside. A single word that gets the point across is veer. He is on his way to see his betrothed, and yet he takes time to veer from his path to check out the dead lion.

Also, the noun *mappeleth* is introduced. It comes from *naphal*, to fall. In this case, it is a fallen body and thus a carcass. However, depending on the amount of time, it could be a completely desiccated carcass, meaning a skeleton surrounded by skin or even just a skeleton.

⁸ (con't) **And behold, a swarm of bees and honey were in the carcass of the lion.**

v'hineh adath d'vorim bigviath ha'aryeh u-d'vash – Literally: “And behold! Congregation bees in body the lion, and honey.” Obviously, it is a swarm of bees, but the word used normally signifies a congregation.

The word translated here as carcass is not the same. It is *g'viyah*, coming from *gevah*, the back. It refers to a body, whether alive or dead. In this case, the back stands for the body. We use similar terminology when we say, “He really put his back into it.”

In this case, the use of the word is important. It is not the word *peger*, corpse. It is a word that can indicate anything including a skeleton. Bees are known to avoid rotting corpses, but this one is sufficiently dried out, being consumed by prey and insects, making it a perfectly suitable place for the bees to nest.

As for the *d'vorah*, or bee, it is the same as the name Deborah, coming from the verb *davar*, to speak. It is the root of the noun “speech” or “word.” Just as words are spoken in an orderly fashion, so are the movements of bees.

Honey pictures sweetness and abundance. It also is equated in Scripture to the word of God.

There in the body of this fallen lion was a swarm of bees busy at work making honey, and so...

⁹ **He took some of it in his hands and went along, eating.**

Rather: *vayirdehu el kapav vayelexh halokh v'akhol* – “And dominates unto his palms, and walks, walking and eating.” The word is *radah*, to rule, dominate, etc., coming from a root signifying to tread down. Samson didn't just take honey, he reached in and grasped it, took dominion over it, and drew the honey and the comb to himself.

Further, this wasn't into his hands as every one of the 39 translations I checked says, but into his palms. Though similar in meaning, the hand signifies power and/or authority. The palm (and sole) signifies possession and/or the state of something.

⁹ (con't) **When he came to his father and mother, he gave *some* to them, and they also ate. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion.**

vayelekh el aviv v'el imo vayiten lahem vayokhlu v'lo higid lahem ki mig'viath ha'aryeh radah hadvash – “and walks unto his father and unto his mother, and gives to them, and eats. And no declares to them that from body the lion scraped the honey.” As in verse 6, the words anticipate what will be said in the verses ahead, but they do not explain them.

Some find his actions a violation of the law of the Nazirite. In Numbers 6, it says *nephesh meth*, soul dying. He may have reasoned that this was only a skeleton of a lion, not a person and so it didn't apply. It may be that in grasping the honeycomb, he didn't touch the body of the animal. It may be that because of the state of the lion, it no longer qualified as a dead soul.

It's hard to say if an animal is even included in a Nazirite vow or not. If so, does it include insects? Could a Nazirite not swat a fly or a mosquito? They are included in the overall use of *nephesh*, soul, in Genesis 1:30. As such, the Nazirite vow seems to be referring to humans who die, but this is speculation.

Why Samson didn't tell his parents is probably the same as why he didn't tell them he killed the lion in the first place. To him, it just happened. He felt no need to boast of his power over the lion. Or he may have been considering a riddle and how he may use it, not even wanting them to know it until he sprung it on them.

¹⁰ **So his father went down to the woman. And Samson gave a feast there, for young men used to do so.**

vayered avihi el ha'ishah vayaas sham Shimshon mishteh ki ken yaasu habakhurim – “And descends, his father, unto the woman, and makes there, Samson, banquet. For thus makes the selected.” As in verse 3, the text focuses on the father even though the mother has also come along. The father represents the family unit for the sake of the text.

From there, it then notes that Samson made a banquet. The word is *mishteh*, coming from *shathah*, to drink. Thus, it is a banqueting feast where drinking is the main substance of the event.

As for the words “the selected,” the word is *bakhur*, the passive participle of *bakhar*, to choose. Thus, it is “the selected,” or “the chosen,” which is almost universally translated as “young men.” That is an explanation rather than a translation.

¹¹ And it happened, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him.

vayhi kirotham otho vayiqkhu s’loshim mereim vayihyu ito – “And is, in their seeing him, and takes thirty companions and is with him.” The words are highly debated. There is no antecedent to tell who is being spoken of. Some say the mother and father of the bride, some the people of the town, etc.

Whoever it is, they have supplied thirty male companions to be with Samson. These would be what is referred to in the gospels, such as in Matthew 9:15 –

“And Jesus said to them, “Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.”

Of the number, Bullinger says –

“THIRTY being 3 x 10, denotes in a higher degree the perfection of Divine order, as marking the right moment.” E.W. Bullinger

¹² Then Samson said to them, “Let me pose a riddle to you.

The words include a cohortative: *vayomer lahem Shimshon akhudah na lakhem khidah* – “And says to them, Samson, ‘Riddling, I pray, to you riddle.’” Samson, as if speaking an imperative, offers to pose a riddle. It is a new word, *khud*, to tie a knot and thus to propound a riddle. Even more literally, it would read, “Knotting, I pray, to you knot.” The word is seen three times in this chapter and once in Ezekiel 17. His proposition is...

¹² (con’t) If you can correctly solve and explain it to me within the seven days of the feast, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing.

im haged tagidu othah li shivath y'me ha'mishte u-matsathem v'nathati lakhem sh'loshim s'dinim u-sh'loshim khaliphoth b'gadim – “If declaring, you declare it to me seven days the banquet and attain, and I gave to you thirty wraps and thirty changes garments.” They have seven days to untie the knot. If they can do so, each will receive a reward.

The wrap is derived from a new word, *sadin*. It comes from an unused root signifying to envelope. It is widely debated what these are, but most accept that they were fine linen worn close to the body. They are seen here twice, once in Proverbs 31, and once in Isaiah 3.

The words *khaliphoth b'gadim*, changes garments, comes from *khalaph*, to change, and *bagad*, treachery. The word means garment, but the root meaning probably is used because one changes his outer garments so easily it is like the acts of a treacherous person.

Seven is the number of spiritual perfection.

¹³ But if you cannot explain *it* to me, then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing.”
And they said to him, “Pose your riddle, that we may hear it.”

v'im lo thukhlu l'hagid li unthatem atem li sh'loshim s'dinim u-sloshim khaliphoth b'gadim vayomru lo khudah khidath'kha v'nishmaenah – “And if no able to declare to me, and gave, you, to me, thirty wraps and thirty changes garments. And says to him, ‘Riddling her, your riddle, and we hear her.’”

It is one garment to each if they can untie the knot. It is one from each to him if they cannot. To them, it sounds like a sweet deal, and so, they agree. The problem with this, however, is that clothing was very expensive. Many people had one garment, or maybe a common garment and one special garment for such occasions.

The word *khidah*, riddle, is a feminine noun, and so I have translated it directly, “Riddling her, your riddle, and we hear her.” We might still say the same type of thing about a difficult puzzle or riddle, speaking in the feminine, “This puzzle, she’s a tough one to crack.”

¹⁴ So he said to them:

**“Out of the eater came something to eat,
And out of the strong came something sweet.”**

The riddle comes in two lines of three beats each: *vayomer lahem mehaakhel yatsa maakhal u-meaz yatsa mathoq* – “And says to them: ‘From the eating came food. And from strong came sweet.’” Without any context, the words would be impossible to explain.

However, it could be that Samson is using the constellations as Jacob did in Genesis 49. Peak production of honey in Israel comes forth in the summer, between May and August (www.israeltoday.co.il/read/honey-in-the-land-of-milk-and-honey-israel/). Likewise, the Sun (represented by Samson), appears in front of Leo for 37 days from August 10th to September 15th.

A second possibility is that because Samson was attacked near the vineyards by Timnah, it would seem incredible that someone would not have noticed a dead lion in the area, first because of the stink, and then later because of the buzzing of bees, something that makes a hive readily apparent to anyone close by.

As such, he could not be accused of giving an impossible riddle. Instead, it would be something that required attention and contemplation, and maybe a little asking around.

Therefore, Samson could ostensibly be given a pass on the riddle, even if the original meaning was at first only known to him. Regardless, the companions of the feast found themselves in a pinch...

^{14 (fin)} Now for three days they could not explain the riddle.

v'lo yakhlu l'hagid hakhidah sh'losheth yamim – “And no enabled to declare the riddle three days.” They could not solve the riddle, and the first three days passed without any explanation at all.

The number three is the number of Divine fulness. Bullinger says, “It signifies and represents the Holy Spirit as taking of the things of Christ and making them real and solid in our experience. It is only by the Spirit that we realise spiritual things.”

This is the end of the verses today. We will finish the chapter next week, the Lord willing. For now, think about what is being presented. We will hope that interesting things will be revealed after the verses of the chapter are finished.

Until then, we can remember that God has placed the story and details of Samson's life into His word to teach us actual history, moral lessons, prophetic insights, and typological anticipations of future events.

As we read the word, we should consider it from such varied angles. It is a wealth of knowledge and we should read it and ponder it as such. If we have Jesus as the lens through which we read it, the Bible will never seem like a confused or unintelligible word.

Rather, we will see it for what it is: God's precious letter to us concerning His love for the people of the world who will seek Him out and come to Him through faith in His Christ. Let us do this daily, picking it up and treasuring it more than our necessary food.

Closing Verse: *"A wise man will hear and increase learning,
And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel,
To understand a proverb and an enigma,
The words of the wise and their riddles." Proverbs 1:5, 6*

Next Week: Judges 14:15-20 *A Load of fun, like ringing the bell at someone's door...*
(Samson, Judge of Israel, Part IV) (42nd Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Samson, Judge of Israel, Part III

Now Samson went down to Timnah
And in Timnah, a woman he saw
Of the daughters of the Philistines
He really like her... yee haw!

So he went up and told his father and mother
Saying, "I have seen a woman in Timnah
Of the daughters of the Philistines

Now therefore, get her for me as wife, c'mon mama and papa

Then his father and mother said to him

"Is there no woman among the daughters of your brethren

-----or among all my people too

That you must go and get a wife

From the uncircumcised Philistines – this you must do?

And Samson said to his father, yes he did tell

"Get her for me, for she pleases me well

But his father and mother did not know

That it was of the LORD (working behind the scenes)

That He was seeking an occasion

To move against the Philistines

For at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel

So Samson down to Timnah went

With his father and mother

And came to the vineyards of Timnah where grapes ferment

Now to his surprise, the circumstances seemed grim

A young lion came roaring against him

And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him

And he tore the lion apart as one would have torn apart

-----a young goat: limbs one by one

Though he had nothing in his hand

But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done

Then he went down and talked with the woman

-----she was lookin' swell

And she pleased Samson well

After some time, when he returned to get her

He turned aside to see the lion's carcass

And behold, a swarm of bees and honey

Were in the carcass of the lion, kinda gross I guess

He took some of it in his hands and went along, eating
When he came to his father and mother, he gave some to them
-----and they also ate
But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey
Out of the carcass of the lion – carcass honey, I'll take a plate

So his father went down to the woman
And Samson gave a feast there, for young men used to so do
And it happened, when they saw him
That they brought thirty companions to be with him
-----yes, with him too

Then Samson said to them, "Let me pose a riddle to you
If you can correctly solve and explain it to me
Within the seven days of the feast
Then I will give you thirty linen garments
-----and changes of clothing thirty

But if you cannot explain it to me
Then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes
-----of clothing, so I submit
And they said to him
"Pose your riddle, that we may hear it

So he said to them:
"Out of the eater came something to eat,
And out of the strong came something sweet."

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 14:15-20 (SAMSON, JUDGE OF ISRAEL, PART IV)

Judges 14 is a thrilling chapter, even without understanding any of the typology. The verses are exciting and filled with action and intrigue. It was also a difficult chapter for me to evaluate and consider.

There are unusual words, difficulties in the sequence of events, and complicated concepts to be carefully contemplated and then communicated. But even the surface text can leave a person scratching his head. What is Samson doing with a Philistine girl in the first place?

He was selected as a Nazirite, and choosing a Philistine wife would be unexpected. This is evidenced by his parent's reaction to his decision. You would think he would know that such a union would only bring grief. And then, without even knowing her intimately, he went and spilled the beans concerning his riddle.

It's hard to figure what would prompt him to blab out the answer. Maybe if he had the words of Micah, which were penned much later, things would have been different...

Text Verse: *"Do not trust in a friend;
Do not put your confidence in a companion;
Guard the doors of your mouth
From her who lies in your bosom."* Micah 7:5

There is a time for speaking and a time for keeping our mouths closed. Samson obviously hadn't learned that and it caused him a lot of extra work to reconcile the promise he made. Maybe it was youthful immaturity.

Despite this, the Lord used him to work against the Philistines, and he also used the story of Samson's life to anticipate events in redemptive history. God has a plan. He is slowly and methodically working it out, and we are given snapshots into what He is doing in stories like the life of Samson.

This is the beauty of the word. It is a wonderful source of joy, wisdom, and hope. For those who know Jesus, we can rest in that and know that what the Bible says about the future will come to pass. It is also a book of promised restoration for those who have not yet called out to Him.

We know that God is faithful by seeing how He has treated His own unfaithful people, Israel. What wonderful treasure this word is. Let's get into it. Great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Sweeter Than Honey; Stronger Than a Lion (verses 15-20)

¹⁵ But it came to pass on the seventh day that they said to Samson's wife,

vayhi ba'yom hashvii vayomru l'esheth shimshon— "And is, in day the seventh, and says to wife Samson." The words seem inconsistent with the surrounding narrative. In verse 14, it mentioned that they could not explain the riddle on the third day. In verse 17, it says she wept on him for seven days.

Because of this, some translations change seventh to fourth. Some say this is referring to the seventh day of the week, meaning the Sabbath. However, two different thoughts are being communicated that will align at the appropriate time.

As for the words of this verse, this is the day in which the riddle must be solved. If it is not, each of the thirty men selected to participate in the wedding feast must provide Samson with the promised sets of clothing. Seven is the number of spiritual perfection.

¹⁵ (con't) "Entice your husband, that he may explain the riddle to us, or else we will burn you and your father's house with fire.

The words contain a jussive: *pati eth ishekh v'yaged lanu eth ha'khidah pen nisroph othakh v'eth beith avikh ba'esh* – "Allure your husband, and declares to us the riddle. Lest burns you and house your father in the fire." The jussive commands that he declare the meaning of the riddle through her actions. If she doesn't, she will pay for it.

As for the word translated as allure, it is *pathah*. It signifies to be spacious, wide, or open. In this sense, one can see the intent. She is to make herself roomy in a moral sense, opening herself in an attempt to allure him into giving up the riddle's meaning. A literal translation would be "Open to your husband."

To fail to obtain the answer will result in her and her father's house, meaning the whole family, being burned.

¹⁵ (con't) **Have you invited us in order to take what is ours? *Is that not so?***

The words are complicated: *halyarshenu q'rathem lanu halo* – “To disinherit us, called us, not?” There is a reflexive stem on the word translated as disinherit that gives the sense of “In order to take our possessions (make us poor), have you not called us?”

The word *yaresh* means to take possession of, inherit, disinherit, and so forth. It is a word commonly used in the Pentateuch and Joshua to indicate Israel disinheriting the Canaanites in order to inherit their land.

¹⁶ **Then Samson's wife wept on him,**

It simply says and, not then: *vatevakh esheth Shimshon alav* – “And weeps, wife Samson, upon him.” The words here are not chronological. They are based upon the final words of verse 14 –

14: “And no enabled to declare the riddle three days.”

16: “And weeps, wife Samson, upon him.”

Verse 15 provided tension in the story as it continues, leading up to where the two accounts merge. The narrative is providing its own riddle to our minds so that we can join in with the tension that is being expressed.

¹⁶ (con't) **and said, “You only hate me! You do not love me! You have posed a riddle to the sons of my people, but you have not explained *it* to me.”**

vatomer raq s'nethani v'lo ahavtani hakhidah hadta livne ami v'li lo higadtah – “And says, ‘Only, hated me and no loved me. The riddle riddled to sons my people, and to me not declared.’” Oh! The poor deprived young lady.

The words explain the details that have come about after the first three days. The Philistines came and threatened her, so now she is making herself roomy, opening herself to him as they commanded in verse 15. One can just see the crocodile tears...

¹⁶ (con't) **And he said to her, “Look, I have not explained *it* to my father or my mother; so should I explain *it* to you?”**

vayomer lah hineh l'avi u-l'imi lo higadti v'lakh agid – “And says to her, ‘Behold, to my father and to my mother not declared. And to you declaring?’” He has a riddle that no

one has been able to crack. But more, he has kept its explanation from even his parents whom he has known his entire life. Why, then, would he explain it to her?

¹⁷ Now she had wept on him the seven days while their feast lasted.

vatevekh alav shivath ha'yamim asher hayah lahem ha'mishte – “And weeps upon him seven the days which were to them the banquet.” The words here return the two thoughts into one narrative –

“And is, in day the seventh, and says to wife Samson. ‘Allure your husband, and declares to us the riddle. Lest burns you and house your father in the fire.’”

“And weeps upon him seven the days which were to them the banquet.”

She wept on him from the third day, implying that they had come to her and then told her to find out the meaning of the riddle because they couldn't figure it out. Saying seven days, however, may mean either that she wanted to know from the first day what the meaning was, which seems completely in line with her character, or it could mean “the rest of the time of the seven days,” not necessarily from the first day.

Either way, her advances, up until the seventh day were ineffective. By the seventh day, the thirty men were so distressed that they went further in their threats to include the lives of her family...

¹⁷ (con't) And is on the seventh day that he told her, because she pressed him so much. Then she explained the riddle to the sons of her people.

vayhi bayom hashvii vayaged lah ki hetsiqathu vataged ha'khidah livne ammah – “And is in the day seventh, and declares to her for compressed him. And declares the riddle to sons her people.” Here we have a contrasting thought forming a pun. On the seventh day, the Philistines told her to make herself roomy. She did this by compressing him. The word is *tsuq*, coming from a primitive root meaning to compress.

In making herself roomy, her incessant moaning and pitiful tears pressed on him until he was squished and frustrated. With his defenses completely destroyed, he explained the riddle.

He probably waited long enough that he thought it was safe to tell her the meaning. However, with the answer in her possession, off she went to blabber it to the Philistines. His timing wasn't good enough...

¹⁸ So the men of the city said to him on the seventh day before the sun went down:

vayomru lo anshe ha'ir bayom ha'sh'vii beterem yavo ha'kharsah – “And says to him, men the city, in the day the seventh in yet goes the sun-ward.” Notice, it curiously says that it is the men of the city, not necessarily the attendants, who respond.

The word translated as sun, *kheres*, is rare. It is seen only four times in Scripture. It was used in Deuteronomy 28:27 when describing an affliction of the skin. It was seen in Judges 8:13 when describing the sun. It is connected to the word *kharsuth*, a potsherd. That word is found only in Jeremiah 19:2 when referring to the Potsherd, or Eastern, gate.

The word itself comes from an unused root meaning to scrape. One would use a potsherd to scrape, and a potsherd is often broken in the shape of the sun. Hence, the words are connected in this way.

The new day begins at the setting of the sun. Therefore, because the sun has not yet descended, there is yet time to solve the riddle...

**¹⁸ (con't) “What is sweeter than honey?
And what is stronger than a lion?”**

mah mathoq midvash u-meh az meari – “What sweeter from honey? And what stronger from lion?” Their response is in the same form as his riddle, being in two lines of three beats each. The word from is used comparatively. They take his riddle and return a response in the form of a question of comparison.

“From the eating came food.
And from strong came sweet.”

“What sweeter from honey?
And what stronger from lion?”

With their words, the riddle is solved, and the onus now falls to Samson to meet his obligation. However, he is displeased with their conduct and tells them as much –

18 (con't) **And he said to them:**

**"If you had not plowed with my heifer,
You would not have solved my riddle!"**

Not to be outdone with word play, Samson's response is again two lines of three beats each: *vayomer lahem lule kharashtem b'eglathi lo metsatem khidati* – "And says to them, 'If not plowed in my heifer, no found my riddle.'" Samson calls her his *eglah*, or heifer. It is the feminine form of *egel*, a calf. This is derived from *agol*, round, probably because the calf is known to leap around in a frisking manner.

A heifer plows where it is directed by her master. However, they had used his heifer to plow in his field, opening up what was concealed. Because of this, it next says...

19 **Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily,**

vatishlakh alav ruakh Yehovah – "And surges upon him, Spirit Yehovah." It is letter for letter the same as Judges 14:6 when the lion had come roaring against him, and the Lord's Spirit surged on him...

19 (con't) **and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of their men, took their apparel, and gave the changes of clothing to those who had explained the riddle.**

vayered ashq'lon vayak mehem sh'loshim ish vayiqakh eth halitsotham vayiten ha'khaliphoth l'magide ha'khidah – "and descends Ashkelon, and strikes from them thirty man, and takes their strippings, and gives the changes to declarings the riddle."

Rather than kill those who were his attendees, he thought it fair to pay the debt and be done with the matter. However, he was not inclined to pay the debt himself or ask one of his own people to do so. Therefore, he went to one of the five main cities of the Philistines to obtain what he needed.

The name Ashkelon comes from *shaqal*, to weigh, as in weighing money. The -on (*vav-nun*) at the end localizes it. Hence, it is Weighing Place or Market. Samson went there to shop, but despite being the Market, he wasn't there to spend money. Rather, he killed thirty men and took their possessions.

The word is new and rare, *khalitsah*. It signifies "that which is stripped off." It will only be seen again in 2 Samuel 2. After killing them, he stripped them, leaving them naked.

Ashkelon was far enough from Timnah for his deed not to be detected right away. What may be is that he went to either a temple for a feast or found another wedding gathering. At such a time, there would be enough men with expensive garments to fill his need. After completing his obligation, it next says...

¹⁹ (con't) **So his anger was aroused, and he went back up to his father's house.**

vayikhar apo vayaal beith avi hu – “And burns his nostril, and ascends house his father.” Cambridge says, “The anger ought to precede rather than follow the exploit; but the writer probably did not trouble about logical sequence in his narrative of marvels.”

That is not the intent here. Rather, he was certainly miffed at them plowing with his heifer. Despite that, he was bound to pay his wager in regard to the riddle. It was only after he had met his obligation and presented them with their promised garments that he became truly sore.

He had to go through many hours of walking to Ashkelon, plenty of time and energy in obtaining the garments, a long walk back to Timnah, and then the embarrassment of handing over his efforts to those who should have been handing him thirty sets of garments.

This is what made his nostrils burn with fury. In that unagreeable mood, he turned and ascended back to his parents' home. With him gone, another great humiliation takes place...

²⁰ (fin) **And Samson's wife was *given* to his companion, who had been his best man.**

Rather: *vathi esheth Shimshon l'mereehu asher reah lo* – “And is, wife Samson, to his companion who tended to him.” The word *ra'ah* is a verb that signifies to tend a flock. As such, this was one who tended to him. This very well may be the best man, or friend of the bridegroom who is noted in John 3:29.

It will be evident in the next chapter that Samson still thought of himself as married to this woman despite departing from her. However, her father thought that Samson had abandoned her, so he passed her on to the next-ranking person in the marriage ceremony. In this instance, therefore, the friend of the bridegroom has become the bridegroom.

*Who can defeat us with Christ as our Head?
We have nothing to fear as we continue on
Our sins are forgiven, placed on Him instead
He who knew no sin has taken them; they are long gone*

*Because of this, we have a new hope in us
The enemy cannot stand against us any longer
We have won the victory because of Jesus
Against Him, no foe can stand because He is stronger*

*Thank God for His wonderful workings for us
Praises to Him for all that He has done
All has been accomplished through Jesus
All praise and glory to God's only begotten Son*

II. Pictures of Christ

In verse 1, Samson (Place of the Sun) descended Timnah-ward (towards Allotted Portion), where he saw a woman, a daughter of the Philistines (Weakeners).

Timnah speaks of one's allotted portion because of the work of Christ. As the narrative continuously says Timnah-ward, it is an account that only anticipates an allotted portion.

As seen in Chapter 13, the Philistines anticipate those who weaken others spiritually. The mission of Samson is to destroy those who afflict Israel. Jesus came to defeat those who spiritually afflict the people of God through law observance and works-based salvation.

In verse 2, Samson told his parents that he wanted them to get the woman as a wife for him. They weren't hip with this (verse 3), asking him to find a wife from his own brethren or his own people instead of from the foreskinned Philistines. The foreskinned Philistines (Weakeners) picture teachers of false doctrines in an unconverted state. As Stephen said to Israel –

"You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you." Acts 7:51

It is a sentiment proclaimed by Jeremiah in the Old Testament –

“Circumcise yourselves to the LORD,
And take away the foreskins of your hearts,
You men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem,
Lest My fury come forth like fire,
And burn so that no one can quench *it*,
Because of the evil of your doings.” Jeremiah 4:4

Samson came back and told his parents to get her for “she levelled in my eyes.” This woman is the right one for him, despite her state as a Philistine. Verse 4 explicitly said why she was right, “...for from Yehovah, she.”

A rare feminine noun, *ta'anah*, was used to say that this was the Lord's opportunity to move against the Weakensers. The woman is specifically picturing the *apostasia*, the state of apostasy of Israel, also a feminine noun. This is explicitly stated by Jeremiah in the Greek translation –

“Thine apostasy [*apostasia*] shall correct thee, and thy wickedness shall reprove thee: know then, and see, that thy forsaking me bitter to thee, saith the Lord thy God; and I have taken no pleasure in thee, saith the Lord thy God.” Jeremiah 2:19 (LXX)

The Lord will work through Israel's apostate state to destroy the Weakensers and return Israel to Himself. This is speaking of the time after Christ's coming, but before Israel accepts him. That is clearly seen in the words, “and in the time, the it, Philistines ruling in Israel.”

Israel is ruled by the Weakensers. They stand in a state of uncircumcision before the Lord. Christ came to end this.

Verse 5 noted that Samson descended with his father and mother Timnah-ward, coming to the vineyards Timnah-ward. As noted, vineyards represent the cultural side of humanity. The meaning is that they are in the cultural side of Israel near the Allotted Portion. The tenor of the words is that those who will be Christ's are at hand, even if they are not there yet.

It is in this area that it said, “And behold! Whelp lions roaring to meet him.” The Hebrew words are *k'phir arayoth*. The roots indicate atonement and to gather. This lion is a picture of Christ's atoning work, used to gather His people.

That is seen in the next clauses of verse 6, where the Spirit of the Lord rushed [*tsalakh*] upon him, and he tore apart the lion as if it were a kid [*g'di*], even though he had nothing in his hand [*yad*]. The word *g'di* comes from a root ultimately meaning to cut off. It gives the sense of finality or a matter being decided (cut off).

The thought is perfectly expressed in these words –

“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him;
He has put *Him* to grief.
When You make His soul an offering for sin,
He shall see *His* seed, He shall prolong *His* days,
And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper [*tsalakh*] in His hand [*yad*].”

-Isaiah 53:10

The Lord alone *surged* in Christ's hand (the authority) when He cut off sin, providing atonement sufficient to gather His people.

Then verse 7 noted that Samson went down to Timnah and the woman pleased him well. Israel's state of apostasy is going to be the very instrument that the Lord uses to correct them, just as Jeremiah 2:19 said. This is apparent because verse 8 said, “And returns, from days, to take her.”

There is a time when the Lord will use Israel's apostate state to destroy the Weakeners, the uncircumcision of Israel. On his way down, Samson veered off the path in order to see the fallen body of the lion. Once there, it says, “And behold! Congregation bees in body the lion, and honey.”

Using a different word *g'vayah* (body) instead of the word *mappeleth* (fallen body) that was just used, it notes that there is a congregation of bees in the body and honey. It is the Bible, a congregation of words and books (formalizations just as Deborah was the Formalizer who represented the New Testament) filled with abundance and sweetness (words of prophecy about Jesus).

From there, Samson (Place of the Lord) “dominates unto his palms, and walks, walking and eating.” It pictures the possession of the word to sustain Him in this endeavor. Giving it to his parents (verse 9) and not telling them where it came from is an indication that Israel will be provided with the Word, even if they don't realize its Source.

Remember that the father, Manoah, Rest, looks to the rest provided by Christ and the woman, the anticipation of Christ, looks to the coming of Christ as the Seed of the woman. Words of sweetness are there in Scripture to tell of Jesus.

This is actually something that one can see on YouTube today. Messianic believers in Israel will go up to Jews and read them Isaiah 53 and ask who it is speaking of. They inevitably say, “Jesus,” not realizing it is in their own Scriptures.

Verse 10 noted that his father went down to the woman, and Samson made a banquet (*mishteh* – a drink feast) as the selected were accustomed to doing. This is a feast for a bride, even if in an apostate state.

Verse 11 noted, without any antecedent, that in seeing him, they took thirty companions to be with him. Bullinger notes, “THIRTY being 3 x 10, denotes in a higher degree the perfection of Divine order, as marking the right moment.”

The right time for the wedding has come. Understanding that, Samson prepared to riddle his riddle. Promising his attendants (verse 12) thirty *sadin*, wraps which envelop, and thirty *khaliphoth b’gadim*, changes garments, coming from a root signifying treachery.

The challenge is that an answer to the riddle is to come within the seven days of the feast, the number of spiritual perfection. If they fail to solve it (verse 13), they will have to give to Samson thirty like sets. Accepting the riddle, Samson pronounces it in verse 14, “From the eating came food. And from strong came sweet.” The food is what Christ spoke of in John’s gospel –

“Do not labor for the food [*okhel* – Sar Shalom NT] which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.” John 6:27

The sweet is the word of prophecy –

“Then I took the little book out of the angel’s hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey [*mathoq* – Sar Shalom NT] in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter. ¹¹ And he said to me, “You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.” Revelation 10:10, 11

It then noted that they could not explain the riddle for three days, the number of Divine fulness of which Bullinger notes, "It signifies and represents the Holy Spirit as taking of the things of Christ and making them real and solid in our experience. It is only by the Spirit that we realize spiritual things."

Israel, without the Spirit, cannot understand the meaning and purpose of the coming of Christ Jesus.

Verse 15 seemed out of order, noting the seventh day they approached Samson's wife and told her to allure him in order to declare the riddle. The word was *pathah*, to make spacious. The state of apostasy in Israel will expand in the end times in their attempt to obtain the inheritance.

That is seen in the words, "To disinherit us, called us, not?" As noted, the words give the sense of "In order to take our possession (make us poor), have you not called us?"

The Weakeners accuse the woman, Israel's state of apostasy, of being the reason for losing their inheritance. But an inheritance, whatever they think they possess, without Jesus, is no inheritance worth having.

Verse 16 noted the woman's moaning over not being given the answer to the riddle, accusing Samson of hating her. But she, this state of apostasy, is the means by which the Lord plans to take vengeance on the Weakeners, meaning those who work to weaken others spiritually.

Eventually, on the seventh day (verse 17), she wore him down and he explained the riddle to her, whereupon she immediately went and told the sons of her people. Therefore, before the sun, literally "the Scraper," went down (verse 18), the men of the city presented him with the explanation.

The word used to describe the sun in that verse is from an unused root meaning to scrape. It is as if time has scraped by, and at the last minute, the explanation is presented.

The negative in Samson's life is a positive for these men. They have used the state of apostasy in Israel to lead them to the understanding of the mystery of Christ. Because of this, Samson then said, "If not plowed in my heifer, no found my riddle."

The heifer was used in Genesis 15:9 and Deuteronomy 21 as a type of Christ. In Deuteronomy 21, it was a means of covering over innocent blood. Samson notes that in plowing with his heifer, they have uncovered his riddle.

Therefore, verse 19 said the Spirit of Yehovah came upon Him, he went down to Ashkelon (Weighing Place/Market), and he killed thirty of the men there to give changes of clothing to those who explained the riddle.

These people, who had supposedly done a bad thing, are rewarded for their ingenuity. It is not unlike the parable of the unjust steward in Luke 16. The price for their understanding has been weighed out, signified by Ashkelon, at the right moment (thirty).

Only after he had given them their garments does it say that his anger was aroused and that he returned to his father's house. The reason for his anger being aroused appears to be that his wife is still in a state of apostasy, not because of what these men had done.

After that, verse 20 provided the closing note saying that she is given to his companion. The state of apostasy remains, and this intended bride is given to another. It is a note that the destruction of the Weakeners must go on. That will continue in the coming chapters.

We can clearly see the first coming of Christ for His bride, apostate Israel, the clarity of Scripture that tells of Him, the inability of Israel to see that He is their Messiah, and how Israel is continually given over to the Weakeners, the false teachers, because of their apostate state.

In His first coming, only those who seemed to be cheating by going to the word to discover the identity of the Messiah were rewarded for what they did. From this first picture, the rest of Samson's life will be used to lay out much of redemptive history.

The verses are complete for today. The lesson that we can cling to is that Jesus accomplished the work necessary to restore us to God. These pictures of the past reassure us of what we know about Him, and it is through this knowledge of Him, when rightly understood, that we find reconciliation with God.

Israel still hasn't figured this out yet. They remain in a state of uncircumcision (Romans 2:25) before the Lord because of this. But someday, that will change. Until that time comes, each person has an individual choice to call on Him and get right with Him.

Do not delay. Time is rushing by, and both our lives and the dispensation we now live in will soon be over. Therefore, be wise and come to the Lord. Then live for Him. This is what God expects of you if you desire reconciliation with Him.

Closing Verse: *"Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, ⁵³ who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it."* Acts 7:52, 53

Next Week: Judges 15:1-15 *With Samson, we're not yet done, isn't it swell – man o live!* (Samson, Judge of Israel, Part V) (43rd Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Samson, Judge of Israel, Part IV

Now for three days they could not explain the riddle
But it came to pass on the seventh day that they said
-----to Samson's wife
"Entice your husband, that he may explain the riddle to us
Or else we will burn you and your father's house with fire
-----so will end your life!

Have you invited us in order to take what is ours?
Is that not so? Our affection for you sours

Then Samson's wife wept on him, and said
"You only hate me! You do not love me!
You have posed a riddle to the sons of my people
But you have not explained it to me – how can this be!

And he said to her, "Look, I have not explained it to my father
-----or my mother

So should I explain it to you, or to another?

Now she had wept on him the seven days
While their feast lasted, a sentimental touch
And it happened on the seventh day
That he told her, because she pressed him so much

Then she explained the riddle to the sons of her people
So the men of the city, yes in that town
Said to him on the seventh day
Before the sun went down:

“What is sweeter than honey? Is it so?
And what is stronger than a lion?” We want to know

And he said to them:
“If you had not plowed with my heifer
You rotten guys
You would not have solved my riddle!
Not with a million tries

Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily
And he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of their men
-----and their apparel he took
And gave the changes of clothing
To those who had explained the riddle (a page out of
-----the Samson handbook

So his anger was aroused
And he went back up to his father’s house
And Samson’s wife was given to his companion
Who had been his best man, what a crummy louse!

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone

We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 15:1-15 (SAMSON, JUDGE OF ISRAEL, PART V)

The war between Israel and Iran is more or less a tit-for-tat type of thing at this point, but it is Iran who has been the aggressor from the beginning.

The two countries used to be close allies until the Shia Muslims took power. In fact, Iran was the second Muslim country after Turkey to recognize Israel as a sovereign state. In 1953, a *coup d'état* reinstalled Mohammad Reza Pahlavi as the Shah, and things got even better. However, once Khomeini took over, things between the two countries immediately devolved.

In recent times, Iran's general, Mohammad Reza Zahedi, under the authority of the Iranian government, orchestrated an attack against Israel on October 7, 2023. He was identified and eliminated by Israel on 1 April 2024. Israel flattened a building in the Iran embassy compound in Syria, and he got flattened (flattened like a pancake!), along with it.

From there, Iran launched a retaliatory attack on Israel with hundreds of drones and missiles. It was a resounding failure. There was a 99% success rate in Israel's defenses, and the only injury incurred was a seven-year-old Bedouin girl. She was severely injured.

Text Verse: *"Arise, O LORD;
Save me, O my God!
For You have struck all my enemies on the cheekbone;
You have broken the teeth of the ungodly.
⁸ Salvation belongs to the LORD.
Your blessing is upon Your people. Selah" Psalm 3:7, 8*

In response to Iran's egregious but failed attack against Israel, Israel fired three missiles in a limited strike on Iran. The strike was directed at a defense radar site at an air base and nuclear site near Isfahan. The missiles were fired from Israeli fighters outside of Iran.

The strike was brilliant. It sent a signal to Iran that Israel has the capability to do much greater damage and with impunity, but their restraint was intended to not escalate the situation any further.

In today's passage, we'll see Samson act with restraint in repaying the Philistines as well. He will attack and then cease. However, the Philistines, like the Iranians, will never be satisfied by such things. When the Lord goes for the victory, He goes all the way. Samson just needed the prodding to take it there. No point in trying to reason with the devil.

Such great things as this are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. And After, I Cease (verses 1-8)

¹ After a while, in the time of wheat harvest,

vayhi miyamim bime qetsir khitim – “And is, from days, in days harvest wheat.” The wheat harvest begins around the time of Pentecost, in the May-June timeframe. Wheat is considered the finest of the grains in the Bible. Jesus used wheat to represent Himself in John 12:24, where He metaphorically says, “unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.”

If the conjecture made concerning the timing in Judges 14:14 is correct, meaning that Samson's riddle was posed during the main honey-producing season and was based on the sun appearing in Leo between August and September, then it has been about six months or more since the wedding feast. Regardless, around the time of the wheat harvest in the late spring...

^{1 (con't)} it happened that Samson visited his wife with a young goat.

vayiphqod Shimshon eth ishto bigdi izim – “And visits, Samson, his wife, in kid goats.” It is the same thing Judah offered to his daughter-in-law Tamar in Genesis 38:17, and which was presented to the Lord by Gideon in Judges 6 and Manoah in Judges 13.

The animal is described as a *gedi*, a kid. That comes from an unused root signifying to cut off. In the times it has been used in Scripture to this point, one can get the sense of finality or a matter being decided (cut off). The goat is what finishes the matter between the two concerning the agreement.

The next word, *izim*, signifies goats. It is derived from the verb *azaz*, to be strong, to prevail, etc. It is the term used for the sin offering, including that mandated on the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16:5.

¹ (con't) **And he said, “Let me go in to my wife, into *her* room.”**

The words include a cohortative: *vayomer avoah el ishti hekhadrah* – “and says, ‘I will go in unto my wife, the her chamber.’” It is similar to an imperative, “I am over my anger, and it is time for me to enter into the chamber of my wife.” This isn’t a request so much as it is a statement of intent. He had married her, and despite the grief she had given him, he fully intended to unite with her at this time of the wheat harvest. However...

¹ (con't) **But her father would not permit him to go in.**

v’lo nathono aviha la’vo – “And no gave him, her father, to go in.” It is his house, and she is living with him. As such, he has control over her. Samson assumed that he would be allowed to go in, but that is no longer an option...

² **Her father said, “I really thought that you thoroughly hated her;**

The words contain a discussion the father had in his own mind that resulted in an emphatic conclusion: *vayomer aviha amor amarti ki sano s’netah* – “And says, her father, ‘Saying, I said, for hating, you hated her.’” Samson was miffed with the girl and with the companions of the wedding. He had been gone for an indeterminate amount of time, but long enough to note that it was during the wheat harvest, implying that the previous events were not during the time of the wheat harvest.

All in all, the father’s conclusion was that Samson wouldn’t be back, and the girl was again available to marry off...

² (con't) **therefore I gave her to your companion.**

va’etnenah l’mereekha – “And I gave her to your companion.” He uses the word *merea*, the same word from Judges 14:20, where it said, “And is, wife Samson, to his companion who tended to him.” It is derived from *ra’ah* which signifies to tend a flock. When Samson didn’t return, the father reasoned it was best to allow one of those companions who tended to him to take over as her husband. As a consolation prize, the father says...

² (con't) **Is not her younger sister better than she? Please, take her instead.”**

The words contain a jussive: *halo akhothah haqtanah tovah mimenah t’hi na lekha takhteha* – “Not her sister, the younger, good from her? Is, I pray, to you under her.” The moment is probably quite embarrassing, and maybe even fearful, to the father. And

so, he offers his younger daughter instead, practically insisting through the use of the jussive – “Check this one out! This is the girl for you. I insist you have her instead.”

However, God determined to respond to the cries of Israel for relief. Therefore, he had selected the impulsive Samson to begin to deliver them. As such...

³ And Samson said to them,

vayomer lahem Shimshon – “And says, to them, Samson.” The question is, “Who is ‘them’?” It is perhaps the people of Samson’s town in general or his family in particular. It may be that his previous actions were looked down on. Samson could have caused trouble for himself and his people by what he did, which they thought was unjustifiable. However...

³ (con’t) **“This time I shall be blameless regarding the Philistines if I harm them!”**

niqethi ha’paam miplishtim ki oseh ani imam raah – “I clean, the beat, from Philistines, for doing I with them evil.” Samson is saying that he will be free from guilt (clean) when he does evil to the Philistines. The word *ha’paam*, the beat, is being compared to what he did previously.

In Judges 14, instead of taking out anger on her for the indiscretion of telling his riddle to the Philistines, Samson took it out on her people in general, those who weakened her resolve and forced her into the difficult position of choosing against him.

He went down to Ashkelon and killed the men there to get the garments he had promised. The people in Ashkelon were disinterested parties who got caught up in the deceit of their people against Samson.

However, Samson now sees that the culture of the Philistines is simply corrupt. He will have no compunction about bringing disaster on them. As he did before, he will direct his attention on the Philistines in general, instead of toward the girl and her family only...

⁴ Then Samson went and caught three hundred foxes;

vayelekh Shimshon vayilkod s’losh meoth shualim – “And walks, Samson, and catches three hundred foxes.” The narrative introduces the means of Samson’s retribution first by noting the instruments he will use: three hundred foxes.

Three hundred was the number of men whom Gideon employed against Midian. It is a multiple of three and ten. Three signifies Divine Perfection. Expanding on that, Bullinger says –

“The number three, therefore, must be taken as the number of Divine fulness. It signifies and represents the Holy Spirit as taking of the things of Christ and making them real and solid in our experience. It is only by the Spirit that we realise spiritual things. Without Him and His gracious operation, all is surface work: all is what a plane figure is to a solid.”

Of the number ten, Bullinger says –

“Completeness of order, marking the entire round of anything, is, therefore, the ever-present signification of the number ten. It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete.”

The *shual*, or fox, is introduced into the Bible here. The word comes from *shoal*, hollow hand, or handful, and the meaning extends to this. The connection is that foxes dig out a hollow to live in. In the gospels, Jesus said, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head” (Matthew 8:20). In Luke, it says—

“On that very day some Pharisees came, saying to Him, ‘Get out and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You.’

³² And He said to them, ‘Go, tell that fox, “Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.”’

³³ Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.” Luke 13:31-33

The significance of a fox is that of a hole digger, and thus, one who is there to trip others up. Along with catching foxes...

⁴ (con’t) **and he took torches, turned *the foxes* tail to tail, and put a torch between each pair of tails.**

vayiqakh lapidim vayephen zanav el zanav vayasem lapid ekhad ben sh’neh haznavoth vatavekh – “And takes torches. And turns tail unto tail. And places torch one between two the tails in the midst.” Some translations say jackals instead of foxes. Either way, it is an animal that could be found and caught.

Some think it is impossible that he could have caught three hundred foxes, but that is because we are reading an account with mere sentences to describe the events. For all we know, he caught them over a period of time and employed help in the process. Nothing is said of him performing all the coming actions at the same time.

Scripture shows that the fox was quite common. Cities are named after it. The animal is named in Judges, Nehemiah, the Psalms, the Song of Solomon, Ezekiel, and in the New Testament. This shows that foxes were something common and that they continued throughout Israel's history.

The *lapid*, or torch, comes from an unused root, probably meaning to shine. In this case, it is a torch that would not be easily extinguished and which would increase in brightness and intensity when waved to and fro.

Turning the foxes tail to tail implies that they are tied that way with the torch between them. As for the word *zanav*, or tail, it is used in Isaiah 9:15 to refer to one who teaches falsehood. It is derived from the verb *zinev*, to cut off, such as to attack the rear of a group of people.

Samson got the foxes, tied a cord to the tails of each pair of them with a torch trailing behind them. He lit the torch and let them go. In doing this, they would run to get away from him, but each would go off in its own direction. As the foxes pulled against one another with the torch flailing between them, they would set on fire whatever they passed by in a zigzagging, confused manner.

A single fox would run straight and cause a single line of burning, but with two tied in this manner, a large conflagration would result. This is seen next...

⁵ When he had set the torches on fire, he let *the foxes* go into the standing grain of the Philistines, and burned up both the shocks and the standing grain, as well as the vineyards *and* olive groves.

vayaver esh balapidim vay'shalakh b'qamoth plishtim vayaver migadish v'ad qamah v'ad kerem zayith – "And burns fire in the torches, and sends in standings Philistines, and burns from shocks, and until standing, and until vineyard olive."

Gideon had an army of three hundred men carrying torches that he sent out against the Midianites. Samson, likewise, has an army of three hundred. However, he directs his attention against the Philistines, burning their labor, sustenance, and profit away.

Samson targeted the *qamah*, or standing grain. That comes from *qum*, to arise or stand. This would be highly flammable and would burn very quickly. The fire would be so intense that it would spread to the *gadiysh*, shocks.

It is from an unused root, signifying to heap up. Thus, it is the piles of grain that are already cut and set aside. The stalks would be cut, gathered into bundles, and stood up with the butt end down. Eventually, they are taken to the threshing floor for processing.

The fire is also said to have spread to the *kerem zayith*, literally, vineyard olive. The words seem to make no sense. Ellicott says, “Literally, *and to vineyard, to olive*.” That is not what it says. Cambridge says, “lit. *vineyard of oliveyard*, which cannot be right; read *vineyard* and *oliveyard*.” No, we don’t change the word of God based on suppositions!

Such arbitrary changes suppose that the word is corrupt and that the people who maintain it are incompetent doofs. Rather, it is vineyard olive. It is true that vineyards are normally thought to be of grapes, but here it is applied to olives. Vineyards represent the cultural side of humanity. There are various vineyards that represent various cultures. The olive is a symbol of religious privilege.

Samson’s actions were probably done at night when there would be no one around to save the fields. It would have been done in many locations as well. Because of this, it was evident that it was sabotage...

**⁶Then the Philistines said, “Who has done this?”
And they answered, “Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite,**

vayomru plishtim mi asah zoth vayomru Shimshon khathan hatimni – “And say, Philistines, ‘Who done this?’ And say, ‘Samson, affinity the Timnite.’” The word is *khathan*, a relative by marriage, and thus an affinity. They acknowledge the relationship as valid between him and his father-in-law, meaning Samson was considered the woman’s husband. He has done this...

^{6 (con’t)} because he has taken his wife and given her to his companion.”

ki laqakh eth ishto vayitnah l’mereehu – “for took his wife and gives her to his companion.” It is debated if what the Philistines will do is punish Samson or appease him. If they punish him, it is because she is his wife. If they appease him so that he will stop harming them, it is because of the act of adultery that occurred because her father gave her away.

Either way, Samson's reaction will show that he found their actions were wholly inappropriate. As for what they did...

⁶ (con't) **So the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire.**

vayaalu plishtim vayisr'phu othah v'eth aviha ba'esh – “And ascend, Philistines, and burn her and her father in the fire.” Some scholars say that this was because of the act of adultery, and that precedent for this is found in Genesis 38:24 and Leviticus 20:14 & 21:9. However, this dismisses the words of Judges 14:15 –

“But it came to pass on the seventh day that they said to Samson's wife, “Entice your husband, that he may explain the riddle to us, or else we will burn you and your father's house with fire. Have you invited us in order to take what is ours? *Is that not so?*”

This was something the Philistines had promised to do in the past. Thus, there is no reason to assume they were doing this because of adultery. It is just what they did because of the loss they suffered. They were brutal people carrying out their brutal designs.

The notably ironic point is that the very thing the girl hoped to avoid by acting treacherously toward Samson is ultimately what happened to her and her father. It is something that would later happen to Israel –

“Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, ‘What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. ⁴⁸ If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.’” John 11:47, 48

What Israel tried to avoid by coming against their Messiah is exactly what came upon them. As for what the Philistines did...

⁷ **Samson said to them, “Since you would do a thing like this, I will surely take revenge on you, and after that I will cease.”**

The words are rather difficult. Despite this, there is a strong emphasis in them: *vayomer lahem Shimshon im taasun kazoth ki im niqamti bakhem v'akhar ekhdal* – “And says to them, Samson, ‘If (surely) doing according to this, when if I revenge in you, and after, I cease.’”

Various suggestions are given as to his intent, but the repetition of the word *if* is purposeful. Also, depending on the context, the word *ki* can mean for, when, or that, etc. It indicates a causal relationship. It appears that he is giving a limited response to their atrocity, upon which he will be satisfied as long as that ends the matter –

“And says to them, Samson:

Based on: ‘If (surely) doing according to this

Therefore: when if I revenge in you,

Result: and after, I cease.”

The Philistines did something atrocious. Samson will respond accordingly, but once he has done so, he will go no further. It is not unlike Israel’s response to Iran’s huge aerial assault against them. It would be unthinkable that they would not respond, but it would be harmful if they did so in an overwhelming manner.

Thus, they masterfully handled their actions, demonstrating their ability to attack Iran with impunity and yet doing so with restraint, giving Iran the chance to save *face* while also cowering in *disgrace*. In Samson’s case...

⁸ So he attacked them hip and thigh with a great slaughter;

vayakh otham shoq al yarekh makah g’dolah – “And strikes them leg upon thigh, slaughter whopping.” There are numerous suggestions as to what this means. However, it is certainly a proverbial saying. It is not unlike what Jacob said to the Lord –

“Deliver me, I pray from hand my brother Esau. For fear I, him, lest comes and struck me, mother upon sons” Genesis 32:11 (CG).

Thus, it would mean “completely,” as in the bodies of the mothers lying dead upon the sons. This seems likely because the same expression is used in Hosea 10:14, where it says, “mother upon sons, dashed” (CG).

If this is so, then it signifies bodies of men lying scattered so abundantly that their appendages lay upon one another. Whether this or something else, the words leg upon thigh are given to accentuate the words “slaughter whopping.”

^{8 (con’t)} **then he went down and dwelt in the cleft of the rock of Etam.**

vayered vayeshev bisiph sela etam – “And descends, and sits in cleft, Crag Etam.” It does not say where Samson descended from, so it is likely it indicates his home at Mahaneh Dan. Wherever it is, he descended and sat, meaning dwelling, in cleft, Crag Etam.

The word *saiph* is introduced here. It comes from *saaph*, a lopped off bough. The root of that means to divide up. As such, this is a division in a *sela*, or craggy rock. That word comes from a root signifying to be lofty. There is a crag with a fissure in it where Samson dwelt known as Etam.

The name has various interpretations. The NASB thinks its root is *iyt*, to fly as if swooping down upon. Strong’s indirectly identifies it coming from *ayit* – bird of prey (which is from *iyt*). As such it is Place of Ravenous Birds (McClintock), Place of Ravenous Creatures (Jones), or Wild Beasts Lair (Young’s).

It is possible that this isn’t speaking of a place where wild beasts dwelt but that it is named after Samson because he dwelt there. He was the slayer of the lion and the one who caught and sent forth the foxes against the enemy. He is being equated to his prey.

Or it could be that this was a place where others wouldn’t dare to dwell because of such beasts, but Samson willingly stayed there because he knew he was greater than them and could easily defeat them.

*Foxes and torches and three hundred tails
And up goes the standing grain
The shocks burned up like billowing sails
Taking away the enemy’s financial gain*

*And there go the shocks, up to the sky
And the olive vineyard, it went too
As for the Philistines, they just stand and cry
And bid their toil and efforts “Adieu.”*

*Just recompense for the thing they did
When they interfered in Samson’s life
Burning up a man along with his kid
And – oh my! – she happened to be Samson’s wife*

II. A Fresh Jawbone (verses 9-15)

⁹ Now the Philistines went up, encamped in Judah, and deployed themselves against Lehi.

vayaalu plishtim vayakhanu bihudah vayinatsu ba'lekhi – “And ascend, Philistines, and encamp in Judah, and disperse in the Jawbone.” The word *natash* comes from a root signifying to pound. When you pound something, it spreads out. As such, one can think of an army spreading out in an area as it deploys its men, tents, etc. The Philistines came up from their area to the higher land in Judah and there deployed “in the Lehi.”

Lehi is the same as the Hebrew *lekhi*, the jaw or cheek, which was used in our text verse today. By extension, it means Jawbone. It is either a place that resembles a jawbone or the narrative is anticipating the events ahead where Samson will use a jawbone to wipe out the foe. Based on verse 17, I would go with the latter, but that is not definitive.

Judah means Praise. Of Lehi, Abarim has more to say –

“The noun לְהִי (lehi) means jawbone or cheek. It’s not clear where this noun comes from, and creative observers might be forgiven to see a resemblance with the particle לְ (le), meaning for, and the noun חַי (hay) meaning life. The jaw allows food to be chewed, and it’s essential in speaking. And when one dominates the jaw of an animal (or human, for that matter), one dominates the whole animal.” Abarim

More than “for,” the לְ signifies “to” or “toward.” It signifies motion toward an object, purpose, goal, etc. As such, Lehi means Cheek or Jawbone, but with a qualifier that the name can be extended to mean To Life.

¹⁰ And the men of Judah said, “Why have you come up against us?”

vayomru ish Yehudah lamah alithem alenu – “And says, man Judah, ‘Why ascended upon us?’” Samson was from Dan, not Judah. They were unaware of anything they had done to offend the Philistines, so their question is perfectly natural.

¹⁰ (con’t) So they answered, “We have come up to arrest Samson, to do to him as he has done to us.”

vayomru leesor eth shimshon alinu laasoth lo kaasher asah lanu – “And say, ‘To bind Samson, ascended. To doing to him according to which done to us.’” Their target is solely Samson. The battle array meant that further trouble would ensue, however, if he was not delivered to them.

Judah has failed to recognize Samson as their savior, raised up by the Lord to deliver them. Because of their peevish attitude, little choice is left concerning the matter...

¹¹ Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam,

vayirdu sh'loshet alaphim ish mihudah el s'iph sela etam – “And descended three thousands men from Judah unto cleft, Crag Etam.” The large number sent against one man clearly indicates they knew what Samson was capable of. It should have been an obvious clue that he was capable of more, if they would just accept his leadership. Instead, they reject the obvious.

The number 3000 is simply a multiple of 300 and 10, both of which have been explained.

^{11 (con't)} and said to Samson, “Do you not know that the Philistines rule over us? What is this you have done to us?”

vayomru l'shimshon halo yadata ki moshlim banu plishtim umah zoth asitha lanu – “And say, to Samson, ‘Not you know for ruling in us Philistines? And what this you done to us?’” Having completely rejected any notion of freedom from the Philistines, even with a champion like Samson, they admit their subjugation and the consequences they were sure to face if they didn't get rid of him. Samson, however, explains his position...

^{11 (con't)} And he said to them, “As they did to me, so I have done to them.”

vayomer lahem kaasher asu li ken asiti lahem – “And says, to them, ‘According to which done to me, thus done to them.’” Samson treated their conduct like the retribution of the *lex talionis* – kind for kind. The Philistines harmed him, and he returned punishment accordingly without being overly vengeful against them.

¹² But they said to him, “We have come down to arrest you, that we may deliver you into the hand of the Philistines.”

vayomru lo leesarkha yaradnu l'titkha b'yad plishtim – “And say, to him, ‘To bind you we descended, to give you in hand Philistines.’” Said the three thousand to the one! The Lord, through Gideon and his three hundred, defeated Midian. It shows how faithless these men of Judah were. They were gathered together to deliver their savior to the Philistines instead of rallying behind him. However, he graciously allows himself to be so treated...

¹² (con't) **Then Samson said to them, “Swear to me that you will not kill me yourselves.”**

There is a strong emphasis: *vayomer lahem Shimshon hishavru li pen tiphgun bi atem* – “And say to them, Samson, ‘Swear to me, lest (surely) impinging in me, you.’” He does not use the word *harag*, kill, but rather *phaga*. It comes from a primitive root signifying to impinge. It is where there is an interaction between the two. In this case, he says *tiphgun bi*, (surely) impinging in me.

He doesn’t want conflict with them, so he is willing to yield himself to them if they do not forcefully interact with him...

¹³ **So they spoke to him, saying, “No, but we will tie you securely and deliver you into their hand; but we will surely not kill you.”**

Their words are emphatic: *vayomru lo lemor lo ki asor neesar’kha u-n’tthanukha b’yadam v’hameth lo n’mithekha* – “And says, to him, saying, ‘No, for binding we will bind you, and give you in their hand, and killing no we kill you.’” They are more interested in handing him over than attempting to do their own dirty work, which would inevitably mean plenty of trouble for them.

And so, with a sure word, they let him know that they have no intention of harming him at all. Instead...

¹³ (con't) **And they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock.**

vayaasruhu bishnayim avotim khadashim vayaaluhu min ha’sala – “And bind him in two ropes, new. And ascend him from the crag.” The word translated as rope is *avoth*. It signifies something intertwined like a string, a wreath, a chain, etc. That comes from *avath*, to wind or weave. It is used just once, in a figurative sense –

“That they may successfully do evil with both hands—
The prince asks *for gifts*,
The judge *seeks* a bribe,
And the great *man* utters his evil desire;
So they scheme [*avath*] together.” Micah 7:3

In Micah, there is an entangling or conspiring of the people that is not at all unlike the way Samson is bound by those of Judah.

As for the number two, it is the number of division or difference. The two will contrast, and yet they will confirm the whole. As for Samson, once he was so betrayed, they ascend him back to Lehi...

¹⁴ When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting against him.

The word “when” obliterates the intent: *hu va ad lekhi u-plishtim heriu liqratov* – “He coming until Lehi. And Philistines shouted to meet him.” Almost always, a sentence like this begins with “And...” Here, it simply describes him nonchalantly being conducted along by Judah. There is no resistance and no impulse upon him.

However, once the Philistines saw him coming, they either stood and gave a resounding shout of victory which rushed to meet him, or they shouted as they surged forward to meet him. Either way, it was one army against one man who has ambled into their presence. Samson came supposedly defeated. Only then does the Lord intervene...

¹⁴ (con’t) Then the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him;

vatitslakh alav Ruakh Yehovah – “And surges, upon him, Spirit Yehovah.” It is letter for letter the same as Judges 14:6 and 14:19. The lion came roaring against Samson, and a surge of the Spirit was the result. The Philistines had plowed with his heifer, and again it happened. Now, at the victory shouts of the Philistines, it happens a third time...

¹⁴ (con’t) and the ropes that *were* on his arms became like flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds broke loose from his hands.

The words are poetic in nature: *vatihtyenah ha’avotim asher al zerootav kapishtim asher baaru baesh vayimasu esurav me’al yadav* – “And becomes, the ropes, which upon his arms, according to the flax which burned in the fire. And melts, his bonds, from upon his hands.” It interestingly notes ropes upon both the arm and bands upon the hand. That is probably why two new ropes were mentioned.

The *zeroa*, or arm, comes from the word *zara*, meaning “to sow” or “scatter seed.” The arm thus speaks of power and exertion, but also effectual reach to accomplish. When a man desires to show his strength or to defeat an enemy, he will stretch his arms out. In this one stance, he will both defend some and work against others.

The hand signifies power and/or authority. Samson was bound in order to withhold these attributes from him. However, with the cheer of the enemy at their supposed victory, the ropes on his arms became like burned flax and fell from him.

There is also a new word, *esur*. It signifies a band or bond. Whether the bands on his hands were also rope or something else, they simply melted off of him from the surge of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁵ He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, reached out his hand and took it, and killed a thousand men with it.

vayimtsa lekhi khamor t'riyah vayishlakh yado vayiqahela vayak bah eleph ish – “And finds, jawbone donkey, fresh. And sends his hand. And takes her. And strikes, in her, thousand man.” In his state, any weapon will do. The first thing at hand would suffice, and it happens to be a fresh jawbone of a donkey.

It is a new word, *tari*, coming from an unused root meaning to be moist. As such, it signifies dripping and, therefore, fresh. It would not be brittle and could endure a sustained battle, even to striking a thousand of the foes. Using the hand to wield it signifies he is using his position and authority.

It is with this fresh donkey’s jaw that Samson was able to strike a thousand Philistines. The number is simply a derivative of ten, and it bears the significance of that number.

This is where we will stop for now. There are just five more verses in this detail-filled chapter. If the patterns of the past continue, we can – and certainly should – expect what is being said is to tell us about Jesus or some other part of His redemptive plans.

This is key in understanding the otherwise obscure, quaint, or even seemingly purposeless detail contained in so many stories of the Bible. When we can’t seem to figure out what God is telling us, we need to just step back and ask ourselves, “How does this point to Jesus?”

Read things over again this week, look at the verses ahead, and see if you can figure out what is going on. I will do the same in anticipation of my sermon typing day. May the Lord bless the effort with exciting details.

For now, get right with Jesus! This is what God is telling us to do time and again in His word. Keep away from law observance, rest in Christ, and trust that God’s grace alone

will bring you back to Himself. May the grace of God in Christ Jesus fill you and continue to do so until we meet here again.

Closing Verse: *"I gave My back to those who struck Me,
And My cheeks [lekhi] to those who plucked out the beard;
I did not hide My face from shame and spitting." Isaiah 50:6*

Next Week: Judges 15:16-20 *Isn't it fun! What a story to tell when you need a Scripture fix...* (Samson, Judge of Israel, Part VI) (44th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Samson, Judge of Israel, Part V

After a while, in the time of wheat harvest
It happened that Samson visited his wife with a young goat
And he said, "Let me go in to my wife, into her room
But her father would not permit him to go in, he got the No vote

Her father said, "I really thought
That you thoroughly hated her, and that you didn't want to wed
Therefore I gave her to your companion
Is not her younger sister better than she? Please, take her instead

And Samson said to them, "This time I shall be blameless
-----without haw or hem
Regarding the Philistines if I harm them

Then Samson went and caught three hundred foxes
And he took torches (here come the details)
Turned the foxes tail to tail
And put a torch between each pair of tails

When he had set the torches on fire
He let the foxes go into the Philistines' standing grain
And burned up both the shocks and the standing grain
As well as the vineyards and olive groves and all they did contain

Then the Philistines said, "Who has done this?"
And they answered, "Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite
-----was the fire applier
Because he has taken his wife and given her to his companion
So the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire

Samson said to them, "Since you would do a thing like this
I will surely take revenge on you, and after that I will cease
So he attacked them hip and thigh with a great slaughter
Then he went down and dwelt in the cleft of the rock of Etam
-----looking for some peace

Now the Philistines went up, encamped in Judah by and by
And deployed themselves against Lehi

And the men of Judah said
"Why have you come up against us? What is this fuss?
So they answered, "We have come up to arrest Samson
To do to him as he has done to us

Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft of
-----the rock of Etam
And said to Samson, "Do you not know that the Philistines rule
-----over us? Us you will condemn!
What is this you have done to us?"
And he said to them, "As they did to me, so I have done to them

But they said to him, "We have come down to arrest you
That we may deliver you into the hand of the Philistines."
Then Samson said to them
"Swear to me that you will not kill me yourselves by any means

So they spoke to him, saying
"No, but we will tie you securely and deliver you into their hand
But we will surely not kill you
And they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up
-----from the rock, just as they planned

When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting against him

Then the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him
And the ropes that were on his arms became like flax that is
-----burned with fire
And his bonds broke loose from his hands. For the Philistines
-----things were lookin' grim

He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, cool we must admit
Reached out his hand and took it, and killed a thousand men with it

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 15:16-20

(SAMSON, JUDGE OF ISRAEL, PART VI)

Throughout most of their history, the Jewish people have been faithfully unfaithful to the word that established them. God spoke through Moses, and then He continued to speak through His prophets for hundreds of years.

Moses penned the Torah (the Pentateuch) under inspiration of the Lord. It is the first five books of the Bible. However, it is not the entirety of the word of God to Israel. The Law of Moses thus continues with the utterances of the prophets who served under the law and whose words were then included in the sacred writings.

One of the things that Moses told them, which is substantially repeated several times in Scripture, says, "Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it."

Moses' words in Deuteronomy 12:32 presuppose at least these two things: 1) Do not add to or subtract from what the Lord inspires, and 2) observe the things that are written in the proper context.

These are the things that Israel failed at. They had their own oral traditions and false writings that they held to. They also failed to uphold the Scriptures given by God in their proper context. One of the obvious reasons we hold to the word as written is because, as we see week after week, it tells us about Jesus.

Those things are missing from false writings and false oral traditions. After Christ came, the Jews went even further afield and compiled the Talmud. It is a document that includes the Mishnah, a written compilation of the oral Torah, and the Gemara, a clarification of the Mishnah and other writings. At times, the Gemara expounds broadly on the Hebrew Bible.

The problem with these is that there is no light of Christ to be found in them. Hence, Israel is in a bad pickle. They are without Christ, and they have no proper connection to Christ because of their failure to come to the word alone to find Him.

How can that be corrected? A review of the typology in Judges 15 will reveal this.

Text Verse: *“Calling a bird of prey [ayit] from the east,
The man who executes My counsel, from a far country.
Indeed I have spoken it;
I will also bring it to pass.
I have purposed it;
I will also do it.” Isaiah 46:11*

The words of the text verse will be used later to point to what Judges 15 is telling us. When God gives us stories and instructions in His word, we should be able to make connections to other things that are based on reality.

An example is in today’s passage. Samson notes that he is exceptionally thirsty. This isn’t a problem if water is readily available. However, anyone who has been to Israel knows that there are many places that are extremely parched.

Add in the heat of the season, and it is evident why Samson is so distraught. The narrative is set at the time of the wheat harvest, which is around May to June. It is normally getting very hot in Israel at that time.

At the time of typing this sermon at the end of April, the temperature in Israel ranged from 91 to 105 degrees, depending on the location. Add in the dryness of the land without rain, and Samson’s words come alive in our minds. We can feel his thirst ourselves.

God uses such things as the time of year, the dryness of the land, the lack of shade, and so forth to tell us things that will reveal Jesus. This is why Scripture alone must be the reference for our doctrine. It is the only way that God has specially revealed Jesus to the world in writing.

Be sure not to get sidetracked by those who manipulate the word of God, either by taking it out of context or by adding to or taking away from it. And how can you do that unless you are aware of and versed in the written word? Read and know the Bible!

Great things about Jesus are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. En Hakkore (verses 16-20)

¹⁶ **Then Samson said:**
“With the jawbone of a donkey,
Heaps upon heaps,
With the jawbone of a donkey
I have slain a thousand men!”

Translations of this verse are all over the place, but ultimately it is a powerful paronomasia (a play on words) that to tolerably and tidily translate is perfectly perplexing: *vayomer Shimshon bilkhi ha'khamor khamor khamorathayim bilkhi ha'khamor hikethi eleph ish* – “And says, Samson, in jawbone the donkey, donkey two donkeys. In jawbone, the donkey, struck thousand man.” / Or: “And says, Samson, in jawbone the donkey, heap two heaps. In jawbone, the donkey, struck thousand man.” / Or: “And says, Samson, in jawbone the donkey, clay clays. In jawbone, the donkey, struck thousand man.”

The word translated as donkey is *khamor*. The word translated as heap (or clay) is *khomer*. Coming from *khamar*, to boil up. Thus, it would be something that grows. In this case, a heap. However, both words ultimately come from *khamar*, an unused root meaning to be red. The reason for clay is the same as why Job said this –

“Truly I *am* as your spokesman before God;
I also have been formed out of clay.” Job 33:6

As such, it's hard to tell what Samson was thinking. Was he saying he killed a bunch of men who were like donkeys? Was it a bunch of men who made heaps of dead? Or was he saying that he returned the enemy to being lumps of clay? Whichever he is referring to, it still forms a poignantly, profound, and profuse pun. The ultimate point of the words is that the slaughter was immense.

¹⁷ **And so it was, when he had finished speaking, that he threw the jawbone from his hand, and called that place Ramath Lehi.**

vayhi k'khalotho l'daber vayashlekh hal'khi miyado vayiqra lamaqom ha'hu Ramath lekhi – “And is, when he finished to speak, and casts the jawbone from his hand. And calls to place, the it, Ramath Lehi.” One can see Samson standing there, hand raised, holding the jawbone, and saying his poem. Once he finished, he tossed it out of his hand.

After this, he named the place Ramath Lekhi. It means Height of the Jawbone, High Place of the Jawbone, or Exalted Jawbone, or based on the Hebrew *l'khi* – Exalted to Life. The name Ramath comes from *rum*, to be high or exalted.

Some people argue Casting Away of the Jawbone. But the word translated as cast is *shalakh*. It does not necessarily mean to cast away by flinging it far away. Moses was told to cast his staff on the ground, and it became a snake. He would have just tossed it down. This is probably what Samson did.

¹⁸ Then he became very thirsty; so he cried out to the LORD and said, “You have given this great deliverance by the hand of Your servant; and now shall I die of thirst and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?”

vayitsma meod vayiqra el Yehovah vayomar atah nathata b'yad avdekha eth hathshuah ha'g'dolah hazoth v'atah amuth batsama v'naphal'ti b'yad ha'arelim – “And thirsts, very. And calls unto Yehovah. And says, ‘You gave, in hand your servant, the salvation, the whopping, the this. And now, dies in the thirst, and fall in hand the foreskinned.’”

The thirst he felt was a natural consequence of the situation. It is the harvest season when it is hot and dry in Israel. He had been bound. He broke those bonds and engaged in a battle against an entire army of men, taking out a thousand of them. Thirst would be at the forefront of his physical thoughts, just as it was for Jesus on the cross.

And more, Samson acknowledges that the Lord gave the victory through his hand, but it is notable that not a single person of Judah was there to help. If any had been, he could have asked that person for water. The battle was the Lord's, fought for His people. Despite this, they had all denied and forsaken him, leaving Samson to die at the hands of the foreskinned Philistines.

But God was with him and responded to his need...

¹⁹ So God split the hollow place that *is* in Lehi, and water came out,

Rather, as in verse 9, there is an article before *lekhi*: *vayivqa elohim eth hamakh'tesh asher ba'lekhi vayetsu mimenu mayim* – “And cleaves, God, the mortar which in the Jawbone. And comes, from it, water.” It is notable that it says *elohim* rather than *Yehovah*. The powers of God are credited with the action.

As for what He did and where He did it, the word *baqa*, to cleave, is used. It can signify to rend, rip, divide, split, break open, break through, etc. What He cleaved is a new and rare word, *maktesh*. It signifies something hollowed out, a mortar. The word is from *kathash*, to pound as if in a mortar.

The only other place where *maktesh* is seen, other than as a name, is in Proverbs 27 where the mortar and pestle is described –

“Though you grind a fool in a mortar [*maktesh*] with a pestle along with crushed grain, Yet his foolishness will not depart from him.” Proverbs 27:22

The mortar and pestle was the earliest means known for grinding grain. Grain was placed in a shallow depression in a stone, the mortar, and was then pounded with another stone known as the pestle.

This cleaving of the mortar is not in the jawbone of the donkey but a hollowed-out area in the place called the Jawbone. This is what God split open. When He did, water came out...

19 (con't) **and he drank; and his spirit returned, and he revived.**

vayesht vatashav rukho vayekhi – “And drinks, and returns his spirit. And lives.” Samson was completely parched. He called for water and God provided it. In drinking it, it was as if he came to life again. The Lord accomplished the victory through Samson, and then He restored Samson to life through the cleaving of the hollow.

There is a pun in the Hebrew if you know the hidden meaning of Lehi –

God split the hollow place that is in Lehi (*l'khi*: to life)
And drinks, and returns his spirit, and lives (*vayekhi*: and lives)

19 (con't) **Therefore he called its name En Hakkore, which is in Lehi to this day.**

al ken qara sh'mah ein ha'qore asher ba'lekhi ad hayom hazeh – “Upon thus, calls her name, ‘Fountain, the Caller,’ which in the Jawbone until the day, the this.” Following Samson’s calling out to the Lord, God cleaved the hollow and sent forth water. Thus, the well that sprang up is called Spring, the Caller.

The name En Hakkore comes from two words, *ayin*, a spring or an eye, and the active participle of *qara*, to call or proclaim. Thus, it means Fountain (Eye) of the Caller or Fountain (Eye) of the Calling.

It is this fountain that continued to flow, even at the time of the author of Judges. Extra-biblical writings also speak of the fountain being there many hundreds of years later. In fact, Barnes notes –

“A spring, on the way from Socho to Eleutheropolis, was commonly called Samson's spring in the time of Jerome and writers in the 7th, 12th, and 14th centuries.” Albert Barnes

^{20 (fin)} **And he judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines.**

vayishpot eth Yisrael bime plistim esrim shanah – “And judges, Israel, in days Philistines, twenty year.” The statement is unusual in that the record of Samson has another chapter to go. However, at the end of his life, the words will be repeated. Here, the verb is in the imperfect aspect: Samson judges Israel. At the end of Chapter 16, the aspect will be perfect, he judged Israel.

Of the number twenty, Bullinger notes –

It “...is the double of ten, and may in some cases signify its concentrated meaning. But its significance seems rather to be connected with the fact that it is one short of twenty-one, $21 - 1 = 20$; that is to say, if 21 is the three-fold 7, and signifies Divine (3) completion as regards spiritual perfection (7), then twenty, being one short of 21, it would signify what Dr. Milo Mahan calls expectancy.”

With the verses complete, we will next look at what God is telling us about things yet to come...

*With a fresh jawbone of a donkey
The enemy is struck and defeated
How is it so? How can it be?
With a mere jawbone, the victory is completed*

*And with a call out to the Lord
The hollow place is split
At the mere calling of a word*

Out flow the waters, flowing forth from it

How glorious is the Fountain of the Caller

That it flows forth to this day

A treat for every Bible scholar

God gives forth His Spirit, and He does so without delay

II. Pictures of Christ

In Judges 14, we saw that Samson's betrothed wife pictured Israel in her apostate state. Jesus came to Israel despite their apostasy, using that state to bring them back to Himself.

The account of the lion roaring at Samson revealed the means by which Christ will deliver His people. It was typologically given as an anticipation of the work of Christ through adherence to the word of the Lord to overcome the Philistines, the Weakeners, condemning those who rely on the law or personal merit as a means of works-based salvation.

Samson then walked and ate the honey. This reflected Jesus' possession of the Word to sustain Him. Samson gave his riddle to the Philistines and some of them were able to glean the meaning of the riddle through his wife, meaning Israel's apostate state.

It represented those who realized the time of Jesus' coming. They solved the riddle. For this, they were granted their garments, just as believers are covered in Christ's righteousness. However, the chapter ended with the note that the wife was given to his companion, who had been his best man.

John the Baptist noted that he was "the friend of the bridegroom" in John 3:29. He was the last prophet of the law and thus stands as representative of the law that Jesus came to fulfill. John died before Jesus fulfilled the law, and therefore he did not receive the grace of God in Christ in the new dispensation.

The bride being given to the best man by the father anticipates Israel remaining under the law. Chapter 14 ended there and Chapter 15 resumes the narrative with the words, "in days harvest wheat."

The wheat harvest follows the barley. Barley (*seorah*), for reference, comes from *sear*, hair. It is the crop of hairy ears. Hair signifies awareness, particularly an awareness of

sin. It is the time of the law. The wheat harvest follows that and, thus it is the time of grace.

Christ first fulfills the law and then comes grace. As noted, Jesus metaphorically used wheat to refer to Himself in John 12:24. Still in verse 1, Samson went with a young goat to visit his wife, representing Israel in her apostate state. The *gedi izim*, or kid goats, was his offering to go into her.

That anticipates that her sin was to be cut off and atoned for. Samson, speaking with an imperative, said, "I will go in unto my wife, the her chamber." Likewise, Christ came to atone for Israel's sin and be wedded to her. However (verse 2), Samson's father would not allow it. His words were, "Saying, I said, 'For hating, you hated her.'"

It was assumed that Jesus would have nothing more to do with Israel because of her apostate state. However, it is that state, prophesied through Jeremiah that the Lord will use in order to correct her. That was seen in Chapter 14 –

"Thine apostasy [*apostasias*] shall correct thee, and thy wickedness shall reprove thee: know then, and see, that thy forsaking me bitter to thee, saith the Lord thy God; and I have taken no pleasure in thee, saith the Lord thy God." Jeremiah 2:19 (LXX)

That did not happen at the time of Jesus' first coming. As such, the father said that he had given the wife to his companion. It pictures Israel's returning to the law as noted concerning John the Baptist a moment ago.

Instead of the bride, the father offered Samson his other daughter, noting that she was even better than the first. Without directly saying anything about her, it is obvious she was rejected. Israel, even in her apostate state, was to be the bride of the Lord.

Instead, Samson, Place of the Sun (the Word of God in Christ), was determined to punish the Philistines (the Weakeners, meaning the false teachings opposed to the Word of God in Christ).

In order to do so, Samson noted that he would be blameless when he brought evil upon them (verse 3). To start the process, he caught three hundred foxes.

Three hundred, being a multiple of 3 and 10 signifies Divine fulness and completeness of order where nothing is wanting and the whole cycle is complete. This is done through

“taking the things of Christ and making them real and solid in our experience”
(Bullinger).

The number of foxes, three hundred, represents the timing of Christ’s earthly ministry. Using foxes (hole diggers) signifies that these things will occur by tripping up the foe.

The use of torches has a double signification, it illuminates the work of Christ and burns up the works of the Weakeners. Tying the foxes at the *zanav*, tail, means that he was using the foxes to destroy their falsehood, symbolized by the tail.

Teaching falsehood is exactly what the Weakeners, symbolized by the Philistines, picture. One can think of Pharisees, Sadducees, etc. coming against Jesus in His ministry, but He destroys their every argument.

In verse 5, Samson lit the torches and set the foxes free in the standing grain [*qamah*] of the Philistines. This burned up the shocks [*gadiysh*], the standing grain, and the “vineyard olive.” The first two of these were first noted in Exodus 22 –

“If fire breaks out and catches in thorns, so that stacked grain [*gadiysh*], standing grain [*ha’qamah*], or the field is consumed, he who kindled the fire shall surely make restitution.” Exodus 22:6

These things represent the labors of the people, both the present labors (the standing) and that which they have already tended to (the shocks). It speaks of the totality of the unsound doctrine of those who opposed Christ through self-works.

To get a sense of this, the word *gadiysh* is used only four times in Scripture. The first three refer to shocks of grain, but the last use refers to a tomb, because a tomb is something heaped up like shocks of grain –

For the wicked are reserved for the day of doom;
They shall be brought out on the day of wrath.

³¹ Who condemns his way to his face?
And who repays him *for what* he has done?

³² Yet he shall be brought to the grave,
And a vigil kept over the tomb [*gadiysh*]. Job 21:30-32

The labors of the Weakeners are burned up through the work of Christ. Like the tomb of a person being a witness to his life, the works of the Weakeners stood as a witness to their works.

The last thing noted, the “vineyard olive,” was the unusual term which seemed incorrect. An olive grove and a vineyard are not the same thing. However, typology is being conveyed.

The vineyard represents the cultural side of the people, the traditions of the elders, etc., that Jesus spoke against. The olive refers to their religious privilege, which – without Christ – is no privilege at all. It is all burned up through the ministry of Christ.

Verse 6 then brought in the questioning of the Philistines concerning who was responsible for burning up their works. The answer was that “Samson, affinity the Timnite, for took his wife and gives her to his companion.”

Think of Jesus: Samson (Place of the Sun, referring to the Word of God in Christ), the one tied to apostate Israel through affinity to the Allotted Portion-ite (the promise of Messiah), burnt up the Philistines’ deeds because the father-in-law gave his wife to his companion.

In other words, because of the deeds of the false teachers of Israel, the nation remained bound to the Law of Moses. This is the reason Christ came against their theology. He came to give grace, but Israel kept rejecting Him and His instruction.

Still in verse 6, the Philistines came up and burned Samson’s wife and her father with fire because of what Samson did. The Weakeners of Israel stood against Jesus and robbed Israel of any chance of being saved at that time.

It is clear, based on the words of Scripture, that there is a future for Israel the nation, but there has to be a way of showing that Israel, at Jesus’ time, was led astray and kept from Christ. This is symbolized by the act of burning the wife.

However, verse 7 then emphatically said, “And says to them, Samson, if (surely) doing according to this, when if I revenge in you, and after, I cease.” The difficult words were explained thus –

“And says to them, Samson:

Based on: if (surely) doing according to this

Therefore: when if I revenge in you,
Result: and after, I cease.”

Jesus came to accomplish His mission by uniting with Israel. The false teachers and false doctrine prevented that through their teachings, and therefore, He would carry out His planned program to act against them anyway, thus completing His mission.

One can sense this in Luke 9:51, “Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.” It is what is anticipated in the words of verse 8, “And strikes them leg upon thigh, slaughter whopping.”

Jesus, in His ministry, did a mighty work against the false teachings and false teachers of Israel, even if they prevented the nation from entering its rest. He continued until His mission was fully complete.

Still in verse 8 it said that Samson went down and dwelt in the cleft of Crag Etam. The name means the cleft of the Lofty Place of Ravenous Birds. That has to be understood from the words of our Text Verse today. The name is derived from *ayit*, a bird of prey. That verse from Isaiah was a prophecy of Cyrus who would release the captives of Israel, returning them to their land.

However, even into antiquity, the words were known to anticipate the work of the Messiah. The larger context says –

“Remember the former things of old,
For I *am* God, and *there is* no other;
I *am* God, and *there is* none like Me,
¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times *things* that are not *yet* done,
Saying, ‘My counsel shall stand,
And I will do all My pleasure,’
¹¹ Calling a bird of prey from the east,
The man who executes My counsel, from a far country.
Indeed I have spoken *it*;
I will also bring it to pass.
I have purposed *it*;
I will also do it.

¹² ‘Listen to Me, you stubborn-hearted,
Who *are* far from righteousness:
¹³ I bring My righteousness near, it shall not be far off;
My salvation shall not linger.
And I will place salvation in Zion,
For Israel My glory.’” Isaiah 46:9-13

As such, the cleft of the Crag of Etam anticipates the lofty counsels of God where Samson, the Word of God in Christ, dwells.

Next, in verse 9, it noted that the Philistines ascended, encamped in Judah, and dispersed in Lehi. Lehi means Jawbone. However, as Abarim noted, it cannot go unnoticed that someone who knows Hebrew and who looks at the name will see the words To Life (To as in Toward).

The Weakeners, the false teachers and their teachings, came against Judah, dispersing in To Life. When Judah asked why the Philistines had come against them, they said it was to bind Samson.

Think of the false teachers, the Judaizers, in Galatia! They wanted to bind the Word of God in Christ and teach law observance. It is the entire point of calling the council at Jerusalem in Acts 15.

Both during the time of Jesus’ ministry and afterward, even to this day, the same Weakeners infect and attempt to destroy the world of proper Christ-centered doctrine.

From there, in verse 11, three thousand men of Judah went to the cleft of the rock of Etam, the “lofty counsels of God,” to get Samson. When they came to him, they noted that the Philistines ruled over them. The Weakeners, those who teach law observance, are still pointing Israel to this false doctrine today.

His response was, “According to which done to me, thus done to them.” The false teachers work against the Word of God in Christ, stealing away the bride and burning her family. Therefore, the Word of God in Christ responds with a great slaughter against them. One can see the spiritual war raging in the world in these verses.

Next (verse 12), the men of Judah came down to arrest Samson and deliver him into the hand of the Philistines. Judah, for two thousand years, has been in this position. They

have handed the Word concerning Christ over to the false teachers, but they have not killed Him off completely. That is seen in the exchange –

“Then Samson said to them, ‘Swear to me that you will not kill me yourselves.’
¹³ So they spoke to him, saying, ‘No, but we will tie you securely and deliver you into their hand; but we will surely not kill you.’”

In the continuation of verse 13, it said, “And binds him in two ropes, new. And ascends him from the crag.” The word ropes, as explained, signifies something intertwined like a string, a wreath, a chain, etc. That comes from *avath*, to wind or weave. It is used just once, in a figurative sense –

“That they may successfully do evil with both hands—
The prince asks *for gifts*,
The judge *seeks* a bribe,
And the great *man* utters his evil desire;
So they scheme [*avath*] together.” Micah 7:3

The two cords represent the false teachings Judah accepted concerning the coming Messiah, meaning the verbal and written commandments that had arisen among the Jews in contradistinction to the word of God.

Such things were prophesied in Isaiah 29:13 and then referred to by Jesus in Matthew 15:8, 9. The word concerning Christ was bound. However, as twice before in the Samson narrative, it next said, “And surges, upon him, Spirit Yehovah.”

The Spirit of God is in the Word of God in Christ. When it is properly presented, it will prevail. Thus, it next said, “And becomes, the ropes, which upon his arms, according to the flax which burned in the fire. And melts, his bonds, from upon his hands.”

The effective reach of Christ to accomplish salvation (the arms), and the power and authority of Christ to effect that salvation (the hands), are completely loosed in rightly applying the Word of God.

When they are properly presented, they are wholly capable of defeating the enemy. As such, “And finds, jawbone donkey, fresh. And sends his hand. And takes her. And strikes, in her, thousand man.” Or stated typologically, “And finds, To Life Red One, Fresh.”

In the properly handled word concerning Christ, the Man (Red One) who gives Life (Jawbone) is revealed. This word is fully capable of destroying the false teachings of the false teachers. His victory over them as recorded in verse 16, says –

“And says, Place of Sun (the Word of God in Christ):
‘In To Life the Red One
Red One two Red Ones.
In To Life, the Red One,
Struck thousand man.’”

Through the Word of God in Christ (the incarnate Man) the doctrines of the false teachers are completely obliterated. Hooray for Jesus!

After that, it then said (verse 17), “And is, when he finished to speak, and casts the jawbone from his hand. And calls to place, it, Ramath Lehi.” In prevailing over the enemy, the To Life has served its purpose and never again needs to be wielded. But in memory of the event, the place is called Exalted To Life! It is an eternal memorial to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Again, hooray for Jesus!

With this accomplished, it noted Samson’s great thirst and his appeal to the Lord. He had gained the victory, but now would he fall into the hands of the foreskinned? Was Christ’s victory just a one-time salvation that had no lasting effects? No! The response is, “And cleaves, God, the hollow which in the Jawbone. And comes, from it, water.”

Not only did Christ prevail in His atonement for sin, but that caused God to send the Spirit for believers as well. This is why the narrative started with “in the time of the wheat harvest.” The thus narrative anticipates that time which begins around Pentecost, the time when the Spirit was first given in Acts 2.

God cleaved the mortar, a spot where grain could be ground to make bread. In cleaving it, water issued forth. It again speaks of the Word of God of Christ. Christ’s atonement was sufficient, He was raised to life, His spirit revived, and because of Him, the Spirit henceforth issues to those who believe, apart from works of the law.

One can see the symbolism of Christ, the Bread of Life, who was metaphorically crushed in the mortar. He then revived as the Spirit issued forth. That is seen in the words, “Upon thus, calls her name, ‘Fountain, the Caller,’ which in the To Life until the day, the this.”

The Fountain remains, issuing forth from the Fountain of the Caller, the Word of God in Christ –

“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” John 7:38

Verse 20 ended with, “And judges, Israel, in days Philistines, twenty year.” Twenty is the number of Expectancy. It said in Judges 13 that Samson would begin to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines. That will continue even until the time of David.

Samson is being used to show the process of Israel’s salvation from the Weakeners, though not the entire panorama of it. There is the expectancy of that in each part of the Samson narrative. This will be seen again at the end of Chapter 16.

The main lesson, once again, is that of law versus grace. The Philistines are the Weakeners, those who work against the message of salvation through the deeds of Christ alone. Instead, they teach personal merit through deeds. This is wholly contradictory to what God in Christ has done.

A choice is set before us, and it cannot be ignored. We must give up on self and trust solely in the merits of Jesus Christ, believing the gospel and accepting that it is sufficient for our salvation and its continued effects, right up until the day God calls us home.

Let us have this mind and glorify God for what He has done through Jesus. And it is the Word of God in Christ, represented by Samson, the Place of the Sun, that will lead us to understand these things. Pick up the Bible, and there you will find the Word. And in Him, you will find contentment and rest.

Closing Verse: *“And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’⁷ Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.” Galatians 4:6, 7*

Next Week: Judges 16:1-9 *This guy is number one. What a story to tell – like a slice of heaven.. (Samson, Judge of Israel, Part VII) (45th Judges Sermon)*

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Samson, Judge of Israel, Part VI

Then Samson said: "With the jawbone of a donkey
Heaps upon heaps of them
With the jawbone of a donkey
I have slain a thousand men!"

And so it was, when he had finished speaking, by and by
That he threw the jawbone from his hand, and called that place
-----Ramath Lehi

Then he became very thirsty
So he cried out to the LORD and said
"You have given this great deliverance by the hand of Your servant
And now shall I die of thirst and fall into the hand of the
-----uncircumcised and wind up dead?

So God split the hollow place that is in Lehi
And water came out, and he drank away
And his spirit returned, and he revived
Therefore he called its name En Hakkore, which is in Lehi
-----to this day

And he judged Israel years twenty
In the days of the Philistines, with enemies aplenty

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 16:1-9 (SAMSON, JUDGE OF ISRAEL, PART VII)

The sermon today reviews and explains the short passage comprised in Judges 16:1-3. After that, we will begin to look through the next account that deals with the she-devil Delilah.

The first section deals with the area of Gaza. Cambridge, in its comments on the first verse, says of Gaza, "As it lay at the meeting-point of the caravan-routes from Egypt and the Arabian desert, it was always an important centre; the kind of place where bad characters might be found."

Nothing has changed. The place has always been, and it continues to be, a place filled with bad characters. As for what Samson does when leaving Gaza, it almost sounds comical to us. Why would anyone pull up the entire entryway to the city and carry it away?

And yet, even outside of Scripture, such an event has great symbolic meaning. John Lange gives a nice description of it –

"Hence, in the East victorious princes have frequently literally carried away the gates of conquered cities. ... For the same reason, Almansor, when he took Compostella, caused the doors of the St. James' Church to be lifted out, and to be carried on the shoulders of Christians, to Cordova, in sign of his victory. ... The same idea presents itself in North-German legends, when giants are represented as carrying away churches from their places, in order to show their hostility against Christianity." John Lange

Thus, it is a common ancient custom representing victory and subjugation.

Text Verse: *"Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, ¹⁶and said: 'By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son — ¹⁷blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.'"*
-Genesis 22:15-17

Abraham was told he would possess the gates of his enemies. Samson literally possessed the gates of his enemies, hauling them away as a sign to the people of Gaza and to those who would later see them on a mountain facing Hebron.

With all of that might at his disposal, no wonder the next account has the Philistines looking to discover the secret of his strength. Anyone that strong would be a terrible foe to have around, ready to strike at his leisure.

And how else to woo a strong man than by a sultry, sensual, seductress who will lure him away from sound reason and clarity of thought? Once such a soul is in the mix, tragedy is sure to lie ahead.

It's a truth that is to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Doors of the Gate (verses 1-3)

Chapter 15 ended with words concerning Samson's time of judging Israel being "twenty years in the days of the Philistines." Remembering that, it next says...

¹ Now Samson went to Gaza

vayelekh Shimshon azatah – "And walked, Samson, Gaza-ward." Beginning this way means that the events concerning Samson continue to unfold as a narrative, but this is not necessarily chronological. As this is during the time of his twenty-year judgeship, it is not. Rather, it is categorical.

Gaza (Azah) is the chief of the five principal cities of the Philistines. It is also the most southerly of them. The change from Azah to Gaza is because of the pronunciation of the letter *ayin* at the beginning of the name. It has a strong sound towards the back of the throat.

From there, the Greek translates this hard *ayin* with the letter *gamma* in an attempt to closely reproduce the sound. With the *g* sound introduced, it has carried forward into our modern English name, Gaza. The name is a feminine form coming from *az*, strong. It signifies Strong or Strong Place.

No explanation is given concerning why he headed toward Gaza. It doesn't appear he went there looking for a lady of the night but on his way there...

1 (con't) and saw a harlot there,

vayar sham ishah zonah – “And saw there woman, prostituting.” The word is *zanah*, a verb often translated as a noun. It signifies to commit fornication. Thus, as in the narrative of Jephthah when referring to his mother, it refers to a harlot. But as a verb, it describes the act when referring to the person.

Unlike the account of Jephthah, however, I translate this in the verbal form rather than the noun because Samson is in the process of having her, as it next says...

1 (con't) and went in to her.

vayavo eleha – “and goes in unto her.” It is the normal idiom meaning that he had intimate relations with her. While so engaged...

² When the Gazites were told, “Samson has come here!”

The words seem elliptical, being incomplete: *la'azatim l'mor ba Shimshon henah* – “To the Gazites, to say, ‘Came, Samson, here.’” Normally, it would say something like, “And it was told to the Gazities...,” or “And the Gazites said...”

All the commentators I read, if they addressed the issue at all, believe a word has dropped out of the original. That seems hard to justify with something so obviously incomplete. Rather, I suggest that this is a continuation of the first clause of verse 1 and that the next two clauses were parenthetical –

“And walked, Samson, Gaza-ward, (And saw there woman, prostituting. And goes in unto her.) to the Gazites, to say, ‘Came, Samson, here.’”

Not wanting to be presumptuous and argue against scholarly opinion, while also wanting to include Sergio in another sermon, I asked if this was a possible translation. His response was, “Totally possible!! And would totally explain the difficult Hebrew insertion of that parenthesis paragraph.”

As will be seen, not only is it possible, but such a translation is also key to understanding what is going on. Samson has come to the area of Gaza. Therefore...

² (con't) **they surrounded *the place* and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city.**

vayasovu vayeervu lo kal halaylah b'shaar ha'ir – “And surrounded, and lay in wait to him all the night in gate the city.” John Lange says, [Judges 16:2. — וַיִּסְבּוּ: [and surrounded] the accusative (cf. Eccles. 9:14) object of this verb is to be disengaged from לו [to him], the object of the immediately following verb...]

It is for this reason that the translators inserted the words “the place.” Otherwise, the words “they surrounded” would have to be referring to Samson. But as the text read without the parenthesis, he has not been the subject and so he cannot now be the object.

However, with the translation properly rendered as I have (with the parenthesis), we see that they surrounded him, not a place, and waited within the gates of the city, hoping to trap him when he arose in the morning. In this state...

² (con't) **They were quiet all night, saying, “In the morning, when it is daylight, we will kill him.”**

The verb is reflexive: *vayitkharshu khal halaylah le'mor ad or ha'boqer v'harg'nuhu* – “And quieted themselves all the night, to say, ‘Until light the morning, and killed him.’” Instead of going in during the night to attack Samson, the Philistines quieted themselves, planning to take advantage of the safety of the light of day to attack.

However, Samson alerted them of his presence by boldly telling them that he had arrived and knew what to expect. As such, he had other plans...

³ **And Samson lay *low* till midnight;**

vayishkav Shimshon ad khatsi ha'laylah – “And lies, Samson, until half the night.” Despite commentaries that say something like, “because of his guilty conscience over his lewdness,” it appears that Samson arising when the night was half over was preplanned in order to do what he will next do. In other words, what is presented shows purposeful design to meet an intended goal. Therefore...

³ (con't) **then he arose at midnight, took hold of the doors of the gate of the city and the two gateposts, pulled them up, bar and all,**

vayaqum ba'khatsi ha'laylah vayeekhoz b'dalthoth shaar ha'ir u-bishte hamzuzoth vayisaem im habriakh – “And arises in half the night. And grasps in doors gate the city, and in two the posts, and removes them with the bar.” The words are detailed and specific.

First, the *deleth*, or door, is mentioned. The word comes from *dalah*, to draw water. Thus, they are something swinging like a pail when it is drawn up. From there, one sees the idea of the door swinging on its posts. The door is what provides access and egress to what is on the other side.

Next is the *shaar*, or gate. That comes from *shaar* meaning to calculate or reckon. That is used only once, in Proverbs 23:7 –

“For as he thinks [*shaar*] in his heart, so *is* he.
‘Eat and drink!’ he says to you,
But his heart is not with you.” Proverbs 23:7

The gate is for protecting those within. A gatekeeper is one who actively decides who to let in and who to keep out. He reckons in his heart and acts upon that. But the symbolism of the gate goes further. The text verse said, “and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.”

Because of Abraham’s faithfulness to God through his willingness to sacrifice Isaac, God promised him that he would have full authority over his enemies. To understand all this entails, several more verses will help explain the intent –

“So the field of Ephron which *was* in Machpelah, which *was* before Mamre, the field and the cave which *was* in it, and all the trees that *were* in the field, which *were* within all the surrounding borders, were deeded ¹⁸ to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city.” Genesis 23:17, 18

The gate of the city is where business is transacted. It is where land inheritances were exchanged, bought, sold, etc. All types of official commerce took place there. Abraham purchased the field of Ephron the Hittite and the transaction was recorded at the gate.

Thus, to possess the gate signified having full authority over all judicial matters and commerce conducted within the city. Samson is literally possessing the city gates by

pulling them up and carrying them away. All of Gaza's judicial authority and commerce thus implicitly now belongs to him.

The promise to Abraham is thus fulfilled against the Weakeners through Samson. And more...

"So they sent away Rebekah their sister and her nurse, and Abraham's servant and his men. ⁶⁰ And they blessed Rebekah and said to her:

'Our sister, *may you become*

The mother of thousands of ten thousands;

And may your descendants possess

The gates of those who hate them.'" Genesis 24:59, 60

The promise of Abraham went through his son Isaac, Rebekah became Isaac's wife, and so the words pronounced over Rebekah are fulfilled against the Weakeners through Samson.

"It came to pass in the month of Chislev, *in* the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the citadel, ² that Hanani one of my brethren came with men from Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped, who had survived the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. ³ And they said to me, 'The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province *are* there in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem *is* also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire.' ⁴ So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned *for many* days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven."

-Nehemiah 1:1-4

"And it came to pass in the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, *when* wine *was* before him, that I took the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had never been sad in his presence before. ² Therefore the king said to me, 'Why *is* your face sad, since you *are* not sick? This *is* nothing but sorrow of heart.' So I became dreadfully afraid, ³ and said to the king, 'May the king live forever! Why should my face not be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' tombs, *lies* waste, and its gates are burned with fire?'

⁴ Then the king said to me, 'What do you request?'" Nehemiah 2:1-4

The wall of the city is for protection, as are the gates. But the gates are also the parts of the wall that carry the importance for the matters already mentioned. It is why

Nehemiah focused on the gates when he went before the king. Having walls around a city without gates would be pointless.

“Blessed *are* those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. ¹⁵ But outside *are* dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.” Revelation 21:14, 15

The gates keep out miscreants and allow in those with the rights and privileges granted by the ruler of the city.

Next are *hamzuzoth*, “the posts.” The *mezuzah*, post, comes from the same source as the word *ziz*, or “moving things.” That word is seen only three times.

In Psalm 50 and Psalm 80 it describe beasts moving in the field. In Isaiah 66:11 it refers to the bosom of a woman. Thus, it speaks of that which is conspicuous, and thus prominent. The prominent nature of the city is removed by Samson, leaving it a city essentially without a soul.

Last is noted the *beriakh*, or bar. That is derived from *barakh*, to pass through or flee. In this case, the bar passes through holders on doors to secure them. These then indicate the final layer of defense before a city is completely breached.

These actions by Samson were his design and intention from the start. What he has done is an act resulting in extreme humiliation of the enemy. Everything symbolically associated with the gate, meaning the doors of the gate, the gateposts, and the bar are removed, demonstrating absolute authority over Gaza.

As for the word translated as “removes them,” *nasa*, it is used when setting out on a journey, departing, etc. To get the sense –

“So Israel took his journey [*nasa*] with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.” Genesis 46:1

Hence, just as NASA removes [*nasa*] men into space for a journey by breaking their earthly bonds, Samson removed [*nasa*] the doors, posts, and bar of the gate for a journey, breaking the civic, judicial, cultural, and national strength of the Philistines. After that, he...

³ (con't) **put *them* on his shoulders,**

vayasem al k'thephav – “And sets upon his shoulders.” Samson took this massive set of doors, posts, and bar and placed it upon his shoulders.

The word is *katheph*, coming from an unused root meaning to clothe. It is the place where garments hang from, and thus that which supports and bears a burden and responsibility. That is seen, for example, in Exodus 28 –

“And you shall put the two stones on the shoulders [*katheph*] of the ephod as memorial stones for the sons of Israel. So Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD on his two shoulders [*katheph*] as a memorial.” Exodus 28:12

³ (con't) **and carried them to the top of the hill that faces Hebron.**

vayaalem el rosh ha'har asher al p'ne khevron – “and ascends them unto top the mount which upon faces Hebron.” With this burden on his shoulders, Samson carried the gates to the mount (not the hill) facing Hebron.

As has been seen, a mountain is a lot of something gathered. It is synonymous with a large but centralized group of people. Hebron means Alliance. With these words, this short narrative is complete.

*Who has the strength to continue the task
That God in Christ has begun?
In the light of what authority can we bask?
Except in the work of God's own Son*

*Who has the strength, power, and might
To be victorious in this great task?
What is it that will make things right?
And in the light of whose greatness can we bask?*

*Who is allied with the One sent by God?
And who will faithfully take up the task?
In what power and authority will he trod?
And in the light of whose strength will he bask?*

II. The Typology Explained

These three verses are dependent on what happened in Chapter 15. Samson prevailed over the Philistines with the jawbone. After that, he was hugely thirsty. At that time, it was asked, “Was Christ’s victory just a one-time salvation that had no lasting effects?”

The answer was a resounding No. As noted, “Not only did Christ prevail in His atonement for sin, but God caused that to bring about the Spirit for believers as well.” To demonstrate that Christ’s victory was fully sufficient, we are given these verses.

Samson, Place of the Sun (the Word of God in Christ), is said to have headed towards Gaza, Strong or Strong Place. Because it is a city of the Philistines, the Weakensers, it reflects something that is strongly opposed to the message of God in Christ. It is what is reflected in Paul’s words of 2 Corinthians 10 –

“For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, ⁶ and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.” 2 Corinthians 10:4-6

The Philistines, Weakensers, anticipate those who weaken others spiritually through the use of law. The mission of Samson (Place of the Sun and thus the word of God in Christ) was to destroy those who afflict Israel. It is through the word that Jesus is revealed.

Thus, in rightly using the word, the power of God in Christ is appropriated. He is the One to defeat those who spiritually afflict the people of God. He is demonstrating that He fully has this ability.

In going to Gaza, Samson next saw a harlot there. It is the same typology as seen in the Jephthah series. It refers to Israel in her state of national apostasy, prostituting herself –

“The LORD said also to me in the days of Josiah the king: “Have you seen what backsliding Israel has done? She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot [*zanah*]. ⁷ And I said, after she had done all these *things*, ‘Return to Me.’ But she did not return. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. ⁸ Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot [*zanah*] also.” Jeremiah 3:6-8

Samson going into her anticipates the word of God in Christ going into this disobedient people. He has openly announced that He has come and that the word is where the power lies because it speaks of Him. While in Gaza, an ambush is set for Samson with the intent of killing him in the morning.

However, Samson, intent on proving he was victorious over the Philistines (the Weakeners) in their strong place, rose in the middle of the night and removed their means of access, their protection, and their authority to conduct civil or judicial matters and commerce.

In essence, this looks to Christ, who has completely removed the state, the ability, the authority, etc., of Weakeners to afflict God's people through law observance. The promise to Abraham was one based upon his faith. He lived by faith and received the promise because of faith. His deeds were not of law but of faith –

“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten *son*, ¹⁸ of whom it was said, ‘In Isaac your seed shall be called,’ ¹⁹ concluding that God *was* able to raise *him* up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.”

-Hebrews 11:17-19

The promise is fully realized in Christ for those who are of faith. Everything about the implements of that gate is seen in this act of Samson lifting them up, placing them on his shoulders, and carrying them away.

The entire burden is on Christ, the place of the word of God. Samson carried them to the top of the *har*, the mount signifying a large but centralized group of people that faced Alliance. This location, as in previous sermons, looks to the relationship established between Christ and His people because of His work.

In other words, the account is recorded to show that the work of God in Christ, recorded in the word, is our authority over the Weakeners. It is faith in Christ and His completed work, not works of the law, that prevails.

The doors, posts, and bars of the gates of the stronghold are defeated in Christ for those who will use his power, symbolized by Him placing them before Hebron – the Alliance of God in Christ with His people.

*Eleven hundred of silver from each
A great payday, if Samson I can defeat
I know I can do it, he is such a peach
He will cave, and his strength we will unseat*

*And who wouldn't do it? That I ask
All that loot just waiting to take
Only a fool would turn down this task
When all that money is at stake*

*I'll do it! I'll weaken his resolve
And you'll get your answer on that day
The mystery of his strength I will solve
And then, buddy boys, it's time for you to pay*

III. Where Your Great Strength Lies (verses 4-9)

Now that the short insert of Samson's exploits in Gaza is complete, the narrative turns to another story involving another woman. She is one of the most notorious females seen in Scripture. Let's find out what the story of this femme fatale has to say...

⁴Afterward it happened that he loved a woman in the Valley of Sorek,

v'hi akhare ken vayeeshav ishah b'nakhal soreq – “And is, after thus, and loves woman in Valley Sorek.” The first thing of note is that the words never say this woman is a Philistine. Rather, regardless of her ancestry, the Philistines use her to come against Samson.

The Valley of Sorek is accepted to be a broad valley that narrows as it rises towards the hills of Judah. The word *nakhal*, valley, comes from the verb *nakhal*, to take as a possession. Thus, it speaks of inheritance.

The name Sorek means Choice Vine. It is derived from *soreq*, a choice species of vine. Strong's says it yields purple grapes, which are the richest variety. Of this woman, it says...

⁴ (con't) whose name was Delilah.

ushmah d'lilah – “and her name Delilah.” The meaning of Delilah is debated. It could be from *dal*, weak or languid. Young’s says, Languishing.

Lange takes the idea of that word and makes it active, thus giving the sense of Debilitator, though he doesn’t specifically use that word. Sergio assumes Water Down Woman, deriving that from a root meaning to thin out or water down.

Abarim provides Hangar or Vertical Transporter, basing that on the same root as door, *dalah*, to draw water. Using this same root, I would call her Drawer, as in Drawer Out. That is based on the words of the Proverb –

Counsel in the heart of man *is like* deep water,
But a man of understanding will draw it out [*dalah*].” Proverbs 20:5

This is exactly what this venomous vixen will do to Samson...

⁵ And the lords of the Philistines came up to her

vayaalu eleha sarne plishtim – “And ascended unto her, lords Philistines.” The word translated as lords, *seren*, signifies a lord, but also an axle. Hence, the word may indicate that the lord is the central point upon which the city turns.

It is always used in relation to the lords of the Philistines, with one exception when it describes the bronze axles of the carts in Solomon’s Temple. These would probably be the five lords of the Philistines mentioned in Judges 3:3.

As for Philistine, it comes from *palash*, signifying to roll in the dust as an act of mourning. They are the Grievors or Weakeners. They are here to weaken Samson...

^{5 (con’t)} and said to her, “Entice him, and find out where his great strength *lies*, and by what *means* we may overpower him, that we may bind him to afflict him;

vayomru lah pati otho ur’i bameh kokho gadol u-vameh nukhal lo vaasarnuhu l’anotho – “And say to her, ‘Allure him, seeing in what his strength, great, and in what ables to him. And bound him to afflict him.’” From these words, it could be inferred that Samson wasn’t an exceptionally whopping guy. If he was, such great strength would seem more apparent.

However, they know he possesses this strength, and it is unnatural. Therefore, there must be some secret beyond himself that provides him with this strength. They want to know what it is so that they can disable it in order to bind and afflict him.

As for the word translated as allure, it is *pathah*. It is the same word used in Judges 14:15 when the Philistines tried to get his betrothed wife to reveal the secret of his riddle.

It signifies to be spacious, wide, or open. In this sense, one can see the intent. She is to make herself roomy in a moral sense, opening herself in an attempt to allure him into giving up the riddle of his strength. The sense of the words is “open to him.”

⁵ (con't) **and every one of us will give you eleven hundred *pieces* of silver.”**

va'anakhnu nitan lakh ish eleph u-meah keseph – “And we giving to you, man, thousand and hundred silver.” The meaning is that each lord would give this amount to Delilah, thus totaling fifty-five hundred pieces of silver. If so, it is an incredible amount of money.

However, the number is given as eleven hundred, is a multiple of 10 and 11. Bullinger says ten is the number of “Completeness of order, marking the entire round of anything, is, therefore, the ever-present signification of the number ten. It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete.”

Eleven is the number that marks “disorder, disorganization, imperfection, and disintegration.”

Silver signifies redemption.

⁶ **So Delilah said to Samson, “Please tell me where your great strength *lies*, and with what you may be bound to afflict you.”**

vatomer d'lilah el Shimshon hagidah na li bameh kokhakha gadol u-bameh teaser l'anothekha – “And says, Delilah, unto Samson, ‘Declaring, I pray, to me, in what your strength great, and in what binding to afflict you?’” The words appear direct and obvious to us, as if he would be a fool to answer them.

However, with the right inflection and intonation, they could be taken as admiring. Think of the girl whose boyfriend has the fastest car in town. She gets paid to find out what makes it so fast and so she whittles away at him.

“How does your car run so fast? If I had my own car, how could I beat you?” All the while, she is coaxing him along as women do. He would never suspect that she meant him harm. The account is perfectly plausible.

In response to this first inquiry, he decides to hold his tongue from telling the secret...

⁷ And Samson said to her, “If they bind me with seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried, then I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man.”

vayomer eleha Shimshon im yaasruni b’shivah y’tharim lakhim asher lo horavu v’khalithi v’hayithi k’ekhad ha’adam – “And says unto her, Samson, ‘If binding me in seven cords, fresh, which not dried, and weakened, and became according to one the man.’”

Samson makes up a tale that hides the secret and yet also reveals it in an unexpected way. Seven is the number of spiritual perfection. The *yether* is a cord that hangs free, coming from *yathar*, to remain over. For example, if there is a feast and it’s not all eaten, that is the remaining. Thus, it can signify excess, abounding, or even preeminence.

The word fresh, *lakh*, signifies green or moist. For example –

“And all the trees of the field shall know that I, the LORD, have brought down the high tree and exalted the low tree, dried up the green [*lakh*] tree and made the dry tree flourish; I, the LORD, have spoken and have done *it*.” Ezekiel 17:24

The verb dried, *kharav*, comes from *khorev*, dry. That word was used concerning the dry ground around Gideon’s fleece or the dried fleece surrounded by ground with dew.

Samson tells her that if these things are done, he will be weakened and “according to one the man [*ha’adam*].” The meaning is that he will be like any other man.

⁸ So the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried, and she bound him with them.

It takes the exact same words from the previous verse, simply rearranging them accordingly: *vayaalu lah sarne plishtim shivah y'tharim lakhim asher lo khoravu vataasrehu bahem* – “And ascend to her, lords Philistines, seven cords, fresh, which not dried. And binds him in them.”

She didn't get the things and try them out. Rather, the Philistines brought the articles, exactly as she specified. She then used them to do what he said, binding him in them. With that accomplished...

⁹ Now *men* were lying in wait, staying with her in the room. And she said to him, “The Philistines *are* upon you, Samson!”

v'ha'orev yoshev lah bakheder vatomer elav plishtim alekha Shimshon – “And the lying-in-wait sitting to her in the chamber. And says unto him, ‘Philistines upon you, Samson.’” The verb *arav*, to lie in wait, is used. It comes from a primitive root signifying to lurk.

The Philistines are lurking, waiting for their chance to overcome Samson. If he was asleep and she did the tying, there is no reason to assume that Samson believed the Philistines were there.

Think back to the previous example, the girl is told by her boyfriend that his car is so fast as long as it has only 89 octane gas. And so when she puts in 87 octane and it still runs just as fast, she could say, “I was just testing. Why'd you lie to me?” He wouldn't have any idea that she was getting paid by someone else.

Likewise, with the right smooth-talking, Samson wouldn't have a clue that she really intended him harm. And so, with the ambush out of sight, and with Samson all tied, she made her actions known, supposedly only pretending to have the Philistines at hand...

^{9 (con't)} But he broke the bowstrings as a strand of yarn breaks when it touches fire.

vaynateq eth haytharim kaasher yinatheq p'thil hanoreth baharikho esh – “And tears the cords according to tearing thread the fiber in his breath, fire.” Here is a new and rare word, *neoreth*. It signifies tow, or fiber, for making thread. It comes from *naar*, to shake off or out. Thus, it is fiber that is shaken out, as in the refuse of flax. When fire is brought near to it, it practically dissolves in an instant. Such was Samson's strength...

^{9 (fin)} So the secret of his strength was not known.

v'lo noda kokho – “And not known his strength.” Despite giving clues for us to search out what is going on, Delilah is left without realizing her hopes for big money. Likewise, Samson’s source of strength remains unknown to her, and he is just as he was.

The words leave us in suspense as to what lies ahead, but it is a good place to finish for now. For each person who is listening, I hope you know the true Source of strength in a world of calamity and death.

It is found in Jesus. We are in a pickle because we are in mortal bodies that are destined to weaken over the years and eventually face death. Unless we go straight to the death part, the process is inevitable. We are living in bodies of weakness and corruption, but in Christ, there is a resolution to this dilemma –

“For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.” Romans 5:6-9

For those in Christ, whatever happens to these mortal bodies, even if it is unpleasant in the process of life, we have a way better hope ahead. I trust that you will be wise and receive the gift of God, which is given through receiving His Son.

In Him is eternal strength and everlasting life. So be wise and discerning and call out to Him today.

Closing Verse: *“It is God who arms me with strength,
And makes my way perfect.” Psalm 18:32*

Next Week: Judges 16:10-22 *Monkeys in a barrel fun. Yes, really swell, even super great...* (Samson, Judge of Israel, Part VIII) (46th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Samson, Judge of Israel, Part VII

Now Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there
And went in to her... Watch out Samson, better beware!

When the Gazites were told, "Samson has come here!"
They surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night
-----at the gate of the city
They were quiet all night, saying
"In the morning, when it is daylight, we will kill him, we
-----the Samson killing committee

And Samson lay low till midnight; then he arose at midnight
Took hold of the doors of the gate of the city and the gateposts, two
Pulled them up, bar and all, put them on his shoulders
And carried them to the top of the hill that faces Hebron
-----a huge feat, I'm telling you

Afterward it happened that he loved a woman
In the Valley of Sorek
Whose name was Delilah
Look out Samson, she will cost you, like a bad check

And the lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her
"Entice him, and find out where his great strength lies
And by what means we may overpower him
That we may bind him to afflict him... watch him agonize

And every one of us will give you
Eleven hundred pieces of silver, so we shall do

So Delilah said to Samson, "Please tell me where
-----your great strength lies
And with what you may be bound to afflict you, please apprise

And Samson said to her
"If they bind me with seven fresh bowstrings, if they can
Not yet dried, then I shall become weak
And be like any other man

So the lords of the Philistines
Brought up to her (that fatale femme)
Seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried
And she bound him with them

Now men were lying in wait, staying with her in the room
And she said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!
But he broke the bowstrings as a strand of yarn breaks
-----when it touches fire
So the secret of his strength was not known (tee hee, so fun)

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 16:10-22 (SAMSON, JUDGE OF ISRAEL, PART VIII)

The Hebrew in the passage that we will look at today has some interesting nuances. In one verse, it will take more time to explain what is being said in just a few words of the text than might seem necessary, but little variations in how something is considered or concerning its translation can make a world of difference in what is ultimately being pictured.

Because of that, care towards the intent of what is being presented needs to be given. Despite this, however, there are some great life lessons that can be drawn out from a casual reading. For example, Matthew Henry says –

“Samson had been more than once brought into mischief and danger by the love of women, yet he would not take warning, but is again taken in the same snare, and this third time is fatal. Licentiousness is one of the things that take away the heart. This is a deep pit into which many have fallen; but from which few have escaped, and those by a miracle of mercy, with the loss of reputation and usefulness, of almost all, except their souls. The anguish of the suffering is ten thousand times greater than all the pleasures of the sin.” Matthew Henry

As I read his thoughts, Donald Trump and Stormy Daniels immediately came to mind. Regardless of what actually happened between the two, they have both spent an inordinate amount of time and money trying to get past it.

In fact, they are still trying to put it behind them, and it will probably hound one or both of them for years to come. The same is true with innumerable politicians, pastors, and plumbers throughout the years. They are in jobs intended to help others with their problems, and yet many end up flushing their families, finances, and careers right down the drain.

Text Verse: *“And it shall be that the elders of the city nearest to the slain man will take a heifer which has not been worked and which has not pulled with a yoke.”*

-Deuteronomy 21:3

It may seem like an odd text verse for evaluating the life of Samson, or for a moral lesson about making bad choices, but it’s not really. Someone had to kill the person who lay

slain in the field. And the person in the field may have done something to deserve getting whacked.

Consequences will arise from such things. At the same time, a heifer that has never been worked is specified for the atonement process being explained in Deuteronomy 21.

Likewise, Samson said that if he is bound in ropes that were never used for work, he would be like any other man. Even though he wasn't telling the truth, there is a reason he said this. In Scripture, concepts build upon other concepts. Similarly, one story will, at times, be used to explain things going on in other stories.

We should pay heed to the subtleties. They can give us marvelous insights into what is going on in any given passage. For now, let us get into evaluating the verses. Great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. How Can You Say, 'I Love You?' (verses 10-14)

In the previous sermon, the Philistines came to Delilah and asked her to allure Samson in an attempt to find out where his great strength lies. He gave her a false answer. When she tried it, her attempt failed. With that remembered, the account now provides her response to his deception...

¹⁰ Then Delilah said to Samson, "Look, you have mocked me and told me lies.

vatomer d'lilah el Shimshon hineh hethalta bi vatdaber elay k'zavim – "And says, Delilah, unto Samson, 'Behold, deceived in me and speaking unto me lies.'" It is apparent that the Philistines lords' presence was not made known to him.

Rather, Delilah bound him and made it look like she was pretending. When he broke the cords, she playfully came back with her pitiful response. "Oh poor me. You're just making fun of me with your lies." He would have thought playing a trick on the object of his affection was a fun thing to do.

Despite this, she tries again...

^{10 (con't)} Now, please tell me what you may be bound with."

atah hagidah na li bameh teaser – “Now declaring, I pray, to me, in what binding?” This is probably after a period of time, be it the next day or a few days later. He broke the bonds, and she probably said something like, “Oh, you... such a bad boy.”

Later, she acted offended. Then after revealing how her poor heart was broken over the deception, she asked again what made him so strong. And so, once again, he has a bit of fun with her...

¹¹ So he said to her, “If they bind me securely with new ropes that have never been used, then I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man.”

vayomer eleha im asor yaasruni baavothim khadashim asher lo naasah bahem m'lakha v'khalithi v'haythi k'akhad ha'adam – “And says, unto her, ‘If binding they bind me in ropes new, which not worked in them, and weakened, and became according to one the man.’” Samson responds with an obvious lie because in Judges 15, we read this, using the same word for rope, *avoth*, as here –

“So they spoke to him, saying, ‘No, but we will tie you securely and deliver you into their hand; but we will surely not kill you.’ And they bound him with two new ropes [*avoth*] and brought him up from the rock.

¹⁴ When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting against him. Then the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him; and the ropes [*avoth*] that *were* on his arms became like flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds broke loose from his hands.” Judges 15:13, 14

It didn’t work with the men of Judah. Thus, we can be confident of the outcome here as well...

¹² Therefore Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them, and said to him, “The Philistines *are* upon you, Samson!”

vatiqah d'lilah avotim khadashim vataasrehu bahem vatomer elav plishtim alekha Shimshon – “And takes, Delilah, ropes new, and binds him in them. And says unto him, ‘Philistines upon you, Samson.’” Following his instructions exactly, she binds him with the new ropes, hoping she will chance to cash in on the big money. With him securely bound, she lets out her cry of hoped-for riches...

¹² (con’t) **And *men* were lying in wait, staying in the room.**

v'ha'orev yoshev bekhader – “And the lying-in-wait sitting in the chamber.” The same word, the verb *arav*, that was used in verse 9, is used again. It comes from a primitive root signifying to lurk. The Philistines were lurking, waiting for a chance to overcome Samson...

¹² (con't) **But he broke them off his arms like a thread.**

vaynatqem meal zerootav kakhut – “And tears them from upon his arms according to the thread.” The unworked cords became like mere thread. The word is *khut*, the same word used when Rahab was told to tie a scarlet thread in her window. It is a thread also used to indicate a measuring line, such as in 1 Kings 7:5.

Samson once again kept Delilah from knowing the source of his strength, but the account has been giving us clues concerning it in the process. As for the viperous vixen...

¹³ **Delilah said to Samson, “Until now you have mocked me and told me lies. Tell me what you may be bound with.”**

vatomer d'lilah el Shimshon ad henah hethalta bi vatdaber elay k'zavim hagidah li bameh teaser – “And says, Delilah, unto Samson, ‘Until here deceived in me and speaks unto me lies. Declaring, her, to me in what binding.’” The deceitful dragon again plays the offended party.

This is probably on a later date. At the time he broke the bonds, she may have laughed or snorted at him as if it was a joke. But later she pretends like she has thought about it and is offended that he wouldn't trust her with his secret. And again, Samson sees it as funny enough to spin another yarn...

¹³ (con't) **And he said to her, “If you weave the seven locks of my head into the web of the loom” —**

His words form an ellipsis: *vayomer eleha im taargi eth sheva makhl'photo roshi im ha'masakheth* – “And says unto her, ‘If weaves seven locks my head with the warp.’” Samson's words get closer to the source of his strength but still without revealing it.

The word *arag* signifies to weave. It can be literal but still used in a metaphorical way, such as in Isaiah 59 –

“No one calls for justice,
Nor does *any* plead for truth.
They trust in empty words and speak lies;
They conceive evil and bring forth iniquity.
⁵They hatch vipers’ eggs and weave [*arag*] the spider’s web;
He who eats of their eggs dies,
And *from* that which is crushed a viper breaks out.” Isaiah 59:4, 5

Also, there are two new words used here. The first is *makhalaphah*, a ringlet of hair and thus a lock. It is derived from *khalaph*, to pass away or pass through. The idea is that locks glide over one another, forming a full head of hair.

The next new word is *masseketh*, the warp of a loom. It is derived from *nasak*, to weave. This root is found only in Isaiah 25 –

“And He will destroy on this mountain
The surface of the covering cast over all people,
And the veil that is spread [*nasak*] over all nations.
⁸He will swallow up death forever,
And the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces;
The rebuke of His people
He will take away from all the earth;
For the LORD has spoken.” Isaiah 25:7, 8

Leaving the sentence elliptical, Samson tells her that if she weaves his hair in the loom, she will receive the desired result. The reason for the ellipsis is simple enough. He is in her home and she obviously had a loom. He would have simply nodded in the direction of it as he spoke. The rest would be perfectly understood by her.

As for the number, seven is the number of spiritual perfection. What seems likely is that Samson had purposefully plaited his hair into seven locks, somewhat like Viking braids. It is these seven locks that he is referring to.

Also, as a side note, the Greek translation completes the thought, thus removing the ellipsis. Hence, some translations include the words of that text – “If thou shouldst weave the seven locks of my head with the web, and shouldst fasten them with the pin into the wall, then shall I be weak as another man.”

This is unnecessary, but the Greek adds it because of what is in the next verse...

¹⁴ So she wove *it* tightly with the batten of the loom,

The Hebrew is way less descriptive: *vatitqa bayated* – “And blasts in the peg.” The words essentially say the same thing as when Jael killed Sisera. There, it said *vatitqa eth ha’yathed*, “and blasts the peg.” There, Jael took a tent peg and blasted through the temple of Sisera, pinning his head to the ground.

Here, however, Delilah, the traitorous temptress, blasted the peg while weaving. The debate on what this means is long, and there is no firm resolution. I lean towards the words of the Pulpit Commentary that this refers to the weaver’s shuttle. Others completely disagree.

But this is what Delilah was told to do, which is to use his hair as the woof and weave it into the warp that was preset in her loom. Thus, she affixes his locks to the shuttle, here called a peg, and blasts it through the warp to form a mesh. Once her task was complete...

¹⁴ (con’t) and said to him, “The Philistines *are* upon you, Samson!” But he awoke from his sleep, and pulled out the batten and the web from the loom.

vatomer elav p’listim alekha Shimshon vayiqats mishnatho vayisa eth haythad ha’ereg v’eth hamasakhet – “And says unto him, ‘Philistines upon you, Samson.’ And awakens from his sleep, and pulls up the peg, the loom, and the warp.”

Here is another rare word, *ereg*. It comes from *arag*, the word used which indicates to weave. It is used only one more time, in Job 7:6. Most translations say, “weaver’s shuttle,” implying the speed of the shuttle in a loom. That may or may not be correct. It may simply refer to the loom itself. If so, then the verse would read –

“My days receded from a loom.” The meaning would then be “My days receded faster than the speed of a loom.” Therefore, the words are describing what happened when Samson arose from his sleep. The loom was sitting on the ground, his hair was woven into the warp, and the peg was still in the loom. In rising, he pulled all of this up and out. The whole shebang fell apart from the force of his rising.

What is it that will bind you?

And where is it that the source of your strength lies?

How are you able such great things to do?

Won’t you tell me? Please apprise!

*There must be something behind your great power
I would like to know what keeps you so strong
A person could get tired just observing you, hour by hour
And who could keep it up all day long?*

*I long for the strength you possess
Tell me your secret so I know it too
How I wish you'd confide, this I confess
Is this strength that the Lord has given to you?*

II. He Has Told Me All His Heart (verses 15-22)

¹⁵ Then she said to him, “How can you say, ‘I love you,’ when your heart is not with me?”

vatomer elav ekh tomar ahavtikh v'libkha ein iti – “And says, unto him, ‘How saying, “I love you,” and your heart not with me?’” This is not unlike what he has already faced. In Chapter 14, his Philistine wife accused him of hating, not loving, her. Delilah questions his love and notes that his heart isn't geared toward her. How can he love her if he keeps telling her untruths...

¹⁵ (con't) You have mocked me these three times, and have not told me where your great strength lies.”

zeh shalosh p'amim hethalta bi v'lo higadta li bameh kokhakha gadol – “This three beats deceived in me, and not declared to me in what your strength, great.” Like three beats on an anvil as it is being used to pound out metal, Samson has steadily refused to allow Delilah to be united to him. Instead, he has deceived her each time.

Three signifies Divine Perfection. Expanding on that, Bullinger says –

“The number three, therefore, must be taken as the number of Divine fulness. It signifies and represents the Holy Spirit as taking of the things of Christ and making them real and solid in our experience. It is only by the Spirit that we realise spiritual things. Without Him and His gracious operation, all is surface work: all is what a plane figure is to a solid.”

¹⁶ And it came to pass, when she pestered him daily with her words and pressed him, so that his soul was vexed to death,

v'hi ki hetsiqah lo bidvarekha kal hayamim vatalatsehu vatiqtsar naphsho lamuth – “And is when compressed to him in her words all the days, and presses, and reaps his soul to death.” The words here confirm that the three instances so far were spread over a period of time. She continues with her incessant moaning about not being privileged enough to know his secret.

There is a word found only here in Scripture as well, *alats*. It signifies to urge or press, coming from a primitive root meaning to press. She compressed him with her words and she pressed him with her insinuations.

She kept nagging him while probably cooking him some pretty swell meals and telling him all the stories of her life. Each time she did something nice for him, she would remind him that he was not reciprocating. Also, the word *qatsar* is used. It signifies to curtail or shorten and is often used to indicate reaping.

It is the same word used to describe the Lord's attitude towards Israel as they worked to be harmoniously in line with Him in Judges 10 –

“So they put away the foreign gods from among them and served the LORD.
And His soul could no longer endure the misery of Israel.” Judges 10:16

There, it literally says, “And reaped His soul in toil Israel.” They ingratiated themselves to Him by repenting of their ways and serving Him. Eventually, His soul was reaped through their pleas.

The same tactic is used here by Delilah, finally bringing Samson to the point where he can't stand it any longer, and a state of uxoriousness takes over. He was finally overcome so...

¹⁷ that he told her all his heart,

vayaged lah eth kal libo – “And declares to her all his heart.” In the Bible, the heart is not the seat of emotion. Rather, it is the seat of reasoning and understanding. He was so drained from her tactics that he reasoned she could be no threat at all to him.

Unlike the previous times when she had attempted to remove his source of strength, he must have thought, “This is a permanent change. I've opened my heart to her because she is so desirous to know, so she would never even contemplate really cutting my hair.”

Such a notion is unthinkable to him. But Calmet rightly states, “The weakness of Samson’s heart in the whole of this history, is yet more astonishing than the strength of his body.” And so, letting his seat of reasoning slip, he told her all he knew...

¹⁷ (con’t) **and said to her, “No razor has ever come upon my head, for I *have been* a Nazirite to God from my mother’s womb.**

vayomer lah morah lo alah al roshi ki n’zir elohim ani mibeten imi – “And says to her, ‘Razor not ascended upon my head, for Nazirite God, I, from womb my mother.’” Here is the second of three uses of *morah*, razor, in the Bible.

Two uses are in relation to Samson and one is at the announcement of the coming birth of Samuel. It is derived from *mur*, to change or exchange. The connection is that when one uses a razor, there is a change in appearance.

As for what changes in the use of a razor, it is the removal of hair. Hair in the Bible signifies awareness, but in particular it speaks of the awareness of sin. As sin comes through a violation of the law, it is the law itself that introduces and brings about the imputation of sin. Samson is about to give away this important information...

¹⁷ (con’t) **If I am shaven, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man.”**

im gulakhti v’sar mimeni khokhi v’khalithi v’khayithi k’kal ha’adam – “If shaved, and departs from me my strength. And weakened, and became according to all the man.” His power is not in his hair. It is in the connection to God that is upon him. The hair is the sign of this covenant between the two. In cutting his hair, he will bear the appearance of all men, stained with sin. Thus, he will be “according to all the man [*ha’adam*].”

¹⁸ **When Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, “Come up once more, for he has told me all his heart.”**

vatere d’lilah ki higid lah eth kal libo vatishlakh vatiqra l’sarne p’lishtim l’mor alu ha’paam ki higid lah eth qal libo – “And sees, Delilah, that declared to her all his heart. And sends, and calls to lords Philistines to say, ‘Ascending the beat,’ (for declared to her all his heart).” It is apparent that she is absolutely certain he is telling the truth.

The third time he fooled her, it never mentioned those Philistine lords lying in wait. They may have been there, but the account doesn't mention them, implying that she didn't call them. However, Samson has brought God into his words, and his sincerity is otherwise evident.

Before she takes any action, however, she wants to be sure the money is there when Samson is subdued.

18 (con't) So the lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought the money in their hand.

v'alu eleha sarne p'lishtim vayaalu ha'keseph b'yadam – “And ascend unto her, lords Philistines, and ascend the silver in their hand.” This is the eleven hundred per man of silver promised in verse 5. She waited for them to bring the money up first. With them at hand, along with the promised silver...

19 Then she lulled him to sleep on her knees,

It is an unnecessary paraphrase. The words are much simpler: *vatyashnehu al birkeha* – “And sleeps him upon her knees.” Using her as his personal pillow, Samson goes off to la la land. Once he was out, it then says...

19 (con't) and called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his head.

Though this is possible, I think it is an unlikely translation: *vatiqra laish vatgalakh eth sheva makhl'photh rosho* – “And calls to the man, and shaves (fem. sing.) seven locks his head.” The question is, “Who is the man?” No additional person has been identified and yet it uses the definite article. It isn't “a man,” but “the man.”

The meaning is one of three things. The first option, which I affirm but no translation or scholar agrees with, is that she called to Samson. He is both the nearest antecedent and subsequent in the account. Thus, she is determining if he is still awake, “Samson, oooh deary Samson, are you up?”

The text, not Delilah, calls him “the man.” Thus, it cannot be said that she has changed wording. Rather, it is how the narrative is preparing for a change in circumstances. He has repeatedly said that if his power was taken from him, he would be like any other man (*ha'adam*).

The text appears to be showing that he is a man, even if not like every other man, but that is about to change. Grasping the overall context makes the odd verbiage of this verse understandable. Therefore, after calling to him and getting no response, she shaves his head.

The same form of verb is used in the first clause, “And sleeps him” as is used here “and shaves him.” It is indisputable that she is the one who put him to sleep on her knees. It is she who calls to the man. It is she who will afflict him in the coming clause as well. It makes no sense to say that someone else shaves him.

For example, Lange agrees with the verb of her shaving. But he then has to wonder why a man is called. And so, he gives an excuse as to why he would be there –

“... ‘and she shaved.’ The piel [verb form] is not causative here; ... Delilah calls on him, in order to have somebody near to defend her should Samson wake during the shearing process.” John Lange

In this, he has to insert something that is not in the text to make the wording make sense. To me, it only makes the narrative more complicated.

A second option, however, is that she may have called to a Philistine and made the scissor sign with her fingers, indicating the thought, “Bring me a pair of scissors.” From there, she shaved him. Seeing as she had a loom, why she wouldn’t have them there with her kind of kills that thought though.

Or she may have called to a Philistine, had him come, and she then caused him to shave Samson, even though Lange says the verb is not causative. This is, however, the prevalent view, and the Hebrew allows it, but it is not indisputable. It also requires scholars to conclude things that are not explicit.

In each previous instance, she did all of the work, and only then did the Philistines get called. Why she would leave this simpler task to one of them is hard to figure. It would also put their lives in jeopardy without knowing if it worked. And more, the next clause is clearly her, not another person, doing the action...

19 (con’t) Then she began to torment him, and his strength left him.

vatakhel l'anotho vayasar kokho mealav – “And begins (fem. sing.) to afflict him. And departs his strength from upon him.” It is referring to Delilah. She is the one to afflict him. Despite this, it is debated what “afflict him” means.

If it means that in each cut of his locks he was afflicted, then it is certainly she who is also the one to cut his locks. If it was after he was shaved, it could be that she started pinching him or slapping his face, egging him on.

I would go with the former. It is his hair by which the Spirit rested upon him. If his hair was cut, and then she afflicted him, and then the Lord departed from upon him, it means that there is a step in the process which is superfluous. However, if afflicting him is an explanation of her cutting his locks, then there is nothing superfluous. One thing is the consequence of the other.

²⁰ And she said, “The Philistines *are* upon you, Samson!” So he awoke from his sleep, and said, “I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself free!”

The NKJV is more of a paraphrase, but it gets the sense: *vatomer p'lishtim alekha Shimshon vayiqats mishnato vayomer etse k'paam b'paam v'inaer* – “And says, ‘Philistines upon you, Samson.’ And awakens from his sleep, and says, ‘Going out according to beat, in beat, and shake.’”

The words here tend to indicate that the afflicting mentioned in the previous verse was, in fact, the shaving. Otherwise, he would be awake from her afflictions and would not need to be called. But he was still deeply asleep. Only in calling him was he then roused. Then he proclaimed to himself that he would go out in the same manner as previously. Tragically, however...

²⁰ (con't) But he did not know that the LORD had departed from him.

v'hu lo yada ki Yehovah sar mealav – “And he not known that Yehovah departed from upon him.” In verse 17, he said, “If shaved, and departs from me my strength. And weakened, and became according to all the man.”

He has equated his hair to his strength. He noted that he was a Nazirite to God in that verse, but it is the presence of the Lord from which his strength was derived. In cutting his hair, the symbol of his consecration, he was no longer a Nazirite to God.

His strength had departed from him because the Lord had departed from upon him. Keil's commentary includes this quote –

“The whole of Samson's misfortune came upon him, therefore, because he attributed to himself some portion of what God did through him. God permitted him to lose his strength, that he might learn by experience how utterly powerless he was without the help of God. We have no better teachers than our own infirmities.” Berleb Bible

²¹ Then the Philistines took him and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza. They bound him with bronze fetters, and he became a grinder in the prison.

vayokhazuhu p'lishtim vaynaqru eth enav vayoridu otho azzatah vayaasruhu bankhushtayim vayhi tokhen b'beith haasirim – “And grasp him, Philistines, and bore his eyes, and descend him Gaza-ward, and bind him in the bronzes, and is grinding in house the bonds.”

Each clause is an added embarrassment laid upon Samson. Before, the Philistines couldn't touch him without harm. Now they grasp him without effort. Next, they bored out his eyes, taking away his ability to effectively fight against them ever again and also taking away the delights of his eyes, as he had customarily looked upon the form of women.

They took him toward Gaza, the very place he had symbolically defeated when he pulled up the doors of the gate of the city along with its gateposts, bar, and all. As we saw, he had proclaimed boldly and openly that he had arrived in Gaza. Now, he would be taken there as a captive.

Next, it says he was bound in the bronzes. The dual nature of the noun means that they were fetters made of two parts that joined together, or that he was bound in both legs, or both his hands and his feet were bound. Whichever is the intent, he was shackled in bronze, a metal weaker than iron, of which the Philistines possessed (1 Samuel 17:7 & 2 Samuel 12:31).

Further, grinding is a task accomplished in Scripture by women, captives, and slaves. It is a repetitive, menial, tedious task that was unfit for a regular workman. And more, his work was accomplished in the house of bonds, meaning confinement.

Where he once freely roamed and did according to his own will, he was now completely subjugated to a humiliating, degrading existence.

As for the name, Gaza is a feminine form coming from *az*, strong. It signifies Strong or Strong Place. Bronze in Scripture signifies judgment.

^{22 (fin)} **However, the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaven.**

The word “however” is more exciting and tends to get us thinking about what is coming. Despite this, the Hebrew simply says “and.” And yet, it bears the same powerful and hopeful effect: *vayakhel sear rosho l’tsameakh kaasher gulakh* – “And begins, hair his head, to sprout according to which shaven.”

The “and” is definitely used as an exciting introduction to what lies ahead. But more, it is supplemented with other words intended to excite. The first is *tsamach*, to sprout. It is not the same word as was used in Numbers 6 when referring to the Nazirite –

“All the days of the vow of his separation no razor shall come upon his head; until the days are fulfilled for which he separated himself to the LORD, he shall be holy. *Then* he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow [*gadal*].” Numbers 6:5

The word *tsamach* is purposefully used to indicate that something is happening, which is “according to which shaven.” In other words, it didn’t take long for his hair to be cut off. It happened while he lay sleeping on Delilah’s knees.

But as quickly as his hair was removed from him in a time of sleep, so his hair began to sprout in a time of toil. The contrast is purposeful to elicit the imagination of the reader. Don’t expect the end of Samson’s life to be spent keeled over a grinding mill in a dirty Gazan prison.

With this hope-filled verse, we are finished for today. Samson had to learn the lesson that it is the Lord, not his own strength or effort, that allows him to win the battles of life. It’s a good lesson for each of us as well.

When we rely on ourselves, we get arrogant and cocky. And how easy that is. I had friends some years ago that were in desperate times. They posted things about Jesus on social media all the time. I thought their lives were focused on Him.

However, once the troubles were behind them, they got into self-promotion and openly bragged that they were creating their own empire. Jesus was never mentioned by them. It was a terribly sad testimony to their true values.

There was literally nothing we held in common any longer. Loving the Lord is not something to do just when things are hard. Rather, we should find happiness and closeness to Him in every situation and in all seasons of life.

Samson had to learn this in a costly way. I hope my old friends will reconsider and return to the Lord wholly and permanently. Life is short, but eternity is not. The rewards or losses that we face will be reflected in how we live our lives now. Hold fast to the Lord always. Amen.

Closing Verse: *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13*

Next Week: Judges 16:23-31 *It's super fun! It's really swell! It's even divine!* (Samson, Judge of Israel, Part IX) (47th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Samson, Judge of Israel, Part VIII

Then Delilah said to Samson

"Look, you have mocked me and told me lies

Now, please tell me

What you may be bound with, please apprise!

So he said to her

"If they bind me securely with new ropes, if that is the plan

That have never been used, then I shall become weak

And be like any other man

Therefore Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them

And said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!

And men were lying in wait, staying in the room

But he broke them off his arms like a thread (tee hee, still fun)

Delilah said to Samson, "Until now you have mocked me

-----and told me lies

Tell me what you may be bound with, I'm in a gloom

And he said to her

"If you weave the seven locks of my head into the web
-----of the loom

So she wove it tightly with the batten of the loom
And said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!
But he awoke from his sleep
And pulled out the batten and the web from the loom (so, so fun)

Then she said to him
"How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart is not with me?
You have mocked me these three times, and have not told me
Where your great strength lies. How can this be?

And it came to pass, when she pestered him daily
With her words and pressed him, tearing him apart
So that his soul was vexed to death
That he told her all his heart

And said to her, "No razor has ever come upon my head
For I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb
If I am shaven, then my strength will leave me
And I shall become weak, and be like any other man
-----in the lunchroom

When Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart
She sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying
----- (as they had planned)
"Come up once more, for he has told me all his heart
So the lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought the
-----money in their hand

Then she lulled him to sleep on her knees
And called for a man and had him shave off
----- (the story is getting grim)
The seven locks of his head
Then she began to torment him, and his strength left him

And she said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!
So he awoke from his sleep, and said – yes, he started

"I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself free!
But he did not know that the LORD from him had departed

Then the Philistines took him and put out his eyes
And brought him down to Gaza (bad times had arisen)
They bound him with bronze fetters
And he became a grinder in the prison

However, the hair of his head began to grow
Again after it had been shaven. Trouble lies ahead doncha know

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 16:23-31 (SAMSON, JUDGE OF ISRAEL, PART IX)

There are various views on what it means to be justified before God. Within those views, people often get caught up in semantics in order to justify their own position on a point of doctrine.

In an article by Bob Wilkin, where he argues for Free Grace, he writes about an opposing doctrine, “It seems reasonable to call this process progressive justification. After all, Evangelicals already speak of progressive sanctification. If progressive sanctification is necessary to obtain final justification then progressive justification is another name for progressive sanctification.”

The Bible doesn’t teach that progressive sanctification is needed to obtain final justification. Paul says, “But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:11).

We are sanctified. We are also justified. Paul speaks of justification in a legal sense. That is known as forensic justification. A person is declared righteous because of the merits of Christ. On the other hand, this is not what James speaks of.

In James 2:21, he says, “Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?” Was that before or after Isaac’s birth? Long before. Therefore, he cannot be saying that Abraham had to prove something to be justified. He goes on to say...

Text Verse: *“Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? ²³ And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” And he was called the friend of God. ²⁴ You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.”*

-James 2:23, 24

James cites Genesis 15:6 saying that God counted it to Abraham for righteousness. He stood justified. So what is the point James is making about his willingness to offer Isaac? He cannot be speaking of forensic justification. Therefore, he must be saying that Abraham in his state of humanity, is justified by works.

If God came to Abraham and asked him to sacrifice his son Zimran, that would be a test of obedience. He had no promises from God concerning that son. If God said to do it, he would either be obedient or disobedient. He would not be justified in his humanity for his disobedience, even if he stood justified by God through the declaration of righteousness.

However, God promised Abraham that Isaac would carry on his name. When God asked him to sacrifice Isaac, that was not a test of obedience as much as it was of his faith. The reason for this is that God cannot lie.

Therefore, in asking Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, the child of promise, it must be a test of faith that somehow Isaac would still receive the promise. This is verified by Hebrews 11:17-19 –

“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten *son*, ¹⁸ of whom it was said, ‘In Isaac your seed shall be called,’ ¹⁹ concluding that God *was* able to raise *him* up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.”

How is justification relevant to what we will see in the verses about Samson? It is because of who the Philistines picture. They are those who weaken the faith of others or completely steal it from those who have no faith.

If a saved person is told he needs to do something to be saved, if he believes that, his faith is weakened. The same is true if he is told he needs to continue to do something in order to stay saved. God never said to Abraham, “If you don’t sacrifice Isaac, you are no longer righteous.”

Abraham’s trial was one of faith **in** his salvation, not **for** his salvation. If you are saved, you are saved. Don’t let anyone weaken your faith! The Philistines are out there! Don’t let them rob you of your joy in Christ.

It’s all to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Remember Me, I Pray (verses 23-3)

²³ Now the lords of the Philistines gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to rejoice.

v'sarne plishtim neespu lizboakh zebakh gadol l'dagon elohehem u-l'simkhah – “And lords Philistines gathered to sacrifice, sacrifice great, to Dagon their god, and to gladness.” Because the narrative is condensed, it may seem like this gathering was held because of the capture of Samson. However, it may simply be an annual feast or a sacrifice for some particular event.

Because it says, “to their god and to gladness,” it is hard to be dogmatic about any further reason for it. Israel had their annual pilgrim feasts. Other nations had feasts around the equinoxes and solstices. The rest of this verse, however, seems to tie the feast to their triumph over Samson. Whatever the reason for calling the feast, Dagon, their god, was the center of the worship.

Dagon comes from *dag*, fish which signify abundance. Hence, the word *daga* means to multiply or increase. The word *dagan* refers to cereal crops in general, thus natural abundance. Therefore, Dagon can mean Fish, Increase, or Cultivation of Natural Abundance.

Being coastal cities, having a fish as their deity is logical, at least from a fallen human standpoint. The idol representing Dagon was believed to have the upper half reflecting a man and the lower half reflecting a fish.

One Assyrian depiction has a man somewhat wrapped up in a fish with the mouth of the fish looking like one of the pointy hats of Catholic bishops. The rest of the fish hung like a garment around the man.

²³ (con't) **And they said:**

**“Our god has delivered into our hands
Samson our enemy!”**

vayomru nathan elohenu b'yadenu eth Shimshon oyvenu – “And they said, ‘Given, our god, in our hand Samson our enemy.’” As just noted, these words seem to make the reason for the gathering as the victory over Samson, but it also may be that he was the subject of people’s conversation. If so, then it would be that these words are parenthetical –

Now the lords of the Philistines gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to rejoice. (And they said: “Our god has delivered into our hands Samson our enemy!” ²⁴When the people saw him, they praised their god; for they said: “Our god has delivered into our hands our enemy, The destroyer of our land, And the one who multiplied our dead.”) ²⁵So it happened, when their hearts were merry, that they said, “Call for Samson, that he may perform for us.” So they called for Samson from the prison, and he performed for them. And they stationed him between the pillars.

This seems like a logical order of how the narrative is structured. However, whatever the flow of the narrative actually is, the people’s victory over Samson was a point of conversation and joy...

²⁴When the people saw him, they praised their god; for they said:

vayiru otho ha’am vayhal’lu eth elohehem ki amru – “And see, him, the people, and praise their god, for they said...” As noted, the lines seem out of place because only later do the people call for Samson. For this reason, it has been suggested that the words “And sees him” are speaking of Dagon, not Samson.

However, Samson is the nearest antecedent, and so my suggestion that the lines are parenthetical sufficiently explains the matter. It also fits well with other such instances in the book of Judges where the narrative breaks and then catches up with the chronological events. For example, this was seen at the introduction of Jephthah into the narrative in Judges 11. As for their praises...

**²⁴ (con’t) “Our god has delivered into our hands our enemy,
The destroyer of our land,
And the one who multiplied our dead.”**

The words form four lines, each ending with the *nun/vav* suffix indicating “our.” The first line also contains its own internal *nun/vav* suffix. Thus, they form a poetic effect: *nathan elohenu b’yadenu eth oyvenu v’eth makhariv artsenu vaasher hirbah eth khalalenu* – “Given our god, in our hand: our enemy, and desolating our land, and who multiplied our pierced.”

It is like a song that the people learned and sang together just as people do at rallies and demonstrations all the time. It is intended to easily call to mind the heroic acts of their god.

²⁵ So it happened, when their hearts were merry, that they said, “Call for Samson, that he may perform for us.”

vayhi ki tov libam vayomru qiru l’shimshon visakheq lanu – “And is when good their heart, and they say, ‘Call to Samson and laughs to us.’” If the previous verses are parenthetical, then this is where the narrative meets up with the earlier narrative –

“Now the lords of the Philistines gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to rejoice. ... So it happened, when their hearts were merry, that they said, ‘Call for Samson, that he may perform for us.’”

A new word, *sakhaq*, is used. It signifies to laugh in either pleasure or derision. In this case, it signifies to have him amuse them. This could be from them deriding him, beating on him, spitting on him, etc. It could also mean that they ordered him to do things like dance, bow down, and so forth. Whatever it was that made them happy, that is what Samson was called to do...

²⁵ (con’t) So they called for Samson from the prison, and he performed for them. And they stationed him between the pillars.

vayiqru l’shimshon mibeith haasirim vaytsakheq liphnehem vayaamidu otho ben ha’amudim – “And call to Samson from house the bonds, and laughs to their faces. And stands him between the pillars.” Here, a similar but different verb is used, *tsakhaq*. It is the thirteenth and last time that it is used in the Bible. It carries essentially the same meaning as *sakhaq*. Interestingly, one word is finished in Scripture when the other is just beginning to be used.

The structure of the words in this sentence indicates active performance by Samson. The people demanded that Samson perform for them, probably in dancing or some other activity. The great hero is reduced to embarrassing subjugation and degradation before their eyes.

But it may be that Samson then uses this as a pretext to act as stated in the following words...

²⁶ Then Samson said to the lad who held him by the hand,

vayomer Shimshon el ha’naar hamakhaziq b’yado – “And says, Samson, unto the lad, the strengthening in his hand...” It is of note that a mere lad is used to guide Samson

around. A single youth directs where the once-great Samson – who slayed a thousand men with the jawbone of a donkey – went. And not only is he guided by a youth, but in his blindness, he is totally dependent on the lad to identify the place he desires to go.

²⁶ (con't) **“Let me feel the pillars which support the temple, so that I can lean on them.”**

The first verbs are imperative and the last is cohortative: *hanikhah oti vahemisheni eth ha'amudim asher ha'beith nakhon alehem v'eshanen alehem* – “Resting, me, and I am feeling the pillars which the house support upon them, and I will lean upon them.” If Samson actively performed for the people, he could pretend to be tired from the efforts. After all, the great champion of Israel lost his power and endurance.

In these words is a verb found only here in Scripture, *yamash*, to feel, coming from a primitive root meaning to touch. Because he is blind, he is asking for the lad to guide his hands so that he can feel the supporting pillars...

²⁷ **Now the temple was full of men and women. All the lords of the Philistines were there**

The NKJV makes the whole verse seem like one category of people, all on the roof. That is not the intent: *v'habayith male ha'anashim v'hanashim v'shamah kol sarne p'listim* – “And the house filled the men and the women, and there-ward all lords Philistines.” In other words, the temple itself was filled with the ruling class, here designated by the plural of the words *enosh* and *ishah*, men and women. These people are within the walls of the temple, and...

²⁷ (con't) **—about three thousand men and women on the roof watching while Samson performed.**

v'al ha'gag kishlosheth alaphim ish v'ishah ha'roim biskhoq Shimshon – “And upon the roof according to three thousands man and woman, the seeing in laughing Samson.” This is another category, *ish* and *ishah*, cumulatively numbered with the plural “three thousands,” and thus they are designated in the singular.

Of the number, it is a multiple of three and ten. Three signifies Divine Perfection. Expanding on that, Bullinger says –

“The number three, therefore, must be taken as the number of Divine fulness. It signifies and represents the Holy Spirit as taking of the things of Christ and making them

real and solid in our experience. It is only by the Spirit that we realise spiritual things. Without Him and His gracious operation, all is surface work: all is what a plane figure is to a solid.”

Of the number ten, Bullinger says –

“Completeness of order, marking the entire round of anything, is, therefore, the ever-present signification of the number ten. It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete.”

With this great number of people standing there enjoying his humiliation, Samson has a plan that he is about to execute...

28 Then Samson called to the LORD, saying, “O Lord God, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God,

Samson doesn’t merely call out to God, but to the God: *vayyiqra Shimshon el Yehovah vayomar adonay Yehovah zakhreni na v’khazqeni na akh ha’paam hazeh ha’elohim* – “And calls, Samson, unto Yehovah, and says, ‘Adonai Yehovah, remember me, I pray, and strengthen me, I pray, surely the beat, the this, the God.’”

When speaking of the true God, the term *elohim*, or “God” has been seen twelve times in the Samson series. Of them, six have been preceded by the definite article, *ha’elohim*, or “the God.” The first five times were in Chapter 13 when his parents interacted with the man of “the God” in verses 13:6-9. This is the only instance by Samson.

He first acknowledges Him as Adonai Yehovah, or Lord Yehovah. He then acknowledges Him, before all these people who have thought their god greater than Samson’s God, as the one true God. He knows that Yehovah is the source of His strength. With the hair again on his head, the Lord is being asked to again acknowledge his state as a Nazirite to God...

28 (con’t) that I may with one *blow* take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes!”

The verb is cohortative: *v’inaqmah n’qam akhath mishthe enay miplishtim* – “and I am avenging vengeance, one from two – my eyes – from Philistines.” The meaning cannot be as most translations read, one vengeance for two eyes. The word *naqam*, vengeance, is masculine. But the form of the word one, *akhath*, is feminine. The word eye, however, is feminine. What he is saying is “I am avenging vengeance for one of my two eyes.”

Only the God's Word translation got the sense, even if it is a bit of a paraphrase – "Let me get even with the Philistines for at least one of my two eyes." The sense is that his vengeance is hardly compensation for one of his eyes, much less two.

²⁹ And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars which supported the temple, and he braced himself against them, one on his right and the other on his left.

*vayilpoth Shimshon eth sh'ne amude hatavekh asher ha'bayith nakhon alehem
vayisamekh alehem ekhad bimino v'ekhad bismolo* – "And wrenches, Samson, two pillars the midst which the house supporting upon them, and propped upon them, one in his right and one in his left."

Here is a new and rare word, *laphath*. It signifies to twist, turn, or grasp with a twisting motion, and, thus, to wrench or wring. It is a verb that gives the sense of sudden and excited motion. It is used in Ruth when Ruth startled Boaz as he slept –

"Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself [*laphath*]; and there, a woman was lying at his feet." Ruth 3:8

Samson was probably standing there calmly resting against a pillar, maybe with his head down as if he was exhausted, but he suddenly wrenches himself so that he is now directly between the pillars where he props himself into a fully extended position between them, and...

³⁰ Then Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!"

vayomer Shimshon tamoth napshi im plishtim – "And says, Samson, 'Dies my soul with Philistines.'" Samson knows that this is his end, but it is worth his death to destroy the Philistines, the Weakeners, in the process. In this, they would not be able to afflict Israel as they once had...

^{30 (con't)} And he pushed with *all his* might, and the temple fell on the lords and all the people who were in it.

vayet b'koakh vayipol habayith al hasranim v'al kal ha'am asher bo – "And stretches in strength. And falls the house upon the lords and upon all the people who in it." It is thought impossible that the temple could collapse in this manner with just two pillars being pushed over. However, depending on the construction, which is unknown, and with the weight of three thousand people on the roof, the act was sufficient to bring it

down. (See Sergio's opening comments on 16 June 2024 for archaeological evidence of such a temple and its design).

Those inside would have been crushed like Crimson Seedless grapes under the foot of an African elephant. Those on top would tumble into the falling debris and be broken to pieces like a pile of shortbread cookies in a hydraulic press... what a mess.

³⁰ (con't) **So the dead that he killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life.**

vayihyu hamethim asher hemith b'motho rabim measher hemith b'khyav – “And is the dying which killed in his death greater from which killed in his life.” Samson's great deeds with his eyes didn't match the great act he brought about without them. By the power of the Lord strengthening him, his final battle was accomplished...

³¹ **And his brothers and all his father's household came down and took him, and brought him up and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of his father Manoah.**

vayerdu ekhav v'khal beith avihu vayisu otho vayaalu vayiqbru otho ben tsarah u-ben Eshtaol beqever manoakh abiv – “And descend his brothers and all house his father. And take him, and ascend, and buried him between Zorah and between Eshtaol in grave Manoah, his father.” Based on the wording, it appears Manoah and his wife had other children.

The term brothers can extend to others within a tribe, but because it mentions brothers and then the extended members of the household of his father, it seems that Samson had actual brothers as well. Either way, they came to Gaza, gathered up his body, and carried him back to be buried in his father's grave.

Zorah (*Tsarah*) means Affliction. It comes from either *tsirah*, a collective word meaning hornets, or *tsaraath*, leprosy. Thus, it literally means either Hornet(s) or Leprosy. However, both are a type of affliction because the hornet is metaphorically used as an instrument of war, driving out enemies.

Eshtaol is listed by Strong's under the root *shaal*, to ask for or inquire. Thus, he defines it as Entreaty. However, Sergio noted that the word Eshtaol without the vowel points, which were added much later, would say Bride of God, Wife of God, Woman of God, etc.

Manoah means Rest or Quiet.

^{31 (fin)} **He had judged Israel twenty years.**

v'hu shaphat eth Yisrael esrim shanah – “And he judged Israel twenty years.” This is a general repeat of Judges 15:20 –

“And he judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines.”

Of the number twenty, Bullinger notes –

It “...is the double of ten, and may in some cases signify its concentrated meaning. But its significance seems rather to be connected with the fact that it is one short of twenty-one, $21 - 1 = 20$; that is to say, if 21 is the three-fold 7, and signifies Divine (3) completion as regards spiritual perfection (7), then twenty, being one short of 21, it would signify what Dr. Milo Mahan calls expectancy.”

*The Philistines are there, working out their evil
Ready to rob your joy in Christ
They work the works of their father, the devil
Telling you that by works your soul is priced*

*But God's gift of life is one of grace
It comes by trusting His word
Only through faith will you see God's face
In the radiant glow of Jesus our Lord*

*Have faith! Don't be duped by the Philistines
God has done it all through Jesus our Lord
The devil will try to deceive you through any means
So hold fast to the truth of grace, found in the word*

II. Pictures of Christ

Judges 15 revealed to us the work of Christ in atonement and how that allowed for the Spirit to come forth. The Fountain of the Caller was opened and it remained open.

The first three verses of Chapter 16 detailed Samson's symbolic victory over Gaza. While Israel is in a state of national apostasy, pictured by the harlot, Samson (Place of the Sun meaning the Word of God in Christ) pulled up the doors of the gate of Gaza.

That symbolically represents Christ completely removing the state, ability, authority, etc. of Weakeners to afflict God's people through law observance. Taking them and placing them before Hebron (the Alliance of God in Christ with His people) shows the effectiveness of Christ's power, recorded in His word, over the Weakeners. It is Christ, not the law, that prevails.

After that, the account immediately (verse 4) turns to the narrative of the harpy hellcat Delilah who dwelt in the Valley of Sorek. The words *nakhal* and *soreq* together would signify the Inheritance of the Choice Vine.

This is a picture of the inheritance of the church which came from the atoning work of Christ (seen in Chapter 15) and which bears the power of God in Christ (seen in the short Gaza narrative that opens Chapter 16). The name Delilah means something akin to Languisher, Debilitator, etc. I translated her name as Drawer Out which would be the cause leading to the effect where she draws out in order to afflict.

She is used by the Philistines in an attempt to harm Samson. Their intent is to bind him in order to afflict him. If she prevails the five lords promise (verse 5) eleven hundred of silver from each of them.

As noted, 1100 is a derivative of 10 and 11. Bullinger says ten is the number of "Completeness of order, marking the entire round of anything, is, therefore, the ever-present signification of the number ten. It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete."

Eleven is the number that marks "disorder, disorganization, imperfection, and disintegration."

If she prevails, it will have come about after a cycle of time which will bring about disorder and so forth. Starting in verse 6, Delilah, the dangerous dragon, begins her series of entreaties. Samson's responses are not true, but each gives hints about what causes God's people to stumble. In verse 7, his first response was –

'If binding me in seven cords [*yether*], fresh [*lakhim*], which not dried [*kharav*], and weakened, and became according to one the man.'"

The cord, *yether*, signifies excess, abounding, or preeminence. The words "fresh, which not dried" are the opposite of what can hurt. The *lakhim*, or fresh, signifies the time of God's favor (see Ezekiel 17:24 and Luke 23:31).

The word dried, *kharav*, is identical to the spelling of Horeb, the mountain of the law. It was used in the account of Gideon and the fleece in the same manner.

Whatever is preeminent is the state of the thing. The dry law will harm but the fresh gospel will not. This is more certain because the form of the verb *kharav* is *khorvu*. That is identical in spelling to *kharvo*, [חרבון] His sword. It speaks of the law that only Christ can fulfill.

The first attempt failed, so she tried again. In verse 11, his next answer was –

“If binding they bind me in ropes [*avoth*] new [*khadash*], which not worked [*asah*] in them, and weakened, and became according to one the man.”

Here Samson uses the word *avoth*, ropes. They are strands woven together which are used for binding, drawing, holding, etc. For example, in Isaiah 5, it says –

“Woe to those who draw iniquity with cords of vanity,
And sin as if with a cart rope [*avoth*];
¹⁹That say, ‘Let Him make speed *and* hasten His work [*maaseh*, from *asah*],
That we may see *it*;
And let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw near and come,
That we may know *it*.” Isaiah 5:18, 19

In this case, however, they are never to have “done in them work.” In other words, like the fresh, not dried cords of the previous attempt. It again provides a picture of the opposite. The gospel of the New [*khadash*] Covenant says, “no work.”

That attempt also failed, and so she tried a third time. In verse 13, Samson’s next answer was –

“And says unto her, ‘If weaves seven locks [*machalaphah*, noun, fem.] my head with the warp.’”

This time, he actually reveals the source of his strength to Delilah, but he doesn’t reveal how it is his strength. Samson is the Place of the Sun, the word of God in Christ. That is currently revealed in the church, of which there are seven individual churches (noun fem.) noted in Revelation 1-3.

They represent the state of all churches of the church age at any given time. In other words, one may be like the church of Laodicea and another like the church at Thyatira. It is ironic that Christ is called the head of the church and the locks on his head are being compared to the seven churches which form the church.

These seven locks (noun fem.) have not been noted until this verse. As his unshaved hair is the connection to the Source of his strength, this is sufficient to mirror the other two accounts. Blasting it with the peg, as she did, doesn't change its status. Like the first two attempts, the secret is left undiscovered.

In verse 15, Delilah noted his three mockings. It is the number of Divine Perfection, but Bullinger says further –

“The number three, therefore, must be taken as the number of Divine fulness. It signifies and represents the Holy Spirit as taking of the things of Christ and making them real and solid in our experience. It is only by the Spirit that we realise spiritual things. Without Him and His gracious operation, all is surface work: all is what a plane figure is to a solid.”

God's favor is realized in trusting Christ's fulfillment of the Old Covenant, not in our works. His grace is found woven into the New Covenant, based on what He has done, not in what we do. And these are then on display in His church.

This is the state of the true church from its inception. It has been one of trusting in Christ. However, Delilah continued to harass Samson until his soul was reaped (verse 16). Eventually he blabbed (verse 17) and gave up his secret that the connection was in his hair. It had never been cut.

Samson's mother was to participate in the Nazirite vow until his birth. The line leading to Christ brought forth Christ who brought forth the church. Hair in Scripture consistently symbolizes awareness, particularly an awareness of sin. That reflects the state of the church.

Using a *morah*, or razor, on him means there will be a change in appearance. The root of it, *mur*, means to change or exchange. Thus, there will no longer be the awareness of sin. It is the state of man noted by Paul in Romans 1:18-32 where he explains how man suppresses the knowledge of God and no longer has shame or an awareness of sin. That is why the words of verse 17 say –

“If shaved, and departs from me my strength. And weakened, and became according to all the man [*ha’adam*].”

When shaved bald, there is no longer this consciousness of sin. It is the carnal man, the unregenerate Adam, *ha’adam*, without the Spirit. That is why he kept saying, “If you do XXX, I will be like any other man (*ha’adam*).” In verse 19, the Philistine lords brought the silver for payment. The time for the promise of redemption is ending.

I would deduce that the rapture of the church fits in at this point. This is because Delilah, the Debilitator hired by the Philistines (the Weakeners), is about to completely remove the consciousness of sin from the church, just as Paul explains in 2 Thessalonians 2.

She “sleeps” him on her knees, meaning she calls to him and he is asleep, and then she shaves away his consciousness of sin, as is perfectly described by the sleeping church in 1 Thessalonians 5:1-10.

The place of the word of God in Christ is disarmed through her afflicting him, “And he not known that Yehovah departed from upon him.” He no longer has the Spirit upon him.

The rapture, the snatching of the church, is akin to the grasping and cutting away of the locks. Anything left of the church is without the Spirit and without the connection to Christ.

As such, the true church is gone even if the word of God in Christ remains. Verse 21 said that they put out Samson’s eyes and brought him down to Gaza, bound him in bronze, and he was grinding wheat in the bonds.

For a time, there will be no knowledge of the truth. The world will be blinded and there will only be works, judgment, and bondage. However, immediately, it said in verse 22 that Samson’s hair began to sprout. As quickly as his hair was cut off, so also an awareness of sin began to arise again, just as Revelation shows in the tribulation saints.

Law observance and bondage are celebrated and will multiply (verse 23), symbolized by the Philistines worshiping Dagon, Increase. They will celebrate their supposed victory over Samson (Place of the Sun, which is the word of God in Christ) while God is building up his believers during the tribulation.

The spiritual battle is being described by the events of Samson's life. Noting that the Philistines call for Samson that he may perform for them anticipates what Daniel says –

“I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, ²²until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made *in favor* of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

²³ “Thus he said:

‘The fourth beast shall be
A fourth kingdom on earth,
Which shall be different from all *other* kingdoms,
And shall devour the whole earth,
Trample it and break it in pieces.

²⁴ The ten horns *are* ten kings
Who shall arise from this kingdom.

And another shall rise after them;
He shall be different from the first *ones*,
And shall subdue three kings.

²⁵ He shall speak *pompous* words against the Most High,
Shall persecute the saints of the Most High,
And shall intend to change times and law.
Then *the saints* shall be given into his hand
For a time and times and half a time.” Daniel 7:21-25

However, there is a time when this persecution will end. The narrative notes three thousand on the roof. The roof, *gag*, comes from *gaah*, to rise up or (figuratively) exalt. The time of divine fulness where the whole cycle is complete will come when all those who exalt themselves will be brought down.

Understanding this, Samson prepared himself as stated in verses 28 & 29, calling out, “and I am avenging vengeance, one from two – my eyes – from Philistines.” The highly unusual wording shows the totally devastating nature of what had taken place.

The eye is the channel of information into a person. Jesus said –

“No one, when he has lit a lamp, puts *it* in a secret place or under a basket, but on a lampstand, that those who come in may see the light. ³⁴ The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when *your eye* is bad, your body also *is* full of darkness. ³⁵ Therefore take

heed that the light which is in you is not darkness. ³⁶ If then your whole body *is* full of light, having no part dark, *the whole body* will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light.” Luke 11:33-36

Samson, Place of the Sun, is the word of God in Christ. By taking away his eyes, even if one, there was only darkness. How can a lamp that is dark bring others to the light?

The Philistines, the Weakeners, are those who take away the light of Christ. At the time determined by God, that will come to an end. He will, for all intents and purposes, bring down the house around them.

The two main pillars of the temple (verse 29) represent the two pillars of the end times apostasy, the Antichrist and the False Prophet. In bringing them down, the rest of the house of apostasy will collapse with them.

The final verse said his brothers and all the house of his father “buried him between Zorah and between Eshtaol in grave Manoaah his father.” Literally, it would mean “between Affliction and between Entreaty/Bride of God, in grave Rest his father.”

Samson, the man, had to die. Ignoring that for the sake of the narrative, these words mean that the place of the Word of God in Christ stands between the state of the people waiting to be glorified and the Bride of God.

The dual meaning of Eshtaol, which includes Entreaty, then looks to the believer’s life of affliction while awaiting their final glorification. Rest being in the middle of the two confirms that they possess God’s rest as an assurance. Hebrews 4:3 notes, “we who have believed do enter that rest.”

The seventh day millennium, which follows the tribulation, is a picture of that. God created in six days, followed by His rest. That follows in the six thousand years awaiting the thousand-year reign of Christ, something our closing verse will refer to.

Once again, as has been the case time and again in Judges, we have been shown picture after picture of the contrast between the law and grace. The law is what makes sin possible. In violating the law, there is the imputation of sin.

For those who come to Christ, we are told, “For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace” Romans 6:14. The choice belongs to each

person. Will we live in the grace of God that comes through faith in Christ, or will we try to work our way back to God through our own effort?

The Weakensers are out there. A spiritual battle is going on all around us. It is insistent and constant. Its mantra is, "It can't be that simple. You must earn your way back to God."

The world is filled with this notion. Every religion on the planet insists that you must perform, you must do, you cannot trust what God has done in Christ. Unfortunately, much of the church is filled with this same doctrine. But what God wants from you is faith.

Trust Him for your salvation and then trust Him in your salvation. His word has things that you are to do, but they are things that come after you have been saved. Doing the same things before you are saved won't get you an inch closer to God.

And because once you are saved you are in Christ, doing them after salvation won't get you one inch closer to Him either. Rather, they will be reckoned for rewards or losses. Abraham could have decided to not go up Mount Moriah with Isaac.

But he had faith in the sure promises of God. And so he went. Be people of faith, living out your salvation in the ever-increasing knowledge of God in Christ. And that will come by staying in His word, so read it daily!

Closing Verse: *"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,
For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD
As the waters cover the sea.*

¹⁰ *"And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse,
Who shall stand as a banner to the people;
For the Gentiles shall seek Him,
And His resting place shall be glorious." Isaiah 11:9, 10*

Next Week: Judges 17:1-6 *It's a sad story to tell, but we'll get it done...* (No King In Israel, Part I) (48th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

Samson, Judge of Israel, Part IX

Now the lords of the Philistines gathered together
To offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to rejoice
And they said: "Our god has delivered into our hands
Samson our enemy! Everyone raise your voice!

When the people saw him, they praised their god
For they said: "Our god has delivered our enemy into our hands
The destroyer of our land
And the one who multiplied our dead, and now, here he stands

So it happened, when their hearts were merry
That they said, "Call for Samson, that he may perform for us
----- (how sad and grim)
So they called for Samson from the prison, and he performed
----- for them
And they between the pillars stationed him

Then Samson said to the lad
Who held him by the hand
"Let me feel the pillars which support the temple
So that I can lean on them while here I stand

Now the temple was full of men and women
All the lords of the Philistines were there, a big gathering
----- had formed
About three thousand men and women
On the roof watching while Samson performed

Then Samson called to the LORD, saying
"O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray! May Your Spirit arise
Strengthen me, I pray, just this once
O God, that I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines
----- for my two eyes!

And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars
Which supported the temple (of which it would soon be bereft)
And he braced himself against them

One on his right and the other on his left

Then Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!
And he pushed with all his might (as if urged on by a midwife)
And the temple fell on the lords and all the people who were in it
So the dead that he killed at his death were more than he had
-----killed in his life

And his brothers and all his father's household came down
And took him, and brought him up and buried him-
-----certainly with many tears
Between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of his father Manoah
He had judged Israel twenty years.

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 17:1-6 (NO KING IN ISRAEL, PART I)

Without checking Exodus 20, I bet you can already spot several violations of the Big Ten in our passage today. In just five verses, Micah and his mother not only broke several of the Ten Commandments, but they broke other laws that further explain those ten or that define other aspects of the religious laws of Israel.

If you have followed the sermons on the books of Moses for the past few years, you must almost want to cringe at what is recorded here. You might even ask yourself, “How can anyone be so stupid?”

But if you think it through, it is nothing uncommon or unusual. The people are living in a time without TV, internet, cars, and so forth. There weren’t even local synagogues to walk to.

Today, we have churches on every street corner, the Bible in print in our homes, TV with Christian (well...) stations, and the internet to search for information on anything we want to know about our relationship with the Lord.

We can’t defend the actions of the people in today’s verses, but if we condemn them, we are really condemning ourselves. We have laws in the land and the Bible expects us to live by them in order to live in harmony with the government set over us.

And yet, I will bet that many of us got here today by breaking a law or two in the process. I don’t mean, “Well, cops won’t pull you over in a 40 zone if you are doing 45.” I mean that a 40mph speed zone is a 40 zone. If the police don’t enforce the law, it doesn’t mean that the law doesn’t exist. It probably means they are enjoying their donuts and can’t be bothered.

Text Verse: *“And the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; you only heard a voice. ¹³ So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone.” Deuteronomy 4:12, 13*

After saying this to the people, Moses again forbid the idolatry of making images, even if they were to worship Yehovah, because the people have no idea what He looks like. And

more, it would be taking something that He had made and forming into something to represent Him.

The process itself is illogical when thought through. Isaiah speaks of the illogical nature of idolatry in several key passages. John warns against idolatry as he closes out his first epistle. Anything that diverts our attention away from the Lord can easily become an idol.

Once He is out of the picture, we are prone to fill up our existence with other things that simply replace Him. Thank God for Jesus who actually helps resolve this for us. When we read the gospels about Jesus, our minds form a picture of the Man.

Some of us may be a bit more precise in how we perceive Him, but the notion of Him as a man comes through. When my great-grandfather left China after his years as a medical missionary, the Chinese people he tended to gave him some paintings that they had made from the gospels.

The depictions of Jesus and those with Him were of Chinese men. I have passed churches where Jesus is depicted as black. This is true in any place where Jesus has been proclaimed. People form a picture in their minds of Jesus based on their own culture and experience. No, this is not idolatry. It is the human connection of God in Christ that we form.

Jesus is our way of understanding what God has done. We don't have any paintings of the true Jesus. Therefore, God has allowed us to consider Him in our own way. He is the Christ of the nations.

Even though we know that Jesus was from the Mideast and we have an idea of what people there look like, there are millions of Mideast people and none of them look just like Jesus. Again, thank God for Jesus. He is our connection to the unseen God. Because of His human nature fulfilling the Law of Moses, we can be free from the burdens that so heavily weigh us down.

This is a truth that is to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Sanctifying, I Sanctified, the Silver (verses 1-3)

With the narrative of Samson complete, the narrative of individual judges is also complete. Rather than focus on a judge, the book will now focus on events that occurred during the time of the judges, before any king reigned.

As Saul will be the first king, these events occur before his reign. That will be seen in verse 6. As for the events themselves, two specific stories are given. The first will comprise chapters 17 and 18. The second will finish the book in chapters 19-21.

These stories are not to be considered chronologically. For example, a grandson of Moses will be noted in Judges 18:30 and Phineas will be noted as the high priest in Judges 20:28. These place both stories very early in the time of the Judges.

Thus, these stories are selected out of this period to tell us things we need to know in the greater story of redemption. They are stories like Ruth, even if they are contained within the book of Judges itself. As for the first of these accounts, it begins with...

¹ Now there was a man from the mountains of Ephraim,

vayhi ish mehar ephrayim – “And is man from mount Ephraim.” The narrative begins within the tribe of Ephraim. The tribe is north of Judah, Benjamin, and Dan and stretches from the Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea.

What is interesting is that the same words, with some local information added, are used to begin the narrative of Samuel, “And is man...from mount Ephraim.” The apostasy of Israel is highlighted in this early narrative in of the time of the judges which necessitated the calling forth of a judge. That continues through the life of Samuel, Israel’s last judge, and eventually leads to Israel calling for a king.

The name Ephraim means Twice Fruitful and also Ashes.

In Scripture, a *har*, mountain, is a lot of something gathered. In typology, it is synonymous with a large but centralized group of people.

¹ (con’t) whose name was Micah.

ushmo mikhay’hu – “and his name Micayehu.” The name Micayehu is given here, but it will take another form soon. This secondary form will continue throughout the narrative. The name, as it now stands, means Who is Like Yehovah.

² And he said to his mother, “The eleven hundred *shekels* of silver that were taken from you, and on which you put a curse, even saying it in my ears—here *is* the silver with me; I took it.”

The Hebrew is complicated: *vayomer l’imo eleph umeah ha’keseph asher luqakh lakh v’athi alith v’gam amart b’aznay hineh ha’keseph iti ani l’qakhtiv* – “And says, to his mother, ‘Thousand and hundred the silver which taken to you, and you adjured, and also said in my ears – behold the silver with me. I, I took it.’”

The ל (lamed) prefix indicates motion toward something. The most literal rendering is to simply say “to” each time it is used, but then the context must be determined. At times, it can signify “for,” “from,” etc. In this case, it probably means “from.” As such, “which was taken from you.”

The Greek translation conveys the sense of “for” or “of” rather than “from,” saying, “And he said to his mother, ‘The eleven hundred pieces of silver which thou tookest of thyself.’”

In other words, they place the theft on the part of the mother. However, “from” seems more likely based on the rest of the narrative. The mother had eleven hundred pieces of silver that were taken. When she realized it was stolen, she pronounced an *alah*, or curse.

This is the first time the word is used in Scripture. It comes from a primitive root and signifies to adjure. For example, and usually in a bad sense, to pronounce an imprecation.

The mother found the money missing, and so in front of her son, she pronounced an imprecation. In hearing it, he was frightened. This is because of the spirit of the words of Leviticus 5 –

“If a person sins in hearing the utterance of an oath, and *is* a witness, whether he has seen or known *of the matter*—if he does not tell *it*, he bears guilt.”

-Leviticus 5:1

The context of Leviticus is a bit different, but the sense is still obtained. He has stolen from his mother, he hears her curse, and he then acts to correct his conduct by admitting he is the one who took it. The fact that she said it right in his hearing may be an indication that she suspected him all along.

If so, then rather than “curse,” she may have simply adjured him to tell the truth. If he lied, then he would be accountable to the Lord. Either way, he feels convicted and comes clean.

Of the number eleven hundred, it is a multiple of 10 and 11. Of ten, Bullinger says, “Completeness of order, marking the entire round of anything, is, therefore, the ever-present signification of the number ten. It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete.”

Eleven is the number that marks “disorder, disorganization, imperfection, and disintegration.”

It is probably significant that this amount of silver is the same as that promised to Delilah by each of the rulers of the Philistines. That was in the previous chapter, but it is like a set of bookends in Judges from a chronological perspective. This is early in the history of the book, and that came towards the end of the time of the judges.

As for silver, it signifies redemption.

² (con’t) **And his mother said, “*May you be blessed by the LORD, my son!*”**

vatomer imo barukh beni l’Yehovah – “And said, his mother, ‘Blessed, my son, to Yehovah.’” Rather than leaving a curse upon her son, she accepts his confession and pronounces a blessing upon him. With that, the family goes from one sin to another...

³ **So when he had returned the eleven hundred *shekels* of silver to his mother,**

The words “So when” simply read “and”: *vayashev eth eleph u-meah ha’keseph l’imo* – “And returns thousand and hundred the silver to his mother.” The son heard the adjuration or the curse and, being guilt stricken, admitted his wrongdoing. After that, he returns the entire sum to his mother. During this process of giving her the money, which will actually take place in the next verse...

³ (con’t) **his mother said, “I had wholly dedicated the silver from my hand to the LORD for my son,**

vatomer imo haqdash hiqdashti eth ha’keseph l’Yehovah miyadi livni – “And says, his mother, ‘Sanctifying, I sanctified, the silver to Yehovah from my hand to my son.’” There are two ways to read this. The first is in the past perfect, as if it was in the past,

anticipating the future – “I had sanctified it.” The other is that she is now making a vow to sanctify it – “I have now sanctified it.”

If the words are past perfect, then there are again two possibilities. She had the money and had decided at some point in the past that she would sanctify it to the Lord for a particular purpose. Or it could be that when the money was stolen, she promised that she would sanctify it to the Lord if it was recovered.

If the words are simply a reflection of her joy at getting the money back, then she decided to sanctify it to the Lord after her son confessed and returned it. No matter which of the three options, she has emphatically vowed (sanctifying, I sanctified) that it was to be dedicated to the Lord...

³ (con’t) **to make a carved image and a molded image;**

laasoth pesel u-masekhah – “to make carved image and molten image.” The words here are debated. Does this mean a carved image that is then covered with a layer of metal, or a carved image along with a molten image? It must be the latter based on what is said in the next chapter –

“Then the five men who had gone to spy out the country of Laish answered and said to their brethren, “Do you know that there are in these houses an ephod, household idols, a carved image, and a molded image? Now therefore, consider what you should do.” ¹⁵ So they turned aside there, and came to the house of the young Levite man—to the house of Micah—and greeted him. ¹⁶ The six hundred men armed with their weapons of war, who *were* of the children of Dan, stood by the entrance of the gate. ¹⁷ Then the five men who had gone to spy out the land went up. Entering there, they took the carved image, the ephod, the household idols, and the molded image. The priest stood at the entrance of the gate with the six hundred men *who were* armed with weapons of war.” Judges 18:14-17

By placing the ephod and the household idols in the narrative between the carved image and the molded image, it specifies that two images were made.

The *pesel* is a carved image, coming from *pasal*, to hew. The *masekhah*, or molten image, comes from *nasak*, to pour out. Thus, it is an image that is poured out. It can signify the covering of a hewn image, but that is not the case here. Because of her words, we read the next words which are probably the son speaking...

³ (con't) **now therefore, I will return it to you."**

v'atah ashivenu lakh – "And now, I return it to you." Contextually, it seems that these words are the son speaking to the mother, not the mother speaking to the son, although it could be either.

After hearing his mother's words, he excitedly says that he is returning it so that she can whip up some household gods. Before that, a brief poetic interlude...

*No other gods before Me, that is one
How many more can you blow today
Do not steal, but this you have done
You are not following the proper way*

*No carved images... whoops, that makes three
How hard your head is for sure
No coveting! Yet, your heart I can see
You blew it again, but I have the cure*

*How about if I do it all for you
And then you just trust in Me
That is all you need to do
And yet you turn it down! How can it be?*

II. A Shrine, Images, Idols, Etc. (verses 4-6)

⁴ **Thus he returned the silver to his mother.**

This is a confirmation that he is now handing it back to his mother: *vayashev eth ha'keseph l'imo* – "And returns the silver to his mother." Verse 3 says he returned the money to her. This repetition explains that so that the coming words logically follow. It is she, not he, who takes the action with the silver.

There is confusion because many translations say something like, "from my hand for my son to make a carved image and a molten image." But that is probably not what is said.

Rather, it more likely says, "from my hand, to my son, to make carved image and molten image." The sanctification vow was for her, not him, to make these images. The images would then be given to her son as the leader of the household.

This is why determining the meaning of ל (lamed) isn't always easy. The context has to be considered. For example, various psalms begin with *l'David*. Does that mean "to David" as if the song were written to him? Does it mean "of David" as it is written about him? Or does it mean "from David" (which "of" often also means), as if it is written by him?

The context indicates that David is writing the psalms, especially when he refers to himself in many of them and speaks of things that are recorded elsewhere in Scripture that he did or participated in.

However, rabbis who disagree that David wrote a psalm for one reason or another will argue that the psalm is written "to David." That takes care of theological boxes about Christian beliefs that they don't want to be stuck in.

Here in Judges, Micah is the man of the house now. Thus, it is likely his father has died. Naming him *mikhay'hu*, Who is Like Yehovah, showed that his father was probably a sound worshipper of Yehovah, or at least he had the Lord on his mind.

His mother determined that this money would be dedicated to the Lord to make these images in order to serve the Lord, and she is doing it with the thought that Micah will be the one who was to oversee the worship rites. Therefore...

⁴ (con't) **Then his mother took two hundred *shekels* of silver and gave them to the silversmith,**

Rather than a noun, it is a masculine verb: *vatiqakh imo matayim keseph vatitnehu latsoreph* – "And takes, his mother, two hundred silver, and gives it to the smelting [guy]." The mother is the one who dedicated the silver and is having the silver fulfill its vowed purpose.

Of the number two hundred, Bullinger says that it is tenfold of twenty. Twenty is the number of expectancy. Ten indicates that the whole cycle is complete. As such, it is as if the expectancy is never realized and thus, he says –

"The significance of this number is suggested by John 6:7, where we read, 'Two hundred pennyworth of bread is NOT SUFFICIENT for them.' And so we find this number stamping various things with insufficiency."

Thus, in short, it signifies insufficiency.

⁴ (con't) **and he made it into a carved image and a molded image; and they were in the house of Micah.**

vayaasehu pesel u-masekhah vayhi b'veith mikhay'hu – “And he makes it carved image and molten image. And is in house Micayehu.” The smelting guy made the images. The amount is curious because the mother dedicated the entire sum to Yehovah, but it says she only gave two hundred to the silversmith.

Various suggestions have been made as to why. Some seem reasonable. But the words are focused on the number, and thus insufficiency. That is what is being tied into the narrative concerning these images.

Another issue arises in Judges 18. Despite both the carved image and the molten image having been carried away by the Danites, it will later say –

“Then the children of Dan set up for themselves the carved image; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.” Judges 18:30

Because only the carved image is set up, this begs the question: Where is the molten image? Some scholars think they are one unit where the molten image is the base of the carved image. But because the carved image is always mentioned first, noting it was set up could simply be a note that everything else was set up with it.

Regardless, at this time, it says...

⁵ **The man Micah had a shrine,**

v'ha'ish mikhah lo beith elohim – “And the man, Micah, to him house gods.” Of verse 5, Keil interestingly says the following –

His mother did this, because her son Micah had a house of God, and had had an ephod and teraphim made for himself, and one of his sons consecrated to officiate there as a priest. מיכה האיש (the man Micah) is therefore placed at the head absolutely, and is connected with what follows by לו: ‘As for the man Micah, there was to him (he had) a house of God.’ The whole verse is a circumstantial clause explanatory of what precedes, and the following verbs ... are simply a continuation of the first clause, and therefore to be rendered as pluperfects.”

In other words, he is placing this verse after verse 1 and saying all the rest of what we have analyzed fills in the blanks –

“And is man from Mount Ephraim, and his name Micayehu. ... The man Micah had a shrine.”

This is an interesting take on the narrative and it is not without precedent in Judges. We have seen two narratives overlap and later meet up to continue on as one narrative. However, I think there is a problem with that in this story which is seen in the name of the man.

His name changes permanently here: *v’ha’ish mikhah lo beith elohim* – “And the man, Micah, to him house gods.” The name in verses 1 & 4 was *mikhay’hu* and here it is *mikhah*. It is hard to imagine that the name change would happen chronologically before the narrative aligns as Keil suggests.

Here is what his suggestion looks like chronologically –

1. And is man from Mount Ephraim, and his name Micayehu.
5. And the man, Micah, to him house gods [already filled with gods].
4. And he makes it carved image and molten image. And is in house Micayehu.

As his name is changed, information is being assigned to that name. The assignment of the information isn’t contingent on chronology, but it appears that the change of information assigns chronology. Micah comes from the word *mi*, who, and the [כה] *kah* at the end becomes debatable.

The letters correspond to the word *koh*, a demonstrative adverb indicating manner, place, or time. It specifically means “like this.” The name could then read Who’s Like This, Who is Thus, Who’s Here, Who Now, etc. Less likely, but still possible, the כה could also be from one of a couple of similar roots which would lead to possibilities such as Who is Disheartened, Who is a Coward, Who is Afraid, etc.

The name *mikhay’hu* was used twice. This new name, *mikhah*, will be used seven times in this chapter and twelve in the next. He has built a house of gods for his images. It is not uncommon to read commentaries that say it should read House of God, as if the images were to worship only the true God, Yehovah.

If that was the case, one might assume that it would be called Beith Yehovah, House of Yehovah rather than house of gods. And more, if there is more than one image, that option could in no way be considered as such. There is one Yehovah.

If someone incorrectly had a single god and associated it with Yehovah, he might get away with that as Aaron tried to do with the golden calf. But there is no way two or more idols could be equated to the sole worship of Yehovah.

Adam Clarke thinks that Micah's shrine is a replica of the tabernacle and he has set up a little ark with a mercy seat and all the other tabernacle furniture. There is nothing to suggest this.

As for the money, if the two hundred of silver was for the two images, then it is possible that the rest may have gone into the things mentioned here, such as the shrine and what follows...

⁵ (con't) **and made an ephod and household idols;**

vayaas ephod utraphim – “And makes ephod and teraphim.” An ephod is a priestly garment set apart for ministering to the gods of the house.

This is comparable to what is seen in the Roman Catholic Church with their supposed priestly garments that are used when ministering to the ten thousand images and idols they have set up. One might say that is the House of God, but it is a house of gods.

As for the *teraphim*, it is unknown what they are. It is a plural word and the singular is never used. They were first seen in Genesis 31:19 where Rachel stole her father's teraphim. In verse 31:30, Laban specifically calls them his gods.

In 1 Samuel 15, the word is used in a truly negative sense –

“So Samuel said:

‘Has the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices,

As in obeying the voice of the LORD?

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,

And to heed than the fat of rams.

²³ For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft,

And stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry [*teraphim*].

Because you have rejected the word of the LORD,
He also has rejected you from *being* king.” 1 Samuel 15:22, 23

There are fifteen uses of *teraphim* in the Old Testament but none of them clearly define what they are. Whatever they are, they can in no way be considered in the proper worship of the Lord. It is no wonder that the name of Micah changes in this verse.

He has gone from Who is Like Yehovah to Who is Like This. We could pick up one of his little gods and toss it on the ground where it would shatter into the nothingness that it always was.

^{5 (con't)} **and he consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest.**

vaymale eth yad akhad mibanav vayhi lo l'khohen – “And fills hand one from his sons. And is, to him, to priest.” To fill the hand signifies to consecrate. In the case of Aaron and his sons, that was done with the sacrificial offerings –

“Also you shall take the fat of the ram, the fat tail, the fat that covers the entrails, the fatty lobe *attached to* the liver, the two kidneys and the fat on them, the right thigh (for it *is* a ram of consecration), ²³ one loaf of bread, one cake *made with* oil, and one wafer from the basket of the unleavened bread that *is* before the LORD; ²⁴ and you shall put all these in the hands of Aaron and in the hands of his sons, and you shall wave them *as* a wave offering before the LORD. ²⁵ You shall receive them back from their hands and burn *them* on the altar as a burnt offering, as a sweet aroma before the LORD. It *is* an offering made by fire to the LORD.” Exodus 29:22-25

The mother sanctified the silver to be used for this purpose. She followed through for her son to receive charge of the ministry to these images. He now delegates the actual service of these things to a son whom he has consecrated to be his priest for this purpose.

During these four verses, there has been an explicit violation of at least half of the Ten Commandments –

You shall have no other gods before Me. Fail.

You shall not make for yourself a carved image. Fail.

You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain. Possible fail.

Honor your father and your mother. Fail.

You shall not steal. Fail.
You shall not covet. Fail.

There are also violations of other parts of the Mosaic Code as well. This is one house out of the innumerable homes in Israel at the time. It is a time of lawlessness despite being under the law. The sad state of affairs leads the author to implicitly state what he feels is the remedy for this situation.

Unfortunately, what is stated will simply lead to other problems. That point begins with the words...

⁶ **In those days *there was* no king in Israel;**

bayamim ha'hem ein melekh b'Yisrael – “In the days, the those, naught king in Israel.” These words tell us that the narrative was either written or compiled and edited during the time of the kings. Until there was a king, there was no king. To write that this was in the days when there was no king acknowledges that there was a king when the narrative is being presented.

The words imply that a king would rectify the situation. And this is just what the author (compiler or editor) next presents...

^{6 (fin)} **everyone did *what was* right in his own eyes.**

ish ha'yashar b'enav yaaseh – “Man the straight in his eyes does.” As there was no king in Israel, everyone saw his own path as the straight or right one and then took it.

We are being reintroduced to a thought that was already presented in Genesis. From those first events in Genesis, a dispensational model developed within the pages of Scripture. But here we find a set of dispensations within the dispensation of the law.

It began in Exodus, but these words show us that this is what has been going on.

What is straight to one person won't be straight to another. And what is straight to most people is not what the Lord sees as straight. If a king is appointed over these people, what would be the result?

This is what these words are asking us to consider. The answer would logically be, “Whatever is straight in the king's eyes.” This will be borne out in the coming books,

from 1 Samuel to 2 Chronicles, along with the prophets which fill in detail concerning the time of the kings.

And another point, if Jesus is the King of Israel, and this is typologically anticipating something else, then what is this time with no king anticipating? This will be fleshed out as we continue through these final chapters of Judges.

*The covenant was cut and the law was set
“Do these things and you will live.”
Be sure that My word, you don’t forget
And the blessings of heaven I will give*

*But when you fail in this, that is sin
And with that, My law is broken
Without mercy, you would be done in
But mercy I give as a faithful token*

*And on the day when the law is done
You no longer need to follow that path
All is accomplished in the giving of My Son
It’s either Jesus or all those laws, you do the math*

III. Right In His Own Eyes

In Genesis, God gave a law to Adam. Adam did what was straight to him, regardless of what the Lord said. He thought it was a **blast**. And because of what he did, out of the garden he was **cast**.

Without any further instruction from God, but simply living under the law of conscience, fallen man did what was straight in his own eyes as if spiritually **asleep**. That lasted till the year 1656 Anno Mundi and then down came the rains and up broke the fountains of the great **deep**.

From there, God set up the nations under various governments of peoples through the manipulation of their **speech**. This was based on his words to Noah in Genesis 9, but it was most fully realized when the nations were divided in Genesis 11, in humanity came the language **breach**.

People had minimal instruction on what the Lord expected, and they were structured to set up their own laws and live within governments and territories that were carefully monitored by the Lord, as can be inferred from Daniel –

“Blessed be the name of God forever and ever,
For wisdom and might are His.

²¹ And He changes the times and the seasons;
He removes kings and raises up kings;
He gives wisdom to the wise
And knowledge to those who have understanding.” Daniel 2:21, 22

This same thought is expressed elsewhere in various ways. The Lord is guiding human history. But during that time of government, which continues **today**, He called out a group of people to preserve a proper understanding of Him through a set and detailed worship of Him, showing them His **way**.

He gave them His law, just as He had done for Adam. It was a bit more detailed than Adam’s, but it was nonetheless a law that He expected to be obeyed, even if He knew they would not obey it.

From there, mini-dispensations have been introduced. Like Adam, the Israelites immediately failed at Sinai by rejecting Him and His law, even while Moses was on the mountain receiving more of it.

There was the time of Moses’ stewardship of the law, which was a time of disaster as well, both by the people’s failing to adhere to it and Moses failing to do as he was told at one key point. There was the transition to Joshua where there were setbacks, such as with Achan. But things went reasonably well.

However, at the end of the final chapter of Joshua, we saw these words –

“Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the LORD which He had done for Israel.” Joshua 24:31

By reading that verse, one can tell that trouble is just the turn of a page away.

And sure enough, after that, there was the time of the Judges. They were localized in their rule and they met with some degree of success, but there was no overall king to

guide the nation. And so, everyone did what was straight for them, ignoring the fact that God had already set forth His commandments for them to live by.

Israel found itself in a time not unlike that of conscience that preceded the flood. They did have the law, but there was no mechanism to enforce it. Without that, the law was essentially forgotten.

The last story in Judges, even if it chronologically dates to early in the time of the Judges, shows us that it was a time of rule where the majority made the decisions while at least consulting the Lord. And even when a judge was appointed, there was very little to enforce any meaningful rule he may have determined.

When the kings are introduced, the nation will be expected to abide by the laws of the king who reigns at that time. Governments were even set up under the king to ensure it would be so. But the problem is that it was up to each king to determine if he would follow the Lord or not.

And more, when the nation divided, there were even more complications in ruling the people of God. But each story within the time of the law and each situation in which the people found themselves was, supposedly, to help prepare them for the coming Messiah.

If a Messiah was coming, however, what was the point of all of the failed history? Why didn't God just send the Messiah at the beginning and be done with it? It is the same reason why the dispensation in Eden failed.

Human beings cannot appreciate what they have not experienced. Without a minute record of the failings, we could not know that the better way given by God is truly the best way.

This is what makes law observance by people in the world today so maddening to consider. Man has already gone that route. And not just once under ideal circumstances as in Eden. It has been repeatedly brought forth in one situation or another since then. These accounts are showing us that law is not what man needs.

The words of the final verse today say, "In the days, the those, no king in Israel. Man the straight in his eyes does." This is not God telling us that a king will resolve the situation. It is Him telling us that another attempt at fixing the problem of man under law is

forthcoming but which will be no remedy at all. Well, at least in relation to a king who is not the Lord.

If you have read those books, you already know this. If you haven't, pick up your Bible and read it. Things do not go well for the people under the kings. A good king with a proper-running and God-honoring society is a rare thing. And as soon as he is gone, things will normally devolve in the turn of a single page.

After the time of the kings, Israel will be ruled by foreign governments. That era of Israel's history didn't pan out well either. What man needs is something entirely different, something not initiated or maintained by himself.

What we need is grace. Grace comes from outside ourselves as God is the One who lavishes it upon us. But we are so prone to law, even if it means going under it so that we can break it, that is the path that most choose. It is hard to set self aside and simply yield to God, but that is what He asks us to do.

Jesus came and took care of the law problem. Now, He offers us God's grace. Are you ready to accept the grace and give up on self? If so, God has a place for you in His kingdom. Receive His gift by faith and it will be yours forever.

Closing Verse: *"I will extol You, my God, O King;
And I will bless Your name forever and ever." Psalm 145:1*

Next Week: Judges 17:7-13 *Things are not looking swell. Yes, it's true...* (No King In Israel, Part II) (49th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

No King in Israel, Part I

Now there was a man
From the mountains of Ephraim
Whose name was Micah
This guy was a bit extreme

And he said to his mother

"The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from you
And on which you put a curse, even saying it in my ears
Here is the silver with me; I took it. Sad but true

And his mother said in her state of stun
"May you be blessed by the LORD, my son!

So when he had returned the eleven hundred shekels of silver
To his mother, his mother said about what was done
"I had wholly dedicated the silver
From my hand to the LORD for my son

To make a carved image and a molded image, yes, it's true
Now therefore, I will return it to you

Thus he returned the silver to his mother
Then his mother took two hundred shekels of silver
------(amazing but true)
And gave them to the silversmith
And he made it into a carved image and a molded image too

And they were in the house of Micah
Idolatry all day, zippedeecedoodah

The man Micah had a shrine
And made an ephod and household idols, an idolatry feast
And he consecrated one of his sons
Who became his priest

In those days there was no king in Israel
Everyone did what was right in his own eyes
-----a sad story to tell

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone

We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 17:7-13 (NO KING IN ISRAEL, PART II)

The contents of the passage today, as they point to Christ, were as difficult for me to think through as any in recent memory. Analyzing and explaining the content of the verses only took until about 9:30 in the morning.

Once that was done, I needed to sort out what we are being told. At 10:54, I sent a message to Sergio, "I have no idea what Judges 17 is telling us." After sitting, rereading time and again, and praying the entire time, I sent another message at 2:31, "I think I got it. Had to pray to the Lord for over 3 hours."

What seems obvious now wasn't easy to come by. But a few moral lessons did show up along the way. Matthew Henry provides these words concerning the verses in this passage –

"Thus those who please themselves with their own delusions, if Providence unexpectedly bring any thing to their hands that further them in their evil way, are apt from thence to think that God is pleased with them."

It is a correct analysis and it fits well with a news headline on the same day this was typed. A U.S. House of Representatives member informed the public that she has pancreatic cancer. In her statement, like bookends, she said, "My adult life has been defined by my faith in God... By God's grace, I will be back at full strength soon."

For a person who has spent her entire political career doing anything but honoring God, she suddenly has a need to invoke his name. Providence, indeed, brought her many opportunities. And she has taken every one of them to further her work in the evil decisions she has made, all the while thinking that God must be pleased with her.

She is just one example of innumerable people throughout the ages who have treated God as a secondary weapon in their arsenal of iniquity. They will utter His name if it is convenient and beneficial to them, but He is far from their hearts.

Text Verse: *"Has a nation changed its gods,
Which are not gods?
But My people have changed their Glory
For what does not profit." Jeremiah 2:11*

Judges 17 is well reflected in the words of Jeremiah, even if Jeremiah is dealing with an individual and not the entire nation. The name of the Lord is mentioned twice by Micah's mother and only once by Micah in this passage. And his selfish proclamation is only found in the last verse.

So how does this story point to Jesus? It seems hard to make any comparisons. And yet, Abarim insightfully did so –

“To give a hint to the literary complexity of this story: the Levite from Judah who was forced to hire himself to a wealthy Ephraimite is obviously a manifestation of the Suffering Servant of which Jesus is the most familiar. Then note how the Book of the formally unrelated prophet Micah deals with the same themes and even how Matthew weaves these into the gospel of Immanuel.” Abarim

Even if this priest is brought into the picture in order to do inappropriate things, things entirely unlike Jesus, the overall premise that Abarim speaks of is exactly right.

The whole story speaks of total apostasy mingled with nothing more than lip service to the Lord. And yet we can find Jesus in it. It begs us to each consider our own situation. Are we proclaiming Jesus outwardly and yet living as if He is only an afterthought? Or are we truly living with Him on our minds at all times?

Let us not be like the faithless representative from Texas who has spent her years enriching and exalting herself while paying mere lip service to the Lord. Now, while facing her time of crisis, who does she piously return to with the general word “God?”

It is the God who will not be mocked. We all have choices to make and will all stand before Him someday and give an account for our actions. This is a lesson that is on prominent display in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. A Levite, a Servant, a Father, a Son, and a Priest (vss. 7-13)

The narrative of Micah and his mother, as detailed in Judges 17:1-6 ended with the words, “In the days, the those, no king in Israel, man the straight in his eyes does” (CG). It is a time of lawlessness. Those words provide an explanation for the coming words...

⁷ Now there was a young man from Bethlehem in Judah,

vayhi naar mibeith lekhem y'hudah – “And is, servant, from Bethlehem Judah.” The word translated as servant, *naar*, comes from the verb *naar*, to shake. That, in turn, is identical to *naar*, to growl. Thus, one can think of the rustling of a lion’s mane as he growls, shaking his head.

Typically, *naar* signifies young men as they are often restless or active. However, at times it plainly indicates a person in a position of service –

“And the king called to Ziba, Saul’s servant [*naar*], and said to him, ‘I have given to your master’s son all that belonged to Saul and to all his house. ¹⁰You therefore, and your sons and your servants, shall work the land for him, and you shall bring in *the harvest*, that your master’s son may have food to eat. But Mephibosheth your master’s son shall eat bread at my table always.’ Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.” 2 Samuel 9:9, 10

If Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants, he wasn’t a young man. Thus, the term is clearly being used in a technical sense as a servant. This would be like the Greek word deacon. It comes from *diá*, thoroughly, and *konis*, dust. He is one who thoroughly raises the dust as he scurries about.

It is of note that the root *naar* is used in relation to the dust in Isaiah 52 –

“Awake, awake!
Put on your strength, O Zion;
Put on your beautiful garments,
O Jerusalem, the holy city!
For the uncircumcised and the unclean
Shall no longer come to you.
² Shake [*naar*] yourself from the dust, arise;
Sit down, O Jerusalem!
Loose yourself from the bonds of your neck,
O captive daughter of Zion!” Isaiah 52:1, 2

The deacon raises the dust through activity and the servant shakes, as if removing the dust that might be raised during his time of activity.

A detailed explanation is given because of the complicated nature in the words of the next clause. He is from Bethlehem Judah. This is stated to distinguish it from another Bethlehem located in Zebulun as noted in Joshua 19:15.

Bethlehem means House of Bread (*lekhem*), but without the vowel pointing it is identical to the verb meaning war (*lakham*). Thus, it has a secondary meaning of House of War (Battle). The connection between the two terms is that in battle, those being killed are consumed like food.

Judah means Praise. Of him, it next says...

⁷ (con't) **of the family of Judah; he *was* a Levite,**

The words are debated, difficult to explain, and initiate some interesting thoughts that will be more fully looked into elsewhere: *mimishpakhath y'hudah v'hu levi* – “from family Judah. And he, Levite.”

The words “from family Judah” cause complications. He cannot be a Levite if he is from the family of Judah, not Levi, unless the word Levite is being applied in a technical sense. The tribe of Levi and those who descend from it had a job to perform which then became associated with the name.

So, if someone else performed the Levitical duties, he could claim to be a Levite. This would be like saying, “he is a plumber,” even though he is not from the Plumber family. This explanation doesn't seem likely though, especially because we will be told more about him later.

Some look to the words as a further explanation, “He came from Bethlehem Judah ... which is of the family of Judah.” Why this repetition of Judah would somehow be necessary is hard to explain.

One possibility is that his mother was of the family of Judah, so he settled in Bethlehem because of his relationship to her, even though tribal ancestry (being a Levite) comes through the line of the father.

Another view is that his family settled in Bethlehem and he was then considered a member of the family in regard to civil matters.

As usual, there are those who claim the text is wrong and that the words are spurious. However, it is hard to see how such words could be erroneously entered into the text and not weeded out immediately. Thus, the words are original. They are specifically stated to give typology, regardless of which explanation just given (or another) is the correct one. Of him...

⁷ (con't) **and was staying there.**

v'hu gar sham – “and he sojourning there.” He is a servant from Bethlehem Judah, of the family of Judah (whatever that actually means), a Levite, and he was staying in Judah.

Here we have a person introduced who is believed to be the same person noted in Judges 18:30, Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh (Moses). This will be more carefully evaluated when we get there, but the words now, *v'hu gar sham*, “and he sojourning there,” are the same words that the name Gershom is derived from.

The name comes from *gur*, to sojourn, and *sham*, there. Thus, the name means Stranger There, Exile, Expelled. There is more to that name as we will see later. There is a connection being made between this verse and his name as recorded in verse 18:30. For now...

⁸ **The man departed from the city of Bethlehem in Judah to stay wherever he could find a place.**

vayelekh ha'ish meha'ir mibeith lekhem y'hudah lagur baasher yimtsa – “And walks, the man, from the city, from Bethlehem Judah, to sojourn in which finding.” He is looking for a place to live and work.

Here the word *ish*, man, is used. However Judges 18 will again speak of the *naar*, servant, as just used in verse 17:7. Because of this, Cambridge says that these cannot be the same person. They conclude, therefore, that this is not the same young man just mentioned in the previous verse. The ongoing narrative does not bear this out.

Rather, the term *naar* is being used in the sense of a servant, which may help explain the unusual wording of the previous verse. Thus, the words of verse 7 probably contain a parenthesis which then explains his technical relation to Judah –

“And is, servant (from Bethlehem Judah) from family Judah. And he, Levite.” As a Levite, he ministered to the family of Judah. This is a suitable resolution to the otherwise complicated words.

As the previous sermon ended with the thought that there was no king and everyone did what was right in his own eyes, this would include a neglect of the Levites. Such was the case at other times as well –

"I also realized that the portions for the Levites had not been given *them*; for each of the Levites and the singers who did the work had gone back to his field."

-Nehemiah 13:10

The Levites were not given a tribal land inheritance in Israel. They were attached to tribes, given cities to dwell in, and they were to minister to the people of the tribes of Israel. This young Levite might have been neglected in Judah, and he decided to find some other place where he could live and minister. And so he walked...

⁸ (con't) **Then he came to the mountains of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, as he journeyed.**

vayavo har ephrayim ad beith mikhah laasoth darko – "And comes Mount Ephraim until house Micah, to make his way." Here is the uniting of the previous narrative with the account of the Levite. This Levite, looking for a new place to do his shaking, came to Mount Ephraim and eventually wound up at Micah's house.

⁹ **And Micah said to him, "Where do you come from?"
So he said to him, "I *am* a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, and I am on my way to find *a place* to stay."**

vayomer lo mikhah meayin tavo vayomer elav levi anokhi mibeith lekhem y'udah v'anokhi holekh lagur baasher emtsa – "And says to him, Micah, 'From whence come.' And says unto him, Levite, 'I from Bethlehem Judah, and I walking to sojourn in which find.'"

Nothing is said about how the Levite wound up here. Micah appears to live on a main road. As will be evidenced later. The Levite may have simply stopped there as he traveled.

Or, he may have heard that Micah had a house with a shrine. Therefore, he went there in hopes of employment. If the latter, it would perfectly explain the next words...

¹⁰ **Micah said to him, "Dwell with me, and be a father and a priest to me,**

vayomer lo mikhah sh'vah imadi vehyeh li l'av u-l'kohen – "And says to him, Micah, 'Dwell with me and be to me to father and to priest.'" Here we have the word *av*, father, being used as an honorific title and in an ecclesiastical sense, just as it is used today.

Some denominations use the term father when referring to their priest. This is seen several times elsewhere for spiritual leaders –

“Then it shall be in that day,
That I will call My servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah;
²¹ I will clothe him with your robe
And strengthen him with your belt;
I will commit your responsibility into his hand.
He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem
And to the house of Judah.” Isaiah 22:20, 21

Micah is saying that the Levite will be the spiritual head of the house. He will be the one to seek out God’s will, favor, mediation, and atonement as needed...

¹⁰ (con’t) **and I will give you ten *shekels* of silver per year, a suit of clothes, and your sustenance.”**

v’anokhi eten l’kha asereth keseph layamim v’erekh b’gadim u-mikhyathekha – “and I give to you ten silver to the days, and arrangement garments, and your sustenance.” It is not a lot of money but would equate to only a few dollars “to the days,” meaning in a year of days. However, with an arrangement of clothing, and his food and lodging, it would be what a Levite might expect, having no land inheritance of his own.

¹⁰ (con’t) **So the Levite went in.**

Rather: *vayelekh ha’levi* – “And walks, the Levite.” What this seems to imply is that the Levite continued on, considering the proposition while looking for a better opportunity elsewhere. However, he eventually accepts the offer...

¹¹ **Then the Levite was content to dwell with the man;**

vayoel ha’levi lasheveth eth ha’ish – “And determines, the Levite, to dwell with the man.” The word is *yaal*, to yield, be willing, etc. He considered his options and determined that this was the best avenue open to him. Therefore, he dwelt with Micah. Ironically, it next says...

¹¹ (con’t) **and the young man became like one of his sons to him.**

vayhi ha'naar lo k'akhad mibanav – “And is, the servant, to him according to one from his sons.” In verse 5, Micah had ordained one of his sons to be his priest. In verse 10, Micah promised the Levite he would be a father to him. Now, as his father, the Levite is like one of his sons –

- 5. The man Micah ... consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest.
- 10. Dwell with me, and be a father and a priest to me.
- 11. Then the Levite ... became like one of his sons to him.

Even though he is a servant, an attendant, he is also like a son in the family of Micah...

¹² So Micah consecrated the Levite, and the young man became his priest, and lived in the house of Micah.

vaymale mikhah eth yad ha'levi vayhi lo ha'naar l'khohen vayhi b'vieth mikhah – “And fills, Micah, hand the Levite. And is to him, the servant, to priest. And is in house Micah.” To fill the hand signifies to consecrate. This was explained in verse 5. Upon his consecration, he attends in Micah's house as a priest.

Because of the events that have now come to pass...

^{13 (fin)} Then Micah said, “Now I know that the LORD will be good to me, since I have a Levite as priest!”

vayomer mikhah atah yadati ki yetiv Yehovah li ki hayah li ha'levi l'khohen – “And says, Micah, ‘Now I knew that Yehovah does good to me, for have to me the Levite to priest.’” Being fully ignorant of the law, including all of his violations of it in the thirteen verses of this chapter, he assumes that having a Levite will bring him blessing and prosperity.

However, this is an additional violation of the law. Levites were not to perform the duties of a priest. An exception to this, due to the surrounding situation, is noted in 2 Chronicles 29:34 –

“But the priests were too few, so that they could not skin all the burnt offerings; therefore their brethren the Levites helped them until the work was ended and until the *other* priests had sanctified themselves, for the Levites were more diligent in sanctifying themselves than the priests.”

In fact, this is exactly the type of situation that brought about the wrath of the Lord against Korah while in the wilderness –

“Then Moses said to Korah, ‘Hear now, you sons of Levi: ⁹*Is it* a small thing to you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself, to do the work of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to serve them; ¹⁰and that He has brought you near *to Himself*, you and all your brethren, the sons of Levi, with you? And are you seeking the priesthood also? ¹¹Therefore you and all your company *are* gathered together against the LORD. And what *is* Aaron that you complain against him?’”

-Numbers 16:8-11

The entire passage has been wrought with apostasy.

*Now I know that the Lord will be good to me
Because I have all of these things:
I have idols, garments, and a priest, you see
I shall see what each of these things brings*

*This idol thingy is like the Lord, whoo hoo!
And so is this one, can't you see
This thingy is like the Lord too
Good things for sure will be coming to me*

*And this is what it is all about
It's about how the Lord will be good to me
We can be certain of this, no doubt
I have idols, and garments, and a priest, you see*

II. Keep Yourselfs From Idols

Judges 17 was about as hard to decipher as a super-enigma machine. A lot of contemplation was needed, but a lot of prayer was needed even more. This is because there are times when pictures of Christ don't seem possible.

The corruption of the people and the troubling events that take place make it difficult to see the glory of who Jesus is and what He has done. But sometimes a contrast reveals more than a direct comparison. This is how it is in this passage.

The narrative is in Canaan, and thus, it refers typologically to events after the coming of Christ. As was noted, the events occur chronologically early in the narrative of Judges, even though they are recorded towards the end of the book.

Verse 1 noted that the story is in Mount Ephraim. The mount has consistently been seen as synonymous with a large but centralized group of people. Ephraim has consistently pictured the work of Christ, Twice Fruitful, signifying His work as effective for saving both Jews and Gentiles. Its second meaning, Ashes, speaks of His afflictions that have made salvation possible.

The man's name is first given in verses 1 & 4 as Micayehu, Who *is* Like Yehovah. It refers to the church, those who bear the image of the Lord as in Colossians 3 –

“Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, ¹⁰ and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, ¹¹ where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *nor* free, but Christ *is* all and in all.” Colossians 3:9-11

In verse 2, the narrative focuses on the eleven hundred of silver that was taken from his mother. Silver signifies redemption. Eleven hundred points to an entire period of a completed cycle (10) marked by disorder, disorganization, imperfection, and disintegration (11).

It is a good description of the church age. Even if its people are perfected in Christ and redeemed, they are still a completely imperfect group of people that form a body that could easily be thought of as a basket case.

The son admits taking the silver and his mother pronounces a blessing of the Lord on him. In verse 3, he is said to return the silver to his mother. She then says that she dedicated the silver to the Lord for her son to make a carved image and a molded image, meaning idols.

At that declaration, he says, “And now, I return it to you.” Verse 4 confirms that he returned it. Upon receiving it, she took two hundred of silver and had it fashioned into her idols. Two hundred is the number of insufficiency.

Despite silver signifying redemption, its weight and purpose mean that it is insufficient to do what it is intended to do. Also in verse 4, it said that the smelting guy made the images. Then they were put in the house of Micayehu, Who *is* Like Yehovah.

Immediately after that, in verse 5, the man's name is changed from Micayehu to Micah. It no longer refers to Who *is* like Yehovah, but Who *is* Like This. Even if the person, represented by Micah, is supposedly in the church of the Lord, he is not like the Lord. As Jeremiah says –

“Everyone is dull-hearted, without knowledge;
Every metalsmith is put to shame by an image;
For his molded image *is* falsehood,
And *there is* no breath in them.
¹⁵ They *are* futile, a work of errors;
In the time of their punishment they shall perish.
¹⁶ The Portion of Jacob *is* not like them,
For He *is* the Maker of all *things*,
And Israel *is* the tribe of His inheritance;
The LORD of hosts *is* His name.” Jeremiah 10:14-16

Micah made a house of gods, an ephod and teraphim. It is a marvelous depiction of the Roman Catholic Church and many other sects and denominations. They may claim they serve in the House of God, but it is really a house of gods.

The note about consecrating one of Micah's sons to be his priest fits perfectly with the thought of the Roman Catholic Church because they have priests who supposedly mediate to God for them. Other large (un)orthodox denominations have similar structures.

Verse 6 noted that there was no king in Israel in those days. This is a true statement. Israel has no king during the church age, even if they have remained as a people. Likewise, there is no king apart from Jesus in the church, which is a part of the commonwealth of Israel, but He is not a king in the sense of active rulership over the churches that comprise His church. He is the King of Israel, but not currently the King in Israel.

Instead, each church essentially does what is right in its own eyes. If they follow the word, this is great. If not, it isn't, but it is up to the people to do what they want, attend

where they want, and so forth. There is no mandated structure that is meticulously ruled over by a single authoritative king.

Verse 7 introduces the *naar*, the servant, from Bethlehem Judah. What we have here is a picture of Jesus Christ in every sense, even if it is not necessarily a picture of Him to those who welcome Him in. In other words, the apostate church naturally proclaims to be a church under Christ.

No matter how many idols clutter up the house of God, the church falls under the broad category of belonging to Jesus. Even Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses supposedly confess Jesus. Hence, they fall under the broad category of being Christian.

The word *naar* is never directly equated to Jesus in a notable comparison in any Old Testament passage, but at least two times it is used when referring to Him in prophecy –

“For before the Child [*ha'naar*] shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you dread will be forsaken by both her kings.” Isaiah 7:16

“When Israel *was* a child [*naar*], I loved him,
And out of Egypt I called My son. Hosea 11:1

Matthew 1 cites both Isaiah 7:14 and the second half of Hosea 11:1. As those refer to Jesus, then these Old Testament references do also.

Being from Bethlehem (House of Bread) in Judah (Praise) is a reference to Jesus. Being of the family of Judah is a reference to Jesus. And, as was seen in many previous passages concerning the Levites (Attached), they anticipate Jesus as the Firstborn because they replaced the firstborn males of Israel. It is He who is Attached to God as the Firstborn of God.

Verse 8 says that the Levite departed from Bethlehem in Judah. It is fitting of Jesus who is from heaven. This Levite who is so much like Jesus in every way came to Mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah (Who *is* Like This).

In verse 9, the man was queried by Micah, and he provided the details of who he was, where he was from, and what he was looking for. Micah (Who *is* Like This) asked him in verse 10 to dwell with him and be a father and a priest to him. It is what any apostate church that claims to be a Christian church would do.

Micah offered silver, clothes, and sustenance to the Levite. What does Jesus do? He offers us redemption, garments of righteousness, and sustenance – exactly the opposite of what occurs here. Jesus does the offering to His people, not the other way around.

To understand this, think of the Jehovah's Witnesses. Or better, the Church of Christ. They say you must be baptized and it must be in one of their churches. Instead of Jesus offering salvation to the flock, they offer their (supposed) salvation to Jesus. It is essentially what the Roman Catholic Church does as well.

After that, the Levite walks, a strange set of words that seem to make no sense. The Levite considers whether he will accept. In verse 11, the Levite determined to dwell with Micah, and he became like one of his sons to him.

If Micah already had a son who was his priest, then it means that this Levite is just another priest to him, even if he is in a different category. This typifies churches where Jesus is just another way of getting through to God.

In verse 12, Micah consecrated the Levite and the servant became his priest, "And is in house Micah." Who *is* Like This has a representation of Jesus in his church, even if it isn't the Jesus he really needs. With that feeling of satisfaction, the narrative ended with, "Now I knew that Yehovah does good to me, for have to me the Levite to priest."

Micah is hoping to get good out of the Lord because he has his supposed priest along with his idols and vestments. But he, and the churches he reflects, will find out that what he wants and what he will get are not the same thing.

When I typed about the congresswoman I mentioned as we opened, I could only feel pity for her. Hideko has gone through cancer. Regardless of how you treat it, there is no simple way to get through it.

There is a difference though. Hideko has faithfully trusted Jesus each step of the way and has taken this as a part of what He has allowed in her life. And it has been a life of faithfully following Jesus for many years.

However, since I originally typed this, the congresswoman died. She now will face the Lord on whatever her relationship was with Him. As far as I know, she never committed her life to Him. And if not, her end will not be a good one.

Regardless of her, the God people suddenly reach out to in their distress is often forgotten in their victory over the affliction. This can even be to the point where they double down in their sin, thinking they have been so blessed in order to continue the wayward life they were previously leading, as if this was God's way of demonstrating this to them.

Each of us needs to consider how we are appealing to Him and in what circumstances we are doing so. And so, let us do so every day. Think about your relationship with Him and how you can honor Him more each day.

Talk to Him like you would talk to any friend you are walking with. Think of Him as you think of your sweetest friendship, and be sure that your conversations are not just lip service in hopes of getting something out of Him. Instead, let your words return good things to Him.

Our God is great and deserving of all our praise, glory, and adoration. Be sure to give it to Him in whopping doses every day.

Closing Verse: *"But our God is in heaven;*

He does whatever He pleases.

⁴ Their idols are silver and gold,

The work of men's hands.

⁵ They have mouths, but they do not speak;

Eyes they have, but they do not see;

⁶ They have ears, but they do not hear;

Noses they have, but they do not smell;

⁷ They have hands, but they do not handle;

Feet they have, but they do not walk;

Nor do they mutter through their throat.

⁸ Those who make them are like them;

So is everyone who trusts in them." Psalm 115:3-8

Next Week: Judges 18:1-20 *Dan is looking for an inheritance – so I tell and so you will see...* (No King In Israel, Part III) (50th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

No King In Israel, Part II

Now there was a young man
From Bethlehem in Judah, that is where
Of the family of Judah; he was a Levite
And was staying there

The man departed from the city of Bethlehem in Judah
To stay wherever he could find a place
Then he came to the mountains of Ephraim
To the house of Micah, as he journeyed, coming to Micah's space

And Micah said to him
"Where do you come from, I pray?
So he said to him, "I am a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah
And I am on my way to find a place to stay

Micah said to him, "Dwell with me
And be a father and a priest to me (when can you begin?)
And I will give you ten shekels of silver per year, a suit of clothes
And your sustenance." So the Levite went in

Then the Levite was content to dwell with the man
And the young man became like one of his sons to him
----- (but later we'll see he is a louse)
So Micah consecrated the Levite
And the young man became his priest, and lived in Micah's house

Then Micah said
"Now I know that the LORD will be good to me
Since I have a Levite as priest!"
Not a clear thinker, as you can see

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone

We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 18:1-20 (NO KING IN ISRAEL, PART III)

There are various approaches to translating the word. One is word-for-word literal. From there, one can swing all the way to the other end of the spectrum and have a paraphrase that conveys the sense of what is recorded in a way that even a poor reader can understand.

There is also what is known as dynamic equivalence. An idea is presented in an understandable way, carrying the same meaning as something that may be completely obscure to someone reading a literal translation.

For example, if I were to say to you, “Until when you leaping upon two the branches?” that wouldn’t make much sense to you. But that is a literal translation of 1 Kings 18:21. Translators will normally use dynamic equivalence and say something like, “How long will you waver between two opinions?” (NKJV).

That is fine to get the intent, but when doing a detailed analytical sermon on that passage, the most literal translation is necessary. This is why we consult the original text.

Text Verse: *“Blessed be the LORD my Rock,
Who trains my hands for war,
And my fingers for battle.” Psalm 144:1*

Every Monday, when I sit down to type a sermon, I essentially repeat the words of this psalm. It is as if I am going into battle with the words of Scripture, trying to wrestle out what it is telling us. It isn’t always easy. Actually, it hardly ever is. It is a true battle as I struggle with the text.

In the first verse of the passage today, the KJV says, “... for unto that day *all their* inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel.” The italicized words “all their” are entirely wrong, and they give a completely false sense of what is being conveyed. If someone wanted to know what was being said, and then align it with any chronology or typology that was intended, it would be impossible to do so.

This narrative actually occurred long before, either during the time of Joshua or shortly after his death. That will be explained as we go through the verses, but understanding

this tells us that the events recorded here are presented for a categorical reason, apart from the actual chronology.

This is why going through verses in a line-by-line (or verse-by-verse) manner is really the only way to be sure about what the text says. It is true that my translation could be wrong, or my conclusions could be completely off base, but that will certainly be the case without a competent literal translation.

Despite taking up more time and making things more confusing at the beginning, it will lead to a better understanding of what is being presented at the end. So, let's get into another deep dive into what God has for us. Great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. God Has Given It Into Your Hands (verses 1-10)

¹ In those days *there was* no king in Israel.

bayamim hahem ein melekh b'Yisrael – “In the days, the those, naught king in Israel.” It is a letter for letter copy of the words of the corresponding clause in Judges 17:6. There is not a unified leadership to direct the people. As seen in the previous sermon, this represents the time of the church age. Despite having the word, including the epistles, to direct us, churches are left to follow their own ideas of what is right and what is wrong.

Israel had the law, but there was not a unified leadership to unite the tribes and direct them accordingly. Thus, everyone was out doing whatever he thought was best, whether that included adherence to the word or not. As for the narrative, it next says...

^{1 (con't)} And in those days the tribe of the Danites was seeking an inheritance for itself to dwell in;

u-vayamim hahem shevet ha'dani m'baqesh lo nakhalah lasheveth – “And in the days, the those, tribe the Danite seeking, to him, inheritance to dwell.” Here the entire tribe of Dan is spoken of in the singular, the Danite. Note that in Joshua 19, the tribe of Dan is the last listed tribe to receive an inheritance. Only after Dan's inheritance is listed is Joshua's portion detailed.

This is why I concluded that the events now being detailed could actually go back as far as the time of Joshua. While they are waiting for their allotted inheritance, some of the tribe became restless...

¹ (con't) **for until that day *their* inheritance among the tribes of Israel had not fallen to them.**

The word “their” in the NKJV or “all their” in the KJV are italicized, meaning they are inserted for supposed clarity. However, if this is at the time of Joshua, their presupposition damages the readers’ ability to grasp what is actually occurring: *ki lo naphlah lo ad hayom hahu b’tthokh shivte Yisrael b’nakhlah* – “For not fallen to him until the day, the it, in midst tribes Israel in inheritance.”

Without any presuppositional insertions, the text tells us that this falls before the assignment of the seventh and final tribal allotment detailed in Joshua 19:40-48. Notice the differences:

“for unto that day *all their* inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel” (KJV). This implies some of their inheritance had been attained, but some had not. This removes the narrative completely out of the time of Joshua and moves it to any point in time afterward.

“for until that day *their* inheritance among the tribes of Israel had not fallen to them” (NKJV). The understanding depends on what “inheritance” means. Does it mean the lot had not yet been cast, or does it mean that the tribe has simply not gone in and acquired what had been previously allotted to them?

“For not fallen to him until the day, the it, in midst tribes Israel in inheritance” (CG). The falling of the lot has not yet taken place. Thus, the Danite has no allotted inheritance as of yet.

The word “fallen” could mean taking of the land after the inheritance (as with the NKJV), but that could also be explained in other ways. Thus, it appears that this occurs during the time of Joshua and it could very well explain these words of Joshua –

“Now therefore,” *he said*, “put away the foreign gods which *are* among you, and incline your heart to the LORD God of Israel.” Joshua 24:23

Already, even before Joshua's death, idolatry had entered into the lives of the people. However, this account in Judges 18 is provided to give us categorical rather than chronological information, thus providing a basis for future typology.

Dan means Judge. Israel means He Strives with God.

² So the children of Dan sent five men of their family from their territory,

Again, the translation is poor and thus probably gives a false sense of what is being conveyed: *vayishl'khu b'ne dan mimishpakhtam khamishah anashim miqtsotham* – “And send, sons Dan, from their family, five men from their extremities.” Rather than “their territory,” it says *miqtsotham*, “their extremities.” The NKJV assumes this means the extremities of their territory. However, the word is speaking of their people, as it is used elsewhere, such as –

“So they feared the LORD, and from every class [*miqtsotham*] they appointed for themselves priests of the high places, who sacrificed for them in the shrines of the high places.” 2 Kings 17:32

Five is the number of grace.

² (con't) men of valor from Zorah and Eshtaol, to spy out the land and search it.

anashim b'ne khayil mitsr'ah u-meeshtaol l'ragel eth ha'arets ul'khaqrah – “men sons valor, from Zorah and from Eshtaol to foot the land and to search her.” The word *khayil*, valor, gives the sense of being strong and substantial in power, authority, riches, honor, virtue, etc. In this case, they would be strong, brave men who would be able to carry out the necessary task of footing the land, meaning walking throughout to determine a suitable location to meet the intended purpose.

The words here cause scholars to say that Dan had, in fact, received its allotted inheritance already. These men are in the area of Zorah and Eshtaol. These were given to Dan in Joshua 19:41. Thus, it must mean that they have received their allotment.

However, that dismisses the words of Joshua 15:33 where these two cities were located within the allotment of Judah. As was seen during the Joshua sermons, Judah's land was too big for them and Simeon's inheritance was placed within Judah's tribal allotment.

Other cities, such as Zorah and Eshtaol eventually were placed within the allotment of other tribes. As Dan was already dwelling there, it would make complete sense to give them that land when their allotment came up in Joshua 19. As seen previously, Zorah means Affliction, and Eshtaol means both Entreaty and Bride of God.

² (con't) **They said to them, “Go, search the land.” So they went to the mountains of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, and lodged there.**

The words explain the introduction of Micah and the surrounding narrative in the preceding chapter: *vayomru alehem l'khu khiqru eth ha'arets vayavou har ephrayim ad beith mikhah vayalinu sham* – “And say to them, ‘Go, search the land.’ And go mount Ephraim until house Micah. And lodge there.” As they footed the land, they passed by the area where Micah dwelt. It is customary for travelers to be welcomed in. Thus, they stayed with him.

Ephraim means Twice Fruitful and Ashes. Micah, as it is spelled here, means Who *is* Like This.

³ **While they were at the house of Micah, they recognized the voice of the young Levite.**

hemah im beith mikhah v'hemah hikiru eth qol hanaar ha'levi – “They with house Micah. And they scrutinized voice the servant, the Levite.” The word *nakar* means to scrutinize, as in looking intently at, hence with recognition implied. Therefore it can be translated as recognize, discern, be acquainted with, and so forth.

Because of this, one of numerous possibilities arises. It could be that they heard the Levite's voice and recognized it, having known him before. It could be that his accent caught their attention, knowing it was from their area. Some suppose that they heard sounds from him praying or ministering, such as wearing bells on his garments as the high priest at the temple would.

The simplest reading is that they heard his voice and recognized it. However, to make any option possible, I went with scrutinized. It is something that would be done no matter which option is correct. They heard a voice (or sound), thought about it, made a connection to it, and then...

³ (con't) **They turned aside and said to him, “Who brought you here? What are you doing in this *place*? What do you have here?”**

vayasuru sham vayomru lo mi heviakha halom umah atah oseh bazeh umah l'kha phoh – “And they turned aside there. And say, to him, ‘Who brought you hither, and what you doing in this? And what to you here?’” Something alerted them to the fact that he was not from there and that he was now there. Further, what would a Levite be doing there at a private residence?

And more, being a Levite, how was he able to support himself? The whole thing seemed odd to them. Regardless of how they scrutinized his voice, a simple evaluation of it told them that something was peculiar. Therefore...

⁴ He said to them, “Thus and so Micah did for me. He has hired me, and I have become his priest.”

vayomer alehem kazoh v'khazeh asah li mikhah vayisk'reni vaehi lo l'khohen – “And says, unto them, according to this and according to this done to me, Micah. And hires me to be to him priest.” A short explanation of his situation followed, notably ending with the idea of him, a Levite, being a personal priest.

If this is truly the grandson of Moses, as the text later implies, it is a truly abominable situation that he should have known better than to accept, much less brag about openly.

⁵ So they said to him, “Please inquire of God, that we may know whether the journey on which we go will be prosperous.”

The words contain a cohortative: *vayomru lo sh'al na belohim v'nedah hathatsliakh darkenu asher anakhnu holkhim aleha* – “And say to him, ‘Ask, we pray, in God. And we will know surges our journey which we walking upon her.” Like women priests or pastors in the church today, the matter here really is an “in Your face” situation toward God.

The Danites, join in with the delusions of the Levite by asking him to be their mediator to God (or gods), seeking Him (or them) concerning their expedition. The word *elohim* can mean the true God, a false god, or many gods. We aren't standing there with the Danites, so we can only speculate about their intent.

As for the word *tsalakh*, it means to rush upon or surge. It is the same word used when the Spirit came upon Samson. In this case, they want to know if their way will prosper.

One can think of starting out and wondering if you will hit a wall or have a breakthrough in success. We get the same sense when prosperity preachers speak of a breakthrough in finances. They are promising a surge of money from the cosmic ATM in the sky. These Danites want to know if they will likewise prosper...

⁶ And the priest said to them, “Go in peace. The presence of the LORD *be* with you on your way.”

vayomer lahem hakohen l'khu l'shalom nokhakh Yehovah dark'khem asher telkhu bah – “And says, to them, the priest, ‘Walk to peace. Fronted, Yehovah, your way which walking in her.’” The Levite, here acknowledged as “the priest,” tells them not to worry (walk to peace). This is because Yehovah would be with them.

Regardless of what they were asking (God, god, or gods), the Levite acknowledges the name of the Lord. This, however, does not necessarily mean anything more than what might be said by a false preacher in the world today when referring to the Lord or Jesus. And more, it is the only time Yehovah is seen in the passage.

As for his words, “Fronted, Yehovah, your way...”, like going to a palm reader, that can actually mean whatever someone wants it to mean. The word *nokakh* means in front of, opposite to, or over against. It is a true statement, no matter what is said.

The Lord is always opposite all people at all times. However, because of the words “Walk to peace,” they would certainly assume this meant that He would be watching over them in a positive manner as they went...

⁷ So the five men departed and went to Laish.

vayelkhu khamesheth ha'anashim vayavou laysha – “And walks, five the men, and goes Laish-ward.” This is the first note of Laish in the Bible, and yet it is stated as if it is the obvious destination, thus telling us that this is where they will wind up. The name is identical to *layish*, a word for lion used three times in the Bible. Thus, it is called Lion.

However, that comes from *lush*, to knead, as in bread – which is how the word is always used. Thus one gets the sense of a lion's paws delivering blows. Or one can think of a cat kneading his paws on your tummy as felines are known to do. Thus, Kneading is possible.

If it is derived from a similar word originally spelled with two yods (our y), Sergio notes it would have the sense of I Have, To Me Possession, I Possess, etc. It is not uncommon for a letter to drop out in such cases. Thus, this is a possible secondary meaning. This location was called Leshem in Joshua 19:47 –

“And the border of the children of Dan went beyond these, because the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem and took it; and they struck it with the edge of the sword, took possession of it, and dwelt in it. They called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father.”

It will be renamed in the verses ahead, and it will become the northernmost settlement in the land. John Lange assumes the root of Leshem is *lesha*, to break through (as in water boiling up). Thus, this is where the waters from Mount Hermon break through and form the beginning of the Jordan.

It is the same root for the name Lesha, which is found in Genesis 10:19, where the springs of the Dead Sea come forth. Laish, Lion, is explained by Lange to be used as a symbol of flowing stream sources. Thus, this would explain why the name may have been used in this manner. This might explain Moses’ prophecy over Dan in Deuteronomy 33, even though a different word for lion is used there –

“And of Dan he said:
‘Dan is a lion’s whelp;
He shall leap from Bashan.’” Deuteronomy 33:22

Of this area and for the Danites, upon arriving...

^{7 (con’t)} **They saw the people who were there, how they dwelt safely, in the manner of the Sidonians, quiet and secure.**

There are a couple of peculiarities in the words: *vayiru eth ha’am asher b’qirbah yosheveth lavetakh k’mishpat tsidonim shoget u-voteakh* – “And see the people who in her midst, dwelling to security, according to judgment Sidonians – reposing and trusting.” The first peculiarity is that there is a gender discord. The word people is masculine, but the corresponding verb, dwelling, is feminine. Likewise, the words security, reposing, and trusting are each masculine.

Available commentaries fail to give any suitable explanation for the discord. For example, Lange says, “the writer’s imagination identifies the people with the city in which they live, and so speaks of them as feminine.”

Also, the noun security is from the same root as the verb trusting. Ellicott sees this as a tautology, (something said more than once, a repetition, reiteration, redundancy, superfluity, iteration, duplication, periphrasis, prolixity, etc.). But why? Rather, it seems the verbs are simply describing the state of security.

7 (con’t) ***There were no rulers in the land who might put them to shame for anything.***

Everyone agrees the words are complicated. Translations vary widely, and the usual suspects cry out that the text is corrupt: *v’ein makhlim davar ba’arets yoresh etser* – “And naught wounding word in the land – possessing restraint.” The word *kalam* comes from a primitive root and means to wound. It is always used in a figurative manner, such as humiliate, insult, reproach, etc.

The noun *etser* is found only here and it is assumed to come from the verb *atsar*, to hold back or restrain. With a literal translation as I have given, the words appear to be saying that the people were not only reposing and trusting, but there was no internal strife where people would argue or insult one another. And more...

7 (con’t) ***They were far from the Sidonians, and they had no ties with anyone.***

urkhoqim hemah mitsidonim v’davar ein lahem im adam – “And far they from Sidonians, and word no to them with man [*adam*].” It is taken from these words that these people were related to the Sidonians but had settled in this area. However, it is estimated that they were a full day’s journey from Sidon.

Therefore, they would have no one nearby to come to their rescue if attacked. And more, they held no regular communication with anyone. Therefore, their disappearance would go unnoticed by anyone.

The last word, *adam*, is rendered by some Greek texts as *aram*, meaning Syria. The two letters are almost indistinguishable when not very clearly written out ר (resh) and ד (daleth). It would then mean they had no relations with the Syrians to the east. The name Sidon means Fishery. If Aram is correct, which seems unlikely, it means Elevated or Highland.

⁸ Then *the spies* came back to their brethren at Zorah and Eshtaol, and their brethren said to them, “What is your report?”

The verse is short and to the point. The final portion lacks any verb at all: *vayavou el akhehem tsarah v'estaol vayomru lahem akhehem mah atem* – “And go unto their brothers, Zorah and Eshtaol. And say to them, their brothers, ‘What you?’” The five return to their starting point and are greeted with the simple words, “What you?” The words are so basic that the meaning could be one of several things. However, the five perfectly understood that it meant to give a report of their survey...

⁹ So they said, “Arise, let us go up against them. For we have seen the land, and indeed it is very good.

vayomru qumah v'naaleh alehem ki rainu eth ha'arets v'hineh tovah meod – “And say, ‘Arise! And we will go upon them. For have seen the land, and behold! Good, very.” It is certain that more is left out of the report than is provided. Their brothers can't know what land they are referring to unless they are told. And they can't know who “them” is referring to unless it is explained to them.

The narrative is excitedly giving just enough for the reader to follow along without being at all specific. That continues in the next words...

^{9 (con't)} ***Would you do nothing? Do not hesitate to go, and enter to possess the land.***

v'atem makhshim al teatslu lalekheth lavo laresheth eth ha'arets – “And you, hushed? Not dawdling to walk to enter to possess the land!” A new word is brought in, *khashah*. It comes from a primitive root meaning to hush. The sense is probably something like, “Get up and raise a war cry!” With that, another word seen only here is used, *atsel*. It comes from a primitive root meaning to lean idly.

One can imagine the folks simply leaning up against the doorposts, shuffling their feet. Instead of strapping on their swords, they are just dawdling around, waiting for someone else to make the first move, and so more prompting is needed...

¹⁰ When you go, you will come to a secure people and a large land.

k'voakhem tavou el am boteakh v'ha'arets rakhavath yadayim – “According to your going, coming unto people trusting, and the land roomy hands.” The description is

enticing. The people are trusting. Keil says, “careless security.” They figured that they were doing their own thing and nobody cared at all about them or where they were.

Also, the words *rakhavath yadayim*, roomy hands, give the sense of the men spreading out their hands with their fingers splayed and then reaching out in both directions. Their fingers symbolically claim everything in eyesight as being a part of the possession...

¹⁰ (con’t) **For God has given it into your hands, a place where *there is* no lack of anything that *is* on the earth.”**

ki n’tanah elohim b’yedkhem maqom asher ein sham makhsor kal davar asher ba’arets –
“For given, God, in your hands place where no there lack all word which in the land.”
They had asked the Levite to inquire of God for them. The Levite told them that the Lord would be with them on their way.

Now, upon their return, they default back to *elohim* (God, god, or gods) again. Chances are they are referring to God in general, but they have not used the name of the Lord as might be expected.

As for their statement about the location, the word *davar*, word, is used in the sense of a matter, issue, or thing. There was nothing lacking there. Everything necessary to live out life in their own possession was available to them.

*What does it mean to be faithful in life
When all around there is only faithlessness
It is a world of enmity and strife
Man has certainly caused quite a mess*

*But in this wicked world we can prevail
And do what God would ask us to do
Any loss now will in heaven pale
Compared to the rewards He offers you*

*So be a faithful soul all your days
And live for the Lord with this life you’ve been given
Take time and give Him all your praise
Someday we’ll move on to what is really livin’*

*Until then, remember the Lord Jesus
And consider all the things He has done for us*

II. Consider What You Should Do (Verses 11-20)

¹¹ And six hundred men of the family of the Danites went from there, from Zorah and Eshtaol, armed with weapons of war.

vayisu misham mimishpakhath ha'dani mitsarah u-meeshtaol shesh meoth ish khagur k'le milkhamah – “And pull up from there, from family the Danite, from Zorah and from Eshtaol – six hundreds man girded implements war.” This does not mean that the entire tribe of Dan went up from this area.

Rather, it means that a small portion of the tribe went up, as is clearly seen in the words “from family the Danite.” The rest of the tribe was still in the general area and was given its inheritance according to Joshua 19 –

“The seventh lot came out for the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families. ⁴¹ And the territory of their inheritance was Zorah, Eshtaol, Ir Shemesh, ⁴² Shaalabbin, Aijalon, Jethlah, ⁴³ Elon, Timnah, Ekron, ⁴⁴ Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Baalath, ⁴⁵ Jehud, Bene Berak, Gath Rimmon, ⁴⁶ Me Jarkon, and Rakkon, with the region near Joppa. ⁴⁷ And the border of the children of Dan went beyond these, because the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem and took it; and they struck it with the edge of the sword, took possession of it, and dwelt in it. They called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father. ⁴⁸ This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families, these cities with their villages.” Joshua 19:40-48

However, their actions fulfill the prophecy of Moses from Deuteronomy 33 exactly.

As for the number six hundred, it is derived from six and ten. Bullinger defines six, saying, “...it has to do with man; it is the number of imperfection; the human number; the number of MAN as destitute of God, without God, without Christ.” Simply stated, it speaks of fallen man.

As for the number ten, Bullinger says, “Completeness of order, marking the entire round of anything, is, therefore, the ever-present signification of the number *ten*. It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete.”

¹² Then they went up and encamped in Kirjath Jearim in Judah.

vayaalu vayakhanu b'qiryath y'arim bihudah – “And ascend, and camp in Kirjath Jearim in Judah.” The trek from where they were to where they encamped is an ascent. For whatever reason, they stopped and camped at Kirjath Jearim, which means City of Forests or City of Honeycombs. Judah means Praise. Next, it says...

¹² (con't) (Therefore they call that place Mahaneh Dan to this day. There *it is*, west of Kirjath Jearim.)

al ken qaru lamaqom ha'hu makhaneh dan ad hayom hazeh hineh akhare qiryath y'arim – “Upon thus called to the place, the it, Mahaneh Dan, until the day, the this. Behold, behind Kirjath Jearim.” It says they camped in Kirjath Jearim and then it says that the location is behind Kirjath Jearim. So is it these are referring to the same place or not?

If not, then Mahaneh Dan would be where they initially started from. However, that is not the nearest antecedent in the narrative and confuses things. Because of this, it is hard to know what is going on. Judges 13:25 says –

“And the Spirit of the LORD began to move upon him at Mahaneh Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.”

Some say that these are referring to the same place and some disagree. If it is the same place, it means that these events, without any doubt at all, precede the life of Samson. This makes sense either way, but it would make it explicit.

If they are not the same place, then there are two Mahaneh Dans. Either way, the names are stated with all certainty for the sake of typology. Therefore, we can go with the narrative without actually knowing which option is historically correct.

Mahaneh Dan means Camp of Dan and, thus, Camp of the Judge.

¹³ And they passed from there to the mountains of Ephraim, and came to the house of Micah.

vayaavru misham har ephrayim vayavou ad beith mikhah – “And pass over from there Mount Ephraim. And come until house Micah.” Leaving Kirjath Jearim, their direction of travel heads northward into the mountainous area of Ephraim, collectively called Mount

Ephraim. It is the area where Micah lives. The Danites followed the known route coming as far as his house.

In Scripture, a *har*, mountain, is a lot of something gathered. In typology, it is synonymous with a large but centralized group of people. Upon arriving, the original trekkers have some news to share...

¹⁴ Then the five men who had gone to spy out the country of Laish answered

vayaanu khamesheth ha'anashim ha'holkhim l'ragel eth ha'arets layish – “And answered, five the men, the walkers to foot the land Laish.” The Bible is filled with this terminology where the first speaker is said to answer.

Without saying a word, one can see them walking along and coming to the settlement of houses where Micah is. Rather than wait for a question or simply pass by without referring to the place, these men initiate what would normally be a response to a question.

¹⁴ (con't) and said to their brethren, “Do you know that there are in these houses an ephod, household idols, a carved image, and a molded image?”

vayomru el akhehem haydatem ki yesh babatim ha'eleh ephod utraphim u-phesel u-masekhah – “and say unto their brothers, ‘Known that is in the houses, the these, ephod, and teraphim, and carved image, and molten image?’”

The others didn't know. Rather, they are being told this. We do this all the time. For example, “Did you know that he's a movie star?” It's a way of stating something emphatically but with a subtle hint of something behind the question. In this case, the subtle hint concerning named items is that they could be beneficial to the tribe. Without saying what it is, they simply continue with...

¹⁴ (con't) Now therefore, consider what you should do.”

The verb is imperative: *v'atah d'u mah taas* – “And now, know what you will do.” In other words, “You know what to do, so go do it.” They have plans for the stuff that belongs to Micah.

¹⁵ So they turned aside there, and came to the house of the young Levite man—to the house of Micah—and greeted him.

vayasuru shamah vayavou el beith hanaar halevi beith mikhah vayishalu lo l'shalom – “And turn there-ward, and come unto house the servant, the Levite – House Micah – and ask to him to peace.” The words appear to indicate that the settlement is called Beith Micah, House Micah. When the five men arrived, they went to the individual house belonging to the Levite and greeted him.

¹⁶ The six hundred men armed with their weapons of war, who were of the children of Dan, stood by the entrance of the gate.

v'shesh meoth ish khagurim k'le milkhamtam nitsavim pethakh hashaar asher mibne dan – “And six hundreds man, girding implements their war, stood entrance the gate – who from sons Dan.” The reason for these words may be to show a united decision on the part of all of the warriors.

They probably broke off from the main caravan, which included women and children and any older folks who continued along. Noting the girding of their weapons is intended to show that they were willing to use force if necessary to obtain what they wanted.

Also, by the narrative stating the disassociated but obvious words that they were from the sons of Dan again ensures that it is known that their actions were intentional, that it was Dan alone who was involved, and that the narrator wants it to be known as such.

¹⁷ Then the five men who had gone to spy out the land went up. Entering there, they took the carved image, the ephod, the household idols, and the molded image.

The aspect of the verb changes in the middle of the sentence from imperfect to perfect: *vayaalu khamasheth ha'anashim ha'holkhim l'ragel eth ha'arets bau shamah laqhu eth ha'pesel v'eth ha'ephod v'eth ha'traphim v'eth ha'masekhah* – “And ascend, five the men, the walkers to foot the land: entered there-ward, took the carved image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image.”

The change in aspect gives the narrative an almost haunting tone. It is as if the narrator is telling us to read each word as if it is a singular crime being committed. It's not just Micah's household doing wrong. Rather, an entire portion of the tribe of Dan has succumbed to the same fatal idolatry. Meanwhile...

^{17 (con't)} The priest stood at the entrance of the gate with the six hundred men who were armed with weapons of war.

v'ha'kohen nitsav patakh ha'shaar v'shesh meoth ha'ish he'khagur k'le ha'milkhamah – “And the priest stood entrance the gate, and six hundreds the man, the girding implements the war.” The priest went out to the gate when the men arrived. They were probably just talking when the five walked around him and went into the house to take the items. As they went in, he probably got curious as to what was going on...

¹⁸ When these went into Micah's house and took the carved image, the ephod, the household idols, and the molded image,

v'eleh bau beith mikhah v'yiqlhu eth pesel ha'ephod v'eth ha'traphim v'eth ha'masekhah – “And these entered house Micah, and take carved image the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image.” The words essentially repeat what was said, but the aspect goes from the perfect to the imperfect. Put side by side, you can see the difference –

17. “And ascend, five the men, the walkers to foot the land: **entered** there-ward, **took** the carved image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image.”

18. “And these **entered** house Micah, and take carved image the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image.”

And more, in these words, it appears that the carved image belongs to the ephod. Only the JPS Tanakh translates the words this way, but the terminology appears specific –

“And when these went into Micah's house, and fetched the graven image of the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image, the priest said unto them: ‘What do ye?’” JPS Tanakh

Even though they are two separate things, it appears that they serve a united purpose. When the priest wanted to consult the carved image, he would wear the ephod.

¹⁸ (con't) the priest said to them, “What are you doing?”

vayomer alehem ha'kohen mah atem osim – “And says unto them, the priest, ‘What you doing?’” In seeing what the five were doing, he must have felt either suspicious or betrayed, depending on how he perceived what was going on. Thus, it was natural to ask what they thought they were doing with the objects of his priesthood.

19 And they said to him, “Be quiet, put your hand over your mouth, and come with us; be a father and a priest to us.

Several verbs are imperative: *vayomru lo hakharesh sim yad’kha al pikha v’lekh imanu veyeh lanu l’av ulkhohen* – “And say, to him, ‘Keep silent! Put your hand upon your mouth, and walk with us, and be to us to father and to priest.’” In essence, “You need to do these things. Otherwise, it won’t go well with you.”

Telling him to put his hand upon his mouth is a way of saying, “Shut your trap!” They are being firm but are willing to give him a new opportunity if he is willing to take it. To get him to think it through...

19 (con’t) Is it better for you to be a priest to the household of one man, or that you be a priest to a tribe and a family in Israel?”

ha’tov heyothkha khohen l’veith ish ekhad o heyothkha khohen l’shevet u-l’mishpakhah b’yisrael – “The good you being priest to house man one, or you being priest to tribe and to family in Israel?” “Listen, is it better to be priest to just one guy, or would it be better for you to be priest to our entire clan?” The answer should be obvious whether he agreed with the way things were done or not.

It notes both a tribe and a family. The tribe of Dan descended from a single son of Dan. Therefore, if he was a priest to even part of the tribe and family of Dan, he was a priest to all of it. They are tempting him with a great offer.

20 (fin) So the priest’s heart was glad; and he took the ephod, the household idols, and the carved image, and took his place among the people.

vayitav lev hakohen vayiqakh eth ha’ephod v’eth hatraphim v’eth ha’pasel vayavo b’qerev ha’am – “And pleased heart the priest, and takes the ephod, and the teraphim, and the carved image, and goes in midst the people.” One can see that his allegiance to Micah was completely based on the money and clothing he received.

It would explain the odd statement in verse 10 where he was given an offer by Micah, and then it said, “And walks, the Levite.” After he got the offer, he continued walking while considering the proposition and maybe looking for a better opportunity elsewhere. However, he eventually accepted the offer.

Now, a better offer has come along, and he is immediately elated about it. So he took charge of the priestly things and joined the people. Saying that he went into their midst is a way of saying that he joined them wholeheartedly, probably enjoying lots of pats on the back and compliments for being their official priest.

With that, we are finished for the day. If you care at all about proper worship of the Lord, treating your fellow man with due respect, or having concern for those to whom you owe allegiance, the narrative is both disappointing and disheartening.

However, it is generally what can be expected in the world in which we live. And this doesn't just mean the secular world. It is becoming rarer by the day to find decent seminaries, denominations, churches, pastors, and Christians who will do what is expected of them from a biblical perspective.

What we need to do is press on in doing right and be the faithful souls we are called to be. Life is short, and we have choices to make. Work out your life, your allegiances, and your friendships with decency, honesty, and integrity. This is key to happy living and a warm and friendly welcome when you stand before the Lord.

First and foremost, however, you need to be right with the Lord. There is only one way that can happen, so be sure to get it right. Have faith in what God has done in Christ. Let me tell you that simple good news before we finish...

Closing Verse: *"If you have been foolish in exalting yourself,
Or if you have devised evil, put your hand on your mouth." Proverbs 30:32*

Next Week: Judges 18:21-31 *Another great story to tell, and that is for shor...* (No King in Israel, Part IV) (51st Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

No King in Israel, Part III

In those days there was no king in Israel.
And in those days the tribe of the Danites (descendants of Shem)
Was seeking an inheritance for itself to dwell in
For until that day their inheritance among the tribes of Israel

-----had not fallen to them

So the children of Dan sent five men of their family
From their territory, men of valor from Zorah and Eshtaol
To spy out the land and search it
They said to them, "Go, search the land, not a part but the whole

So they went to the mountains of Ephraim, that is where
To the house of Micah, and lodged there

While they were at the house of Micah
They recognized the voice of the young Levite
They turned aside and said to him
"Who brought you here, to this site?

What are you doing in this place?
What do you have here, from greatest to least?
He said to them, "Thus and so Micah did for me
He has hired me, and I have become his priest

So they said to him, "Please inquire of God, yes for us
That we may know whether the journey on which we go
-----will be prosperous

And the priest said to them, "Go in peace, yes, I say
The presence of the LORD be with you on your way

So the five men departed and went to Laish
They saw the people who were there
How they dwelt safely, in the manner of the Sidonians
Quiet and secure, with no care

There were no rulers in the land
Who might put them to shame for anything
They were far from the Sidonians
And they had no ties with anyone, not even by a shoestring

Then the spies came back to their brethren at Zorah and Eshtaol
And their brethren said to them, "What is your report?

-----Tell us the whole

So they said, "Arise, let us go up against them
For we have seen the land, and indeed it is very good
Would you do nothing?
Do not hesitate to go, and enter to possess the land. Understood?

When you go, you will come to a secure people
And a large land with no dearth
For God has given it into your hands
A place where there is no lack of anything that is on the earth

And six hundred men
Of the family of the Danites went from there
From Zorah and Eshtaol
Armed with weapons of war, Laish had best beware

Then they went up and encamped in Kirjath Jearim in Judah
(Therefore they call that place Mahaneh Dan to this day
There it is, west of Kirjath Jearim
That's how the name got to be this way

And they passed from there to the mountains of Ephraim
And came to the house of Micah with a little scheme

Then the five men who had gone
To spy out the country of Laish
Answered and said to their brethren
(First, did you know that Laish rhymes with quiche?)

"Do you know that there are in these houses an ephod
Household idols, a carved image too
Also a molded image
Now therefore, consider what you should do

So they turned aside there
And came to the house of the young Levite man
To the house of Micah
And greeted him as a part of their plan

The six hundred men
Armed with their weapons of war, lookin' great
Who were of the children of Dan
Stood by the entrance of the gate

Then the five men who had gone
To spy out the land went up, so they did do
Entering there, they took the carved image and the ephod
The household idols, and the molded image too

The priest stood at the entrance of the gate, so was the score
With the six hundred men who were armed with weapons of war

When these went into Micah's house
And took the carved image, the ephod (bad things were brewing)
The household idols, and the molded image
The priest said to them, "What are you doing?"

And they said to him, "Be quiet, put your hand over your mouth
And come with us; be a father and a priest to us – they did tell
Is it better for you to be a priest to the household of one man
Or that you be a priest to a tribe and a family in Israel?"

So the priest's heart was glad
And he took the ephod with the household idols too
And the carved image
And took his place among the people, this he did do

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 18:21-31 (NO KING IN ISRAEL, PART IV)

The Bible is a book of amazing words that convey incredible meaning. Rare and even unique words come into the narrative at times, some of which are hard to pin down as to their actual meaning.

Some words are found only once in the Bible. These are known as *hapax legomena* (said once). Some of these words are found only once in all ancient writings, meaning that they were coined by the author of that book and not used again.

Other words are coined in Scripture and later used outside of Scripture. Likewise, there are words that come from translations of the Bible only used within that translation. Others were developed by translators and became a part of the language, being used in other contexts.

This happens outside the Bible all the time as well. The German word *jein*, a combination of *ja* (yes) and *nein* (no), was brought into everyday language by a hip-hop band named Fettes Brot in their 1996 single, *Jein*. It means that you could go either way on a decision.

Another German word, of which there is no English counterpart, is *zugzwang*. It refers to when you are forced into making a decision. It comes from the game of chess, where the word *zug* means to move, and the word *zwang* is where you are forced to move, even if it harms your prospects of gaining the advantage or winning.

Text Verse: *“Dan shall be a serpent by the way,
A viper by the path,
That bites the horse’s heels
So that its rider shall fall backward.” Genesis 49:17*

The description of Dan in Genesis 49, and the wording concerning Dan in that passage matches what we will see in typology today. However, Dan is somewhat of a serpent by the way to Micah in these verses.

Because of this, Micah will have a choice to make. Like the German word *zugzwang*, I have coined a word for this. Maybe you will be able to identify it as we go. If so, maybe you can start using it in your own daily speech.

If so, maybe the word will become famous and a part of our standard lexicon. If so, maybe I will become famous, and this sermon will become notable as the first use of it. If so...

Well, let's just get on with it. Great things, such as interesting words, concepts, and ideas are a marvelous part of His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. A Difficult Forcison (verses 21-31)

With the events bringing these Danites to the house of Micah, and the agreement of the Levite to accompany them to their new home set, the narrative next says...

²¹ Then they turned and departed, and put the little ones, the livestock, and the goods in front of them.

vayiphnu vayelexhu vayasimu eth ha'taph v'eth ha'miqneh v'eth ha'k'vudah liphnehem – “And turn, and walk, and set the youngster, and the livestock, and the abundance to their faces.” Having plundered the gods of Micah's home, the Danites continue north to Laish.

The wording here is given to show their defensive strategy as they continued. If Micah were to challenge them to a battle over his things, they wanted whatever would inhibit their ability to strike back ahead of them. This is because Micah would be coming from their rear as they marched away from him.

The *taph*, or youngster, comes from *taphaph*, signifying small quick steps. Thus, it speaks of the wee ones. Having little ones implies bringing women along, but it is the children who need to be guarded and who also set the pace.

Likewise, the livestock would vary in kind. Some would walk at a slower pace and need more frequent stops, thus slowing the pace of the rest. Both of these are seen in the account of Jacob meeting up with his brother Esau –

“Please let my lord go on ahead before his servant. I will lead on slowly at a pace which the livestock that go before me, and the children, are able to endure, until I come to my lord in Seir.” Genesis 33:14

Lastly is the *kevudah*, abundance. It is a new and rare word coming from *kavad*, to be heavy or weighty. Scholars debate what it refers to, but as it is from a word meaning heavy, it probably means their baggage or other abundance that would slow them down.

By having these precious and needed items set the pace, it would avoid what happened in the wilderness as Israel trekked toward Canaan –

“Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt, ¹⁸ how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you *were* tired and weary; and he did not fear God.”
Deuteronomy 25:17, 18

²² When they were a good way from the house of Micah, the men who *were* in the houses near Micah’s house gathered together and overtook the children of Dan.

The words “gathered together” are a paraphrase. The word *zaaq* means to cry or call out. As such, it is often used as a cry for battle as gathering men to assemble and arm themselves: *hemah hirkhiqu mibeith mikhah v’ha’anashim asher babatim asher im beith mikhah nizaqu vayadbiqu eth b’ne dan* – “They far off from house Micah, and the men who in the houses who with house Micah cried and impinged sons Dan.”

As the men of the area were probably in the fields tending to daily work, it would take time for whoever saw what happened or noticed the missing articles to get to the field and start gathering people to pursue the thieves.

This gave the Danites time to remove themselves some distance. However, with the slowest of the travelers setting the pace, those in Micah’s area would eventually catch up with them. Therefore...

²³ And they called out to the children of Dan. So they turned around and said to Micah, “What ails you, that you have gathered such a company?”

As with the previous verse, the word *zaaq*, to cry out, is used: *vayiqreu el b’ne dan vayasebu p’nehem vayomru l’mikhah mah l’kha ki nizaqta* – “And calls, unto sons Dan, and turn their faces, and say to Micah, ‘What to you that cried?’” The words begin a rather comical exchange between the two parties.

Micah and his group are hollering at the Danites. We can assume it is something like, “Hey, hey you! Stop. What do you think you’re doing? Stop!”

The Danites, knowing very well why they are being pursued, look back and ask what the matter is, as if they had no idea on earth why anyone would be coming after them. “Wha...? What’s the matter with you?”

It is as if Dan is taunting them for the laughs they will have in the future when they sit around the bonfire and talk about the good old days. Micah, however, isn’t so excited about the events...

²⁴ So he said, “You have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and you have gone away.

vayomer eth elohay asher asiti l’qakhtem v’eth ha’kohen vatelkhu – “And says, ‘My gods which I made, taken, and the priest – and walk.’” We can’t read Micah’s mind as to whether he is using the word *elohay* as “God” (meaning a representation of Yehovah) or “gods” meaning several gods he served as god. However, verse 17 listed a panoply of things taken. Thus, “gods” seems appropriate.

With that in mind, everything about the entire statement is absurd in the extreme. Micah wants the gods he made back. If he made them, they are not gods.

If his “gods” were taken from him, then if they were real gods they are not “his” gods. And the Levite is not a priest, even if he was his “priest.”

The amount of unclear thinking by Micah is astonishing. He had completely deceived himself that the things he had were what he conjured them to be. It is exactly why understanding who the Lord is, what He is like, and what interacting with Him involves is so important.

He is not one of many gods.

He is not created, nor can any part of creation, including something formed by man, be equated to Him.

If He is someone’s God, He can never be taken from that person.

Because He is the One true God, He can always be a person’s God (in the sense of relationship).

Further, as God is omnipresent, He can never be absent from His people.

Also, because of man's state before Him, meaning our sin nature, only a priest without sin who is designated by Him can actually be a priest before Him. As for the priests of the Law of Moses, their sin is dealt with under the law in a temporary way which was anticipatory of the coming Christ.

However, a Levite (or any other person) had no such provision to allow them even this accommodation.

²⁴ (con't) **Now what more do I have? How can you say to me, 'What ails you?'**

u-mah li od u-mah zeh tomru elay mah lakh – “And what to me still? And what this says unto me, ‘What to you?’” Without the Lord, the statement is true, even if it is ridiculous. He was without the Lord as well as the tinker toys that he thought were his guidance and source of care and blessing.

Therefore, he was willing to chase after the people who carried away his gods and fight to rescue them so that his gods could continue to bless and guide him. His affliction was one of the mind, but he was too blind to even understand how preposterous his actions were.

Micah and those with him are like Laban who went chasing after Jacob when Rachel had stolen his gods. While he inspected the tents for his gods that supposedly directed his life, they sat under his daughter, who was in her time of impurity, having her period.

²⁵ **And the children of Dan said to him, “Do not let your voice be heard among us, lest angry men fall upon you, and you lose your life, with the lives of your household!”**

vayomru elav b'ne dan al tashma qolkha imanu pen yiphgu bakhem anashim mare nephesh v'asaphta naphsh'kha v'nephesh beithekha – “And say unto him, sons Dan, ‘Not let be heard your voice with us, lest impinge in you men bitter soul, and gather your soul and soul your house.’”

The comical tone continues, even if a bit grim. The sons of Dan threaten Micah's life and the lives of his family members while pretending they are talking about some unknown individual who might happen to be among them.

As they had lived together, journeyed together, encamped together at Mahaneh Dan, and continued on to Laish together, everyone would have been perfectly aware of everyone else among them.

But the Danites' words make it seem as if there might be some rogue person who could come unhinged at the words and actions of Micah and they needed to protect him from this unknown terror. The fact is that they all were in agreement and would have come down upon their pursuers like a pride of hungry lions.

²⁶ Then the children of Dan went their way.

vayelkhu b'ne dan l'darkam – “And walk, sons Dan, to their way.” It appears that after threatening Micah with this unknown but terrible person who might be among them, they simply turned around and started walking away. It leaves Micah in a difficult spot where he must now make his forcision...

²⁶ (con't) And when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back to his house.

vayar mikhah ki khazaqim hemah mimenu vayiphen vayashav el beitho – “And sees, Micah, for stronger they from him. And turns, and returns unto his house.” Micah is perfectly aware of his limitations. Thus, he must decide upon the lesser of two perceived evils.

Knowing that continuing the pursuit would be disastrous, he considers his next move and decides life without his gods is better than death without them.

²⁷ So they took *the things* Micah had made, and the priest who had belonged to him,

v'hemah laqhu eth asher asah mikhah v'eth ha'kohen asher hayah lo – “And they took which made Micah, and the priest who was to him.” The words “And they” are emphatic. Because Micah is the nearest antecedent, the previous words appear to be parenthetical –

“And says unto him, sons Dan, ‘Not let be heard your voice with us, lest impinges in you men bitter soul, and gathers your soul and soul your house.’ And walks, sons Dan, to their way. (And sees, Micah, for stronger they from him. And turns, and returns unto his house.) And they took which made Micah, and the priest who was to him.”

This appears likely because it simply says they “took which made Micah,” without specifying what they took. However, that was explained in verse 24 – “My gods which I made, taken.”

Thus, Micah could have made his decision while they were still talking to him, or it could be that they finished talking and turned to walk away at the same time Micah turned and headed back home.

Regardless of the exact timing, Dan's actions are the main point of focus, with the idols and their priest as the key points of their actions. They have secured their new prized possessions...

²⁷ (con't) **and went to Laish, to a people quiet and secure; and they struck them with the edge of the sword and burned the city with fire.**

vayavou al layish al am shoget uvoteakh vayaku otham l'pi kharev v'eth ha'ir sar'phu ba'esh – “And goes upon Laish, upon people reposing and trusting, and struck them to mouth sword, and the city burned in the fire.” It is the same words, “reposing and trusting” that were used in verse 7.

Although some scholars take this as an unjustified action, it is what Israel was told to do when they entered the land –

“But of the cities of these peoples which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance, you shall let nothing that breathes remain alive.” Deuteronomy 20:16

As these people dwelt within the original borders of the land of Canaan, they were required to be exterminated. However, nothing gave Dan the right to enter another tribe's inheritance. This land is within the inheritance of Naphtali.

Despite this, Joshua 19:47 acknowledges that this occurred without any sort of rebuke included concerning the matter. There was no written command for burning the city, and yet the text highlights the matter, calling attention to it.

²⁸ **There was no deliverer, because it was far from Sidon, and they had no ties with anyone.**

v'ein matsil ki rekhoqah hi mitsidon v'davar ein lahem im adam – “And no delivering, for far her from Sidon, and word no to them with man [*adam*].” The words of verse 7 are essentially repeated here, “And far they from Sidonians, and word no to them with man [*adam*].” The words are given to confirm how a small portion of a single tribe could take the city without any need for assistance.

Nobody came to the rescue of those in the city, and none from Naphtali were needed by Dan to complete the task as intended.

²⁸ (con't) **It was in the valley that belongs to Beth Rehob. So they rebuilt the city and dwelt there.**

v'hi ba'emeq asher l'beith rekhov vayivnu eth ha'ir vayeshvu vah – “And she in the valley which to Beth Rehob. And build the city and dwell in her.” The meaning is that this valley, which was in the tribal inheritance of Naphtali, was a valley that seems to have belonged to the Syrians of Beth Rehob noted in 2 Samuel 10 –

“When the people of Ammon saw that they had made themselves repulsive to David, the people of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians [*aram*] of Beth Rehob and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand foot soldiers; and from the king of Maacah one thousand men, and from Ish-Tob twelve thousand men. ⁷ Now when David heard *of it*, he sent Joab and all the army of the mighty men. ⁸ Then the people of Ammon came out and put themselves in battle array at the entrance of the gate. And the Syrians [*v'aram*] of Zoba, Beth Rehob, Ish-Tob, and Maacah *were* by themselves in the field.” 2 Samuel 10:6-8

This would explain why some Greek texts say *aram* rather than *adam* in these words. It seems less likely, however, to say *aram* in verse 7 when the ownership of the valley is only stated at this point in the narrative. This is especially so when considering it is the Sidonians who are mentioned. They lived west of the location while the Syrians lived eastward.

As for the name, Beth Rehob comes from *beith*, house, and *rekhov*, to be or become large or wide. Thus, it means something like House of Wideness, House of Spaciousness, or something like that.

²⁹ **And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born to Israel.**

vayiqru shem ha'ir dan b'shem dan avihem asher yulad l'Yisrael – “And call name the city Dan, in name Dan their father who born to Israel.” The reason for calling it Dan is because it was the name of their tribal father who was born to Israel. Thus, it was in honor of him.

However, it is probably a symbolic gesture as well. Even though they were at the furthest point north in the land and in Naphtali's tribal inheritance, they remained of the tribe of Dan, whose inheritance was to the southwest.

Because of its location, the name became a part of the all-encompassing term for the land of Israel, "from Dan to Beersheba" (or Beersheba to Dan) that is noted nine times in Scripture, Beersheba being the southernmost point.

²⁹ (con't) **However, the name of the city formerly was Laish.**

v'ulam layish shem ha'ir larishonah – "and, however, Laish name the city to the first." The name, as seen in verse 7, means Lion. However, that comes from *lush*, to knead, as in bread – which is how the word is always used. Kneading is possible. If it was a word originally spelled with two yods (our y), it would have the sense of I Have, To Me Possession, I Posses, etc.

³⁰ **Then the children of Dan set up for themselves the carved image;**

vayaqimu lahem b'ne dan eth ha'pasel – "And stands, to them, sons Dan, the carved image." The meaning is that these members of Dan stood in a state of apostasy from their inception. They arrived, subdued the land, built their city, and set up an image in order to worship or seek favor. Also...

³⁰ (con't) **and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan**

The text has, without a doubt, been manipulated: *vihonathan ben gershom ben m'nasheh hu u-banav hayu khohanim l'shevet ha'dani* – "And Jonathan, son Gershom, son Manasseh, he and his sons, were priests to tribe the Danite." The Levite's name is Jonathan, Yah Has Given, Given of Yehovah, or something similar.

He is a Levite. Levites do not descend from Manasseh. Rather, Moses was of the tribe of Levi. His son Gershom would have been one of the Levites enumerated during the census. Thus, Jonathan and his sons descended from Gershom, who was born to Moses. The names are identical but with the addition of the letter nun –

משה

מנשה

Ellicott notes what is obvious, saying, “in what is called the Masoretic text—i.e., the text edited by the Jewish scribes—the ך is not boldly inserted, but is timidly and furtively suspended...and is called *nun thaîûyah* (n suspended). This was done to conceal from the uninitiated the painful fact.” As such, it looks like this, מִשָּׁה.

Some ancient manuscripts, as well as the Latin Vulgate, which is translated directly from the Hebrew, bear out the proper reading.

Gershom means Stranger There, Stranger is His Name, or Exile. Moses means He Who Draws Out.

³⁰ (con’t) **until the day of the captivity of the land.**

The words are almost completely misunderstood and almost universally mistranslated: *ad yom g’loth ha’arets* – “until day denuding the land.” Almost all scholars and translations say, “the captivity of the land” (NKJV), “removal of the people of the land” (Young’s), or something similar.

The word is *galah*, to denude. In this case, it is not speaking of the exile by the Assyrians or the Babylonians that happened hundreds of years later. Rather, it is speaking of the capture of the Ark of the Covenant by the Philistines in 1 Samuel 4-6. At that time, the land was stripped of its covering, the glory of God’s presence –

“Then she named the child Ichabod, saying, ‘The glory has departed [*galah*] from Israel!’ because the ark of God had been captured and because of her father-in-law and her husband. ²² And she said, ‘The glory has departed [*galah*] from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured.’” 1 Samuel 4:21, 22

It is believed that Samuel is the author of Judges. This verse certainly makes the case for him as the most likely candidate. The image of idolatry lasted until this period. Nothing is said afterwards concerning it and it is unknown what became of it.

³¹(fin) **So they set up for themselves Micah’s carved image which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.**

These words confirm what was just said: *vayasimu la’hem eth pesel mikhah asher asah kal y’me heyoth beith ha’elohim b’shiloh* – “And set, to them, carved image Micah which made, all days is house the God in Shiloh.” The ark was taken from Shiloh into battle where it was lost to the Philistines –

“So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from there the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, who dwells *between* the cherubim. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, *were* there with the ark of the covenant of God. ... Also the ark of God was captured; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.” 1 Samuel 4:4-11

In 1 Samuel 7, the ark returned to the land of Israel and was in Kirjath Jearim for twenty years. After that, Saul had it brought to him, and later, David had it brought to Jerusalem. Until the land was denuded of their covering, however, the image was set up within the tribe of Dan.

Shiloh means Tranquility.

*How can you keep from being trapped
In a world of false religion and apostasy?
Where are the details mapped
That will keep you from heresy?*

*People go to churches everywhere
But how do they know if what is taught is right?
Does this bother you at all? Do you care?
Does it matter to you if you are pleasing in God's sight?*

*He has given us a way to know
He has provided it so that our choices can be right
The Bible! That's where to go
Let it daily be your guiding light*

II. An Idol is Nothing in the World

Chapter 18 begins with the same thought presented in Judges 17:6, “In the days, the those, no king in Israel.” This is a true statement concerning the church age as well. Israel has no king during the church age, even if they have remained as a people.

Likewise, there is no king apart from Jesus in the church, which is included in the commonwealth of Israel, but He is not a king in the sense of active rulership over the churches that comprise His church. He is the King of Israel, but not currently the King in Israel.

Still in verse 1, it noted that the Danite was seeking an inheritance as he had not yet received one because it had not yet fallen to him. As this is west of the Jordan, it is after the time of Christ's coming.

As the tribe of Dan will receive an inheritance, as seen in Joshua 19, this verse speaks of a group who has not yet been saved but who are going to attempt to obtain their own inheritance apart from Christ.

In sending five men, the number of grace, from among them (verse 2) they are looking to inherit grace through their own efforts. This is something that cannot be accomplished. These reflect people in the church who are not saved. The church has always been full of them.

This is reflected in the fact that they are from Zorah and Eshtaol, Affliction and Entreaty/Bride of God, both of which pictured the church. In going to the Mountains of Ephraim, the home of Micah (Who Is Like This), it means they have gone into the false church to lodge.

While there (verse 3), they recognize the voice of the Levite. In Chapter 17, he pictured someone who appeared to be like Jesus, having all His attributes, but who isn't Jesus. They asked him about their journey, and he assured them the Lord was with them.

Verse 7 introduces Laish, Kneading (as in bread). The people there were safe and secure according to the manner of the Sidonians. Sidon means Fishery and pictures those who are fishers of men, as Jesus said.

They were quiet people living without insult or reproach, and they had no "word to them with man [*adam*]." They speak of a sound congregation that does not have any dealings with the carnal man.

The gender discord of verse 7 was noted. The word people is masculine, but the corresponding verb, dwelling, is feminine. Likewise, the words security, reposing, and trusting are each masculine.

Lange said, "the writer's imagination identifies the people with the city in which they live, and so speaks of them as feminine." That doesn't answer the reason, but it is a start. The church is a feminine entity, but those in the church, the saints, are identified in the masculine.

In verse 8, the five Danites return to their brothers in the church (Zorah and Eshtaol), who have no inheritance yet. They tell them they have just the place to take over and that they need to not dawdle but get about taking it.

From there it specifically notes the number who wanted to get this inheritance, six hundred girded for war. It is a number derived from six and ten fallen man without Christ, and the entire round of the cycle is complete. In this case, it is the time of the church age.

First, these men went up to Kirjath Jearim in Judah. Kirjath Jearim means City of Forests or City of Honeycombs. However, as seen in a previous Joshua sermon, Abarim says –

“The verb יער (*ya'ar*) isn't used in the Bible and it's a complete mystery what it might have meant. Noun יער (*ya'ar*) is the common word for forest or thicket, and the identical noun יער (*ya'ar*) means honeycomb. It is, of course, perfectly possible that these two nouns are not two but one, describing something general like a thing that consists of many elements, which contain energetic nutrients (either fruits or honey) ...” Abarim

Therefore, this is an explanation of the church, a group derived from many people, each filled with individual fruit of the Spirit. This is supportable by the comparison of Israel to a forest in Micah 7:14 –

“Tend Thy people with Thy staff, the flock of Thy heritage, That dwell solitarily, as a forest in the midst of the fruitful field; Let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old” (JPS Tanakh).

Judah means praise. This group left one place reflecting the church. They now stop, naming the place Mahaneh Dan, and will then leave another.

It is the location where “the Spirit of the LORD began to move upon” Samson. It is a Spirit-filled place, but they move on. Next (verse 13), they went to Mount Ephraim. It is another picture of the church, a large but centralized gathering of people (Mount) from Jews and Gentiles who have been saved through faith in His substitutionary afflictions (Twice Fruitful/Ashes).

But where do they stop? Micah's. Instead of joining the church of the redeemed, they go to the false church with their false Jesus, who greets them (verse 15). While there, they take Micah's false modes of worship (verses 17-20). The words were very specific, showing that their actions were completely purposeful.

All of the falsities of the false church are accumulated together. It speaks of the ecumenical movement where everything is tolerated except the truth of Scripture and true believers. The Levite, the false Jesus, is thoroughly pleased and takes his place among them.

Micah (now anyone of the false church who doesn't join the ecumenical movement) has had his idols stolen away and so he gathers neighbors to go after Dan. Their false religion was stolen away. They are faced with a forcision: do something about it or simply give up.

Actually, there is a third option not mentioned, they could have joined with Dan and gone with them. However, they will not try to join with the ecumenicalism of the great apostasy, and they will have no sway when all is said and done. They are left without any Jesus, even a false Jesus, to share with those in the false church.

This is true, for example, of the state of people like the Jehovah's Witnesses. They are not accepted into the ecumenical movement, but they also have no true Jesus. Their own false worship is seen for what it is. It is the pitiful words of Micah echoing throughout time, "And what to me still?" They have nothing.

The sad state of Laish is spoken of in the final verses. It is a group of saved believers, but they are kneading – making their own bread. They are just doing their own thing, not in contact with others.

Without evangelism and outreach, little churches without a purpose beyond themselves are eventually overtaken by law observance (being struck with the mouth of the sword) and by those who put forth nothing but false worship.

Verse 28 noted that there was no deliverance for a church like this. A stagnant church will come to an end. That this was in the valley (*emeq* – depth) that belongs to Beth Rehob (House of Spaciousness). It speaks of the greatness in size of the ecumenical movement as it progresses throughout the church age.

Noting that they called the city Dan, Judge, means that where they reside – the ecumenical blob that has slowly taken over the church since its beginning – considers themselves the judge of doctrine and propriety.

In verse 29, noting that Dan was born to Israel (He Strives with God), tells us that this church is striving with, meaning against, God through their false worship. Repeating that

it was formerly known as Laish reminds us that this was once a place where Bread was made (the kneading of bread), but no longer is.

Verse 30 noted that Jonathan (Yah Has Given), son of Gershom (Exile), son of Moses (He Draws Out), and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan. Everything speaks of Jesus, and yet it is a false Jesus being presented.

According to Scripture, the true church has one High Priest and needs no other priests. Finally, in verse 30, it noted, “until day denuding the land.” As this passage refers to the church age, then these words anticipate the rapture of the church followed by the tribulation.

It is the time when the glory of God’s presence in the church will be removed, and judgment will come upon the world. The final verse of the chapter noted that the Danites set up the carved image of Micah all the days that the house of God was in Shiloh.

In other words, the apostate ecumenical church will remain throughout the rest of the church age. Their idolatry will only be ended after the church age comes to its conclusion.

Despite having the Bible available to us, this is the inevitable path of the church. God allows us to make our own choices. When we put our choice of church above God’s word, this will be the result. When we choose a particular denomination because it suits our social mores, this will be the result.

Studying the Bible is not fashionable to most. Adhering to it is even less so. It is so much easier to attend congregations where our friends attend, where the message may be appealing to us, or where we don’t have to think.

We can escape our problems for a short time each week with promises of blessing and prosperity, or we can face the fact that we live in a fallen world and bad times should be expected. I could go on, but the passage sufficiently presents the situation.

What we need is Jesus. The way we discover Him fully and intimately is through His word. When we neglect this word, or the application of it in our lives, we will inevitably weaken or be overthrown by that which is false.

With the world as it is, this is only increasing. Churches and denominations are either closing or going woke. Proper Christian thinking is quickly becoming a rare commodity. Let us not be a part of that trend. Instead, let us hold fast to Jesus and closely to His word. May it be so with each of us. Amen.

Closing Verse: *“He uncovers [galah] deep things out of darkness,
And brings the shadow of death to light.” Job 12:22*

Next Week: Judges 19:1-21 *A sad story to tell, ain’t no jive...* (No King in Israel, Part V)
(52nd Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

No King in Israel, Part IV

Then they turned and departed without haw or hem
And put the little ones, the livestock, and the goods
-----in front of them

When they were a good way from the house of Micah
The men who were in the houses, yes every man
Near Micah’s house gathered together
And overtook the children of Dan

And they called out to the children of Dan
So they turned around and said to Micah, “What can this be?
“What ails you
That you have gathered such a company?

So he said, “You have taken away my gods
Which I made, and the priest too
And you have gone away. Now what more do I have?
How can you say to me, ‘What ails you?’

And the children of Dan said to him
“Do not let your voice be heard among us, we are telling you
Lest angry men fall upon you, and you lose your life

With the lives of your household too!

Then the children of Dan went their way
And when Micah saw that they were too strong for him
He turned and went back to his house
To him, things were lookin' grim

So they took the things Micah had made
And the priest who had belonged to him whom they did procure
And went to Laish
To a people quiet and secure

And they struck them with the edge of the sword
And burned the city with fire, such a ruthless horde

There was no deliverer, because it was far from Sidon
And they had no ties with anyone, a fatal snare
It was in the valley that belongs to Beth Rehob
So they rebuilt the city and dwelt there

And they called the name of the city Dan
After the name of Dan their father (Dan rhymes
-----with quiche)
Who was born to Israel
However, the name of the city formerly was Laish

Then the children of Dan set up for themselves the carved image
And Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh
-----who were at hand
And his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan
Until the day of the captivity of the land

So they set up for themselves Micah's carved image, doncha know
Which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 19:1-21.

(NO KING IN ISRAEL, PART V)

The day I typed this sermon, a pod of 8-10 manatee was swimming just off our dock. They stayed about four hours, churning up the water, poking out their noses, playing with their young, and slapping their giant tails as they dove down for more sea grass.

I have never seen them stay in a single place along the bay for this long, and it was a real treat. I focused the livestream camera on them, which was quite distracting. But it was also so exciting that Hideko and I had to go out on the dock to watch them for a while.

People tuned in from Australia, Ireland, Germany, the Czech Republic, and elsewhere that day. I didn't get the sermon done on time, but it was worth it 😊. A bonus of them coming was that I didn't have to think of a sermon introduction. The Lord just sent it our way.

Text Verse: *"So that He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh,
The tent He had placed among men,
⁶¹ And delivered His strength into captivity,
And His glory into the enemy's hand." Psalm 78:61*

As distracting as the manatees were, they really blessed us and others. The Levite in our passage today will also be a bit distracted. In fact, it will take him a couple of days just to get out of the area.

The old man, the Levite, and those with him left behind were probably sad at the loss of the company. But another old man will be happy about the company he receives that same evening.

In today's verses are all kinds of treats from the Hebrew. Great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Gladden Your Heart (verses 1-9)

¹ **And it came to pass in those days, when *there was* no king in Israel,**

v'hi bayamim ha'hem u-melekh ein b'yisrael – “And is, in the days, the those, and king naught in Israel.” The words are similar to Judges 17:6 & 18:1. It is prior to the establishment of the kingdom, but there is no judge named in the narrative either. In fact, Judges 20:28 will show that this is during the time of Phineas, son of Aaron.

At such an early time in the history of Israel, their passing through the Jordan would still be fresh in the minds of the majority of the people. And yet, the horrific events of this story come about. The vile conduct of the people of Benjamin is hard to imagine at such an early point in Israel's history, and yet it is on full display in the coming verses.

In the previous chapter, the typology reflected a time after Christ's first coming and prior to His second coming. It is a time when there is no king actively ruling Israel. As for the historical narrative, it next says...

¹ (con't) **that there was a certain Levite staying in the remote mountains of Ephraim.**

vayhi ish levi gar b'yarkthe har ephrayim – “And is, man Levi, sojourning in flanks Mount Ephraim.” Like the previous chapter, another Levite in Mount Ephraim is highlighted. The word *yerekah* is used to describe where he is. It is the feminine of *yarek*, the thigh or flank. It is used when referring to inanimate objects such as a location, a house, a cave, and so forth. It indicates a side, be it an inner side or a remote side.

It is assumed that this is referring to the remote side of Ephraim in relation to Bethlehem Judah which is prominent in the story. It is interesting that the same location, Mount Ephraim, is mentioned in the previous narrative where Micah dwelt, and it is also the area where 1 Samuel begins.

Shiloh is within the tribal allotment of Ephraim. That is where the ark resided after it was moved from Gilgal in Joshua 18:1. The apostasy of Israel is highlighted in this early narrative in the time of the judges, which necessitated the calling forth of a judge.

That continues through the life of Samuel, Israel's last judge. Eventually, the apostasy leads to Israel calling for a king. This account being in Ephraim tends to explain the words of the Lord through Jeremiah in our text verse as well as here –

“But go now to My place which *was* in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel. ¹³ And now, because you have done all these works,’ says the LORD, ‘and I spoke to you, rising up early and speaking, but you did not hear, and I called you, but you

did not answer, ¹⁴therefore I will do to the house which is called by My name, in which you trust, and to this place which I gave to you and your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. ¹⁵And I will cast you out of My sight, as I have cast out all your brethren—the whole posterity of Ephraim.”” Jeremiah 7:12-15

Despite the ark being in Shiloh, there is a great deal of apostasy being highlighted in that very area. It is as if the evil of Israel, even with the presence of the Lord right at hand, permeates the lives and actions of the people.

Levi means Attached.

Ephraim means Twice Fruitful and also Ashes.

In Scripture, a *har*, mountain, is a lot of something gathered. In typology, it is synonymous with a large but centralized group of people.

¹ (con't) **He took for himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah.**

vayiqakh lo ishah philegesh mibeith lekhem Yehudah – “And takes to him woman, concubine, from house Bethlehem Judah.” The words seem to imply that the Levite had a wife and that this woman is added as a second wife with lesser rights.

The word is *pilegesh*, and is supposed by some to be a compound of the word *palag*, to split or divide, and *nagash*, to draw near or approach. If so, it would mean that the man divided his attention between his wife and his concubine. This is what was the case with Abraham –

“And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac. ⁶But Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines which Abraham had; and while he was still living he sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son, to the country of the east.” Genesis 25:5, 6

This concubine is considered a wife, belonging to one man alone, even if she is not a main wife, like Rachel and Leah, with full rights. The children of such a union would be categorized differently as well. It is remarkable that Bethlehem Judah is highlighted again, as in the previous chapter.

The Levite, taken in by Micah of Mount Ephraim, was from there. Now a Levite from Mount Ephraim takes in a concubine from there. Micah’s Levite committed harlotry

against the Lord through idol worship. Now the concubine of the Levite will commit harlotry against her husband...

² But his concubine played the harlot against him,

The meaning is highly debated: *vatizneh alav pilagsho* – “And harlots upon him, his concubine.” Some feel this means she actually committed adultery and he found out about it (hence, “before him”). Others see it as her simply being unfaithful by leaving him. Some see it as her being a crummy concubine toward him and then leaving him.

The use of the word *zanah*, to commit fornication, is used both literally and figuratively, but it always gives the sense of harlotry, not simply departing from the home. When used figuratively about Israel, which is quite common, it means being adulterous against the Lord.

For example, it is used multiple times this way in the book of Hosea –

“Ephraim *is* joined to idols,

Let him alone.

¹⁸ Their drink is rebellion,

They commit harlotry [*zanah*] continually.

Her rulers dearly love dishonor.

¹⁹ The wind has wrapped her up in its wings,

And they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices.” Hosea 4:17-19

² (con’t) and went away from him to her father’s house at Bethlehem in Judah, and was there four whole months.

Again, the meaning is debated: *vatelekh me’ito el beith aviha el beith lekhem Yehudah vathi sham yamim arbaah khodashim* – “And walks from him unto house her father, unto Bethlehem Judah. And is there days, four months.” The term “days four months” could mean a year and four months, or it could mean “days, namely four months.”

The latter seems more likely. She left, and for four whole months, she did not return, making it likely she would not return. It would explain what is said in the next clause.

Either way, the focus is on the number four. Bullinger says, “It is emphatically the number of Creation; of man in his relation to the world as created; while six is the number of man in his opposition to and independence of God. It is the number of things

that have a beginning, of things that are made, of material things, and matter itself. It is the number of material completeness. Hence it is the world number, and especially the 'city' number."

Bethlehem means House of Bread. It can also mean House of War. Judah means Praise.

³Then her husband arose and went after her, to speak kindly to her *and* bring her back,

At times, there are differences in the Hebrew text when it is written (*kethiv*) and when it is read (*qere*). When this occurs, it usually means there is something in the written words that the scribes find odd, and they replace the part that is read with something that makes more sense to them.

In these words, there is a *kethiv* discord: *vayaqum ishah vayelexh akhareha l'daber al libah lahashivo* – "And arises, her man, and walks after her to speak upon her heart, to return him." What would, on the surface, seem to make sense, and what the *qere* reads, is "to return her."

However, there is strong reason to assume that it is referring to her heart, a masculine noun, and the nearest antecedent. Only Smith's Literal Translation follows this idea –

"And her husband will rise and go after her to speak to her heart, to turn it back" (SLT).

Because typology is being conveyed, Smith's is certainly correct. There is no reason to deviate from the written Hebrew unless the Jews somehow sensed that this passage sniffed of their own rebellion. This rendering is not without precedent. For example, in 1 Kings 13:4, the same verbal form refers to the hand of a person –

"So it came to pass when King Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, who cried out against the altar in Bethel, that he stretched out his hand from the altar, saying, 'Arrest him!' Then his hand, which he stretched out toward him, withered, so that he could not pull it back [*lahashivah*] to himself."

When the Levite went to Bethlehem, it was specifically *l'daber al libah*, to speak upon her heart to bring him (it) back. It is a thought that is also seen in Hosea 2 when the Lord appeals to Israel, asking them –

“Therefore, behold, I will allure her,
Will bring her into the wilderness,
And speak comfort to her [*v’dibarti al libah*].
¹⁵ I will give her her vineyards from there,
And the Valley of Achor as a door of hope;
She shall sing there,
As in the days of her youth,
As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.” Hosea 2:14, 15

This would explain the expression “days, four months.” Because the concubine would never return on her own, he instead goes to speak upon her heart.

³ (con’t) **having his servant and a couple of donkeys with him.**

v’naaro imo v’tsemed khamorim – “And his servant with him, and pair donkeys.” Here is a new word, *tsemed*. It signifies a pair. As such, it is used to designate a measure of land, as in the amount of land one can plough in a day, such as an acre. It is derived from *tsamad*, to join.

In this case, it is a pair of *chamor*, donkeys. That is derived from *chamar*, to be red, thus designating their reddish color. Specifically designating two shows that his intent is that she will return with him on one of them. Thus, with a servant and two donkeys, the men went down and met with his concubine...

³ (con’t) **So she brought him into her father’s house; and when the father of the young woman saw him, he was glad to meet him.**

vatviehu beith aviha vayirehu avi hanaarah vayishma liqrato – “And brings him house her father. And sees him, father the damsel, and rejoices to meet him.” Obviously, the Levite’s speaking upon her heart was effective because she is willing to bring him to her father’s house.

Nothing is said about why her father rejoiced to meet him, but it seems apparent that he was happy that the two would be reconciled. It doesn’t seem there are any hidden motives. The Levite had gone out of his way to make reconciliation. The girl’s father liked the Levite, and he was glad things were working out.

⁴ **Now his father-in-law, the young woman’s father, detained him; and he stayed with him three days.**

vayekhezaq bo kothno avi hanaarah vayeshev ito shlosheth yamim – “And holds, in him, his affinity, father the damsel. And dwells with him three days.” The word *khathan*, to be joined in affinity, is used. It shows us that this union was considered a marriage.

In his happiness concerning things getting straightened out, he kept his son-in-law as a guest for three days. Bullinger says the number three denotes divine perfection, and it “stands for that which is solid, real, substantial, complete, and entire.”

⁴ (con’t) **So they ate and drank and lodged there.**

vayokhlu vayishtu vayalinu sham – “And eat, and drink, and lodge there.” The girl’s father provided everything, accommodating his guest as one would expect in such a situation. However, after three days, it was time to go...

⁵ **Then it came to pass on the fourth day that they arose early in the morning, and he stood to depart;**

v’hi bayom harvii vayashkimu ba’boqer vayaqum lalekheth – “And is, in the day, the fourth, and arises early in the morning, and stands to walk.” In what seems an almost comical set of events, the Levite prepares to leave for the first of four times.

The visitors arose early. In doing so, they would avoid traveling during the heat of the day. They got themselves ready and once set, the Levite gets up, ready to head out...

⁵ (con’t) **but the young woman’s father said to his son-in-law, “Refresh your heart with a morsel of bread, and afterward go your way.”**

The father’s words are imperative: *vayomer avi hanaarah el khathno s’ad livkha path lekhem v’akhar telekhu* – “And says, father the damsel, unto his affinity, ‘Support your heart, bit bread. And after, walking.’” It is almost as if he is in a panic that the son-in-law intends to leave, so he admonishes him to have something to eat. The words he uses are similar to when Abraham spoke to the Lord in Genesis 18:5, except without the imperative –

“And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant.”

⁶ So they sat down, and the two of them ate and drank together. Then the young woman's father said to the man, "Please be content to stay all night, and let your heart be merry."

vayeshvu vayokhlu shnehem yakhdav vayishtu vayomer avi hanaarah el ha'ish hoel na v'lin v'yitav libekha – "And sit, and eat, they two, together, and drink. And says, father the damsel, unto the man, 'Yield, I pray, and lodging. And gladden your heart.'" The Levite agreed to stay and eat.

This would mean departing in the afternoon after the sun moved from its high point. But he probably reasoned it wasn't a terrible idea. While eating, however, the father-in-law asked him to lodge for the night and enjoy the evening with him. This didn't appeal to the Levite, and so...

⁷ And when the man stood to depart, his father-in-law urged him; so he lodged there again.

vayaqam ha'ish lalekheth vayiphtsar bo khotno vayashav vayalen sham – "And arises, the man, to walk. And presses in him, his affinity, and returns and lodges there." The Levite got up to leave and probably said, "We really need to get going. However, the father-in-law pressed him to stay the night and so he obliged..."

⁸ Then he arose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart, but the young woman's father said, "Please refresh your heart." So they delayed until afternoon; and both of them ate.

There are different ways to consider these words: *vayashkem baboqer bayom hakhamishi lalekheth vayomer avi hanaarah s'ad na l'avkha v'hithmahmhu ad n'toth ha'yom vayokhlu shnehem* – "And arises early in the morning in the day, the fifth, to walk. And says, father the damsel, 'Support [imp.], I pray, your heart [masc. sg.].' And lingered [masc. pl. *they*] until extends the day. And eat, they two."

Or "...Support [imp.], I pray, your heart [masc. sg.], and linger [masc. imp. pl.: *yourselves*] until extends the day."

Either he asks the Levite to eat and then they all linger until later in the day, or he is asking the Levite to eat and also linger with the others until later in the day. The Hebrew tends toward the latter, but Lange says –

“Older Jewish expositors, as Abarbanel and Meir Obernick, very properly take this, not as imperative, but as 3d per. perf. It is against the sense to make the father say: “Delay till it become evening.”

However, that appears to be exactly what the father-in-law is saying. The Levite sat the day before and then got up in the afternoon to leave. Once that happened, his father-in-law asked him to “yield” and stay the night. Now, the father-in-law uses a different word translated as “linger.” It is like saying, “Just refresh yourself now, and then you can go in a little while.” So the two of them did...

⁹ And when the man stood to depart—he and his concubine and his servant—his father-in-law,

vayaqam ha'ish lalekheth hu u-philagsho v'naaro – “And arises, the man, to walk. He, and his concubine, and his servant.” He had granted the father-in-law’s request and they had supported their hearts. Now, it is time to go as suggested. Therefore, the three of them arise to go. However...

^{9 (con't)} the young woman’s father, said to him, “Look, the day is now drawing toward evening;

The words are unusual: *vayomer lo khotno avi hanaarah hineh na raphah hayom laarov* – “And says, to him, his affinity, father the damsel, ‘Behold, I pray, slackens the day to darken.’” It seems evident that the father-in-law didn’t want them to go at all. Now that they had spent a part of the day, he urges them to just stay the rest of the day. “See, it’s getting dark. Evening is just around the corner! Therefore...”

^{9 (con't)} please spend the night. See, the day is coming to an end; lodge here, that your heart may be merry. Tomorrow go your way early, so that you may get home.”

The words curiously change between singular and plural: *linu na hineh khamoth hayom lin poh v'yitav l'vavekha v'hishkamtem makhar l'dark'khem v'halakhta l'ohalekha* – “Lodge [pl.], I pray. Behold, declines the day. Lodge [sg.] here and gladden [sg.] your heart [sg.]. And arise early [pl.] tomorrow to your way [pl.]. And walk [sg.] to your tent [sg.].” The change is more evident in the older versions that use you/your and thy/thine, but even then, most people just read right over the changes, not paying attention to the nuances.

The man is speaking to the Levite and then to all of them. He finishes by speaking to only the Levite. His word choice throughout these verses has been careful to sway all of them, but particularly the Levite.

In his words, there is a sort of pun. The word translated as decline, *khanah*, is normally used when referring to encamping, as in pitching a tent. It is where the word *makhaneh*, or camp, is derived from. As such, the old man is basically saying, “The day is encamping for the evening, stay here and walk to your tent tomorrow.”

*Stay a while and refresh your heart
And relax while the day goes by
No need to make such a hasty start
Rest! Give it a try*

*Stay a while and gladden your heart
You can remain here a bit more
No point in such an early start
No need to rush out the door*

*Don't hurry away, the day is just starting
Linger a while and relax before you go
No need to be hastily departing
Let the sun incline a bit, it's hot out, you know*

*Hold off till tomorrow, the day is almost gone
Yes, hold off and then depart at dawn*

II. Shalom To You (verses 10-21)

¹⁰ However, the man was not willing to spend that night;

v'lo avah ha'ish lalun “And no acquiesced, the man, to lodge.” He had been offered to refresh himself in the morning and then depart later in the day. Nothing would further detain him, so he refused to acquiesce to another appeal...

¹⁰ (con't) so he rose and departed, and came opposite Jebus (that *is*, Jerusalem). With him were the two saddled donkeys; his concubine was also with him.

vayqam vayelekh vayavo ad nokhakh y'vus hi y'rushalim v'imo tsemed khamorim khavushim u-pilagsho imo – “And arises, and walks, and goes until front Jebus – it Jerusalem. And with him pair donkeys, saddling, and his concubine with him.” A walk from Bethlehem to Jerusalem is a couple of hours. They are now facing the city, but it is mostly occupied by Jebusites at this time.

The word translated as saddling signifies to wrap firmly. Thus, it likely means saddled. However, it could mean they were loaded with things. Because the concubine is mentioned, being saddled seems to be the thought. The servant walked while they rode.

Jebus means Trodden Down or Trodden Underfoot.

Jerusalem means many things, but Foundation of Peace gets the intent.

¹¹ They were near Jebus, and the day was far spent;

hem im y'vus v'hayom rad m'od – “They with Jebus, and the day flattened, very.” If it was a two-hour or even three-hour walk, this means that, depending on the time of year, the father-in-law detained them until at least mid-afternoon, maybe later. He had actually put their lives in peril through his actions.

A new word is used, *radad*. It means to tread in pieces. In 1 Kings 6, it is used to indicate the spreading of gold over the cherubim in the temple. Thus, the day has been almost completely exhausted, thus, flattened.

¹¹ (con't) and the servant said to his master, “Come, please, and let us turn aside into this city of the Jebusites and lodge in it.”

The servant's words are imperative and contain a cohortative: *vayomer hanaar el adonav l'khah na v'nasurah el ir hay'vusi hazoth v'nalin bah* – “And says the servant to his lord, ‘Walk-ward, I pray, and we will turn aside unto city the Jebusite, the this, and lodge in her.’” He urges his master to walk toward Jebus, and they will turn in there. It is the only logical option because night would be coming very quickly...

¹² But his master said to him, “We will not turn aside here into a city of foreigners, who *are* not of the children of Israel; we will go on to Gibeah.”

The intent is understood even though the words are complicated: *vayomer elav adonav lo nasur el ir nakhri asher lo mib'ne Yisrael henah v'avarnu ad givah* – “And says unto

him, his lord, 'Not we will turn aside unto city strange, which not from sons Israel here. And we will pass over until Gibeah.'"

Jebus was not completely subdued by Israel yet, even if it was partially at the time of Joshua. In continuing to Gibeah, which was another two-and-a-half hours or so, they would be in an Israelite city filled with Benjamites. It is the town from which Saul would come.

Gibeah means Hill. It is etymologically connected to the word Gabbatha. If Gibeah was his destination, it seems odd that he would then add in another destination that is not much farther away, as is seen with the words...

¹³ So he said to his servant, "Come, let us draw near to one of these places, and spend the night in Gibeah or in Ramah."

vayomer l'naaro lekha v'niqrevah b'akhad hamqomoth v'lanu bagivah o baramah – "And says to his servant, 'Walk, and we will approach in one the places, and lodged in the Gibeah or in the Ramah.'" The Ramah is not far from the Gibeah, and so they could stop at either. They are so close that they are mentioned together at times –

"When Saul heard that David and the men who *were* with him had been discovered—now Saul was staying in Gibeah under a tamarisk tree in Ramah, with his spear in his hand, and all his servants standing about him." 1 Samuel 22:6

"Blow the ram's horn in Gibeah,
The trumpet in Ramah!
Cry aloud *at* Beth Aven,
'Look behind you, O Benjamin!'" Hosea 5:8

The Ramah, is from *rum*. It means The Height or The Lofty, but it could be from *rama*, and would thus mean The Deceit or The Loose (as in the "being trustworthy" department).

¹⁴ And they passed by and went their way; and the sun went down on them near Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin.

vayaavru vayelekhu vatavo lahem ha'shemesh etsel hagivah asher l'binyamin – "And passes over, and walks, and goes in, to them, the sun beside the Gibeah which to

Benjamin.” They were on the road that could take them to either Gibeah or Ramah, but the day was spent when they were at the point where the road joins with Gibeah.

This is probably stated to set the tone of the narrative for what lies ahead. Benjamin means Son of *the* Right Hand.

¹⁵ They turned aside there to go in to lodge in Gibeah. And when he went in, he sat down in the open square of the city,

vayasuru sham lavo lalun bagivah vayavo vayeshev birkhov ha’ir – “And turns aside there to go in to lodge in the Gibeah. And goes in, and sits in plaza the city.” The city gates were still open, so it was before night had completely settled in. Once inside, they went to the plaza, which was probably inside the gate. It is where people would gather.

The common courtesy of the times dictated that someone would welcome them into his home. Not this time...

¹⁵ (con’t) for no one would take them into *his* house to spend the night.

v’ein ish m’aseph otham habeithah lalun – “And no man gathering them the house-ward to lodge.” It was a command of the law to love the stranger. As such, one would expect them to be taken in. Even before the time of the law, Job noted that this was his custom—

“(But no sojourner had to lodge in the street,
For I have opened my doors to the traveler).” Job 31:32

The unfriendliness of the people is set forth markedly. However...

¹⁶ Just then an old man came in from his work in the field at evening, who also was from the mountains of Ephraim; he was staying in Gibeah, whereas the men of the place were Benjamites.

v’hineh ish zaqen ba min maasehu min ha’sadeh ba’erev v’ha’ish mehar ephrayim v’hu gar ba’givah v’anshe ha’maqom b’ne yemini – “And behold! Man old came in from his work from the field in the evening. And the man from Mount Ephraim. And he sojourning in the Gibeah. And men, the place, sons Benjamin.”

The fact that the man is only a sojourner is given as a contrast to the inhabitants of the city. He is old and he is a field worker at the end of the day. And more, he is only a sojourner in the city. He had every reason to want to be alone for the evening and let someone else take care of things...

¹⁷ And when he raised his eyes, he saw the traveler in the open square of the city; and the old man said, “Where are you going, and where do you come from?”

vayisa enav vayar eth ha'ish haoreakh birkhov ha'ir vayomer ha'ish ha'zaqen anah telekh u-meayin tavo – “And lifts his eyes, and sees the man, the wayfaring, in plaza the city. And says the man, the old, ‘Where walk, and from whence come?’” Here is a new word, *arakh*. It signifies to go wayfaring.

The old man came through the gate into the open area and saw the Levite with his companions and donkeys, and it was obvious to him that this was a wayfaring man. Therefore, out of curiosity, he asked about the route of their trip.

¹⁸ So he said to him, “We *are* passing from Bethlehem in Judah toward the remote mountains of Ephraim; I *am* from there. I went to Bethlehem in Judah;

vayomer elav ovrin anakhnu mibeith lekhem Yehuda ad yarkthe har ephrayim misham anokhi vaelekh ad beith lekhem Yehudah – “And says, unto him, ‘Passing over, we, from Bethlehem Judah until flanks Mount Ephraim – from there, I. And walks until Bethlehem Judah.’”

He answers the second question first. They have come from Bethlehem Judah and are going to Ephraim. To explain further, he then notes that he is from there. In other words, he is on a return trip from Bethlehem Judah. He then says...

¹⁸ (con't) *now* I am going to the house of the LORD.

Wow! Complicated: *v'eth beith Yehovah ani holekh* – “And House Yehovah I walking.” Cambridge (of course!) says the text is corrupt and it should read, “I am going to my house.” Most say that it means he is going to the house of Yehovah. However, he just said he was going to his home in Ephraim.

Some insist that the words, which bear an accusative, must signify “And I walk at the house of Yehovah.” In other words, he was a Levite who served there. This seems likely. Numbers 18:2, 3 says –

“Also bring with you your brethren of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of your father, that they may be joined with you and serve you while you and your sons *are* with you before the tabernacle of witness. ³ They shall attend to your needs and all the needs of the tabernacle; but they shall not come near the articles of the sanctuary and the altar, lest they die—they and you also.”

The verb in these words is a participle that acts as a verbal adjective – like “walking papers” (Beat it. You’re fired!). It would explain why he says the next words...

18 (con’t) But there *is* no one who will take me into his house,

v’ein ish m’aseph othi habay’tah – “and no man gathering me the house-ward.” He is a walking Levite at the House of the Lord. Either he is saying that he is reliable, but no one has taken him in, or it is because he is a Levite in Yehovah’s house that nobody wants anything to do with him. Either way, the reception is very disgraceful.

19 although we have both straw and fodder for our donkeys, and bread and wine for myself, for your female servant, and for the young man *who is* with your servant; *there is* no lack of anything.”

v’gam teven gam mispo yesh lakhamorenu v’gam lekhem vayayin yesh li v’laamatekha v’lanaar im avadekha ein makhsor kal davar – “And also straw, also fodder is to our donkeys. And also bread and wine is to me, and to your maid, and to the servant. With your servant no deficiency all word.”

Here is a word used for the fifth and last time, *mispo*. It signifies fodder, coming from a word meaning to collect. It is food gathered for animals’ use. He has everything he needs for his animals as well as for himself and his companions. Nothing is lacking except a place to spend the night. Despite this...

20 And the old man said, “Peace *be* with you! However, *let* all your needs *be* my responsibility; only do not spend the night in the open square.”

The final clause contains a jussive: *vayomer ha’ish ha’zaqen shalom lakh raq kal makhsorkha alay raq ba’rekhov al talan* – “And says, the man, the old, ‘Shalom to you, only all your deficiency upon me. Only in the plaza not shall you lodge.’” “Shalom to you” means that he would give them lodging. However, he then extends himself beyond that, saying that he would provide all their needs.

As for spending the night in the plaza, he is adamant that they shall not. It is apparent he knows the character of the people and what they are prone to doing. Therefore, he insists on personally caring for them.

^{21 (fin)} **So he brought him into his house, and gave fodder to the donkeys. And they washed their feet, and ate and drank.**

vay'viehu l'beitho vayibol lahamorim vayirkhatsu raglehem vayokhlu vayishtu – “And brings in him, to his house, and mixes to the donkeys, and washes their feet, and eat, and drink.” The old man prioritized the animals first to ensure they would be taken care of for the continued journey.

It is easy to get distracted by entertaining guests and forget the needs of the animals. And so, the old man showed careful attention to his guests so that they were able to be on their way early in the morning.

Washing feet was a custom not to be ignored. After only a couple of miles, while wearing sandals, the feet would be rather grody. It would be a relief to each of them. And then they all together ate and drank.

Nobody in Gibeah was willing to take them in except a foreigner. It is not unlike Lot, a stranger in Sodom, who did the same thing for the messengers who came there –

“Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw *them*, he rose to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground. ² And he said, ‘Here now, my lords, please turn in to your servant’s house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way.’

And they said, ‘No, but we will spend the night in the open square.’”

-Genesis 19:1, 2

It is evident that the town is an inhospitable place. What is coming will reveal it is much worse than that.

We are finished for the day. Think about what has transpired and what you’ve learned. Then, take time to read the coming verses and see if you can come up with any conclusions about what is being said. The word is telling us details so that we can peer into the future of redemptive history. Take your time and think about it. Next week’s sermon is just around the corner.

Closing Verse: *“But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, ¹¹ ‘The very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you.’ ¹² But I say to you that it will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom than for that city.” Luke 10:10-12*

Next Week: Judges 19:22-30 *Some people are destined for hell. It's the only fix...* (No King in Israel, Part VI) (53rd Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

No King in Israel, Part V

And it came to pass in those days
When there was no king in Israel to lead the team
That there was a certain Levite staying
In the remote mountains of Ephraim

He took for himself a concubine
From Bethlehem in Judah, not Lichtenstein

But his concubine played the harlot against him
And went away from him
To her father's house at Bethlehem in Judah
And was there four whole months, things were lookin' grim

Then her husband arose and went after her
To speak kindly to her and bring her back
Having his servant and a couple of donkeys with him
So she brought him into her father's house to get back on track

And when the father of the young woman saw him
He was glad to meet him, happy to the brim

Now his father-in-law
The young woman's father, detained him, he did ensnare
And he stayed with him three days
So they ate and drank and lodged there

Then it came to pass on the fourth day
That they arose early in the morning, and he stood to
-----depart that day
But the young woman's father said to his son-in-law
"Refresh your heart with a morsel of bread, and afterward
-----go your way

So they sat down
And the two of them ate and drank together, fun very
Then the young woman's father said to the man
Please be content to stay all night, and let your heart be merry

And when the man stood to depart
His father-in-law urged him to stay
So he lodged there again
There goes another day...

Then he arose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart
But the young woman's father said, yes he did state
"Please refresh your heart
So they delayed until afternoon; and both of them ate

And when the man stood to depart, he and his concubine
-----and his servant
His father-in-law, the young woman's father, said to him
-----being quite forthright
"Look, the day is now drawing toward evening
Please spend the night

See, the day is coming to an end
Lodge here, that your heart may be merry
Tomorrow go your way early
So that you may get home (before next January!)

However, the man was not willing to spend that night
So he rose and departed, and came opposite Jebus
----- (that is, Jerusalem)
With him were the two saddled donkeys
His concubine was also with him

They were near Jebus, and the day was far spent
And the servant said to his master
“Come, please, and let us turn aside
Into this city of the Jebusites and lodge in it and keep from disaster

But his master said to him
“We will not here into a city of foreigners turn aside
Who are not of the children of Israel
We will go on to Gibeah, that’s what I decide

So he said to his servant
“Come, let us draw near to one of these places
And spend the night in Gibeah or in Ramah
With some familiar Israelite faces

And they passed by and went their way
And the sun on them went down
Near Gibeah which belongs to Benjamin
Yes, as they neared Gibeah town

They turned aside there to go in to lodge in Gibeah
And when he went in, he sat down at some site
In the open square of the city
For no one would take them into his house to spend the night

Just then an old man came in from his work in the field at evening
Who also was from the mountains of Ephraim like him
He was staying in Gibeah
Whereas the men of the place were of Benjamin

And when he raised his eyes
He saw the traveler in the open square of the city
----- (cue the music dum de dum...)
And the old man said
“Where are you going, and where do you come from?

So he said to him, “We are passing from Bethlehem in Judah
Toward the remote mountains of Ephraim, yes toward
I am from there. I went to Bethlehem in Judah

Now I am going to the house of the LORD

But there is no one who will take me into his house
Although we have both straw and fodder for our donkeys
-----yes, we did bring
And bread and wine for myself, for your female servant
And for the young man who is with your servant; there is
-----no lack of anything

And the old man said, "Peace be with you!
However, let all your needs be my responsibility
Only do not spend the night in the open square
No way shall it be!

So he brought him into his house
And gave fodder to the donkeys too
And they washed their feet
And ate and drank beaucoup

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 19:22-30 (NO KING IN ISRAEL, PART VI)

I started typing this sermon thinking I had a good idea of what was being pictured based on what was compiled in the previous sermon. Boy was I wrong. The typology completely surprised me.

Once it was figured out, the words of Paul kept ringing through my head. When I witness to people about Jesus, I try to assess from their body movements, or their eyes how I need to adjust the approach in sharing the good news.

Every person is different, and people grasp things differently. The heart of the gospel is understood once the surrounding details of how we got into this mess are explained. But it is those surrounding details that need to be worked through from person to person.

Once the remedy is presented, I will share a real-life situation to get them to weigh their response carefully. Although it's been twenty-plus years since it happened, my example is still perfectly understood by everyone...

Text Verse: *"We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ² For He says:*

'In an acceptable time I have heard you,

And in the day of salvation I have helped you.'

Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

-2 Corinthians 6:1, 2

This verse is usually the last thing I tell people, but to set up Paul's words so that they are understood, I remind them what happened on 11 September 2001. I let them know that not a single person who entered the Twin Towers was thinking, "Gee, in an hour or so, I am going to face either burning to death or jumping out of a window."

They simply got in the elevator, pushed the button, and went to their day's labor as usual. And the people who got on their flights and headed to their destination never thought, "In just a little while, I am going to be flown right into one of the Twin Towers."

People understand their need to make a decision in such a circumstance. God hears us in the acceptable time. And in the day of salvation, He helps us. But that day and time will end. Then it will be too late for those who failed to respond to the call of the gospel.

And for those who never hear it before the rapture, the heartbreaking truth is that they will be left out of what God is doing during the church age. That puts a burden on us that we should gladly carry. Let us be about the business we have been called to. Time is moving along, and people will either be reconciled to God through His offer of Christ Jesus, or they will be eternally separated from Him.

This is a certain truth that is to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Such a Vile Thing (verses 22-30)

²² As they were enjoying themselves, suddenly certain men of the city, perverted men, surrounded the house *and* beat on the door.

hemah methivim eth libam v'hineh anshe ha'ir anshe v'ne v'liyaal nasabu eth ha'bayith mitdapqim al ha'dalet – “They pleasing their heart. And behold, men the city – men sons worthlessness – surrounded the house, beating upon the door.” The old man and the wayfarers were inside having a nice evening, eating, drinking, and enjoying fellowship when the locals surrounded the house and began banging on the door.

The word translated as beating is reflexive. The men were beating violently (beating themselves tired) to completely frighten those inside. The text describes them as sons of *beliyaal*, sons of worthlessness. The word comes from *beli* (failure) and *yaal* (profit). Thus, “no profit” or “worthless.” Some translators render this as a proper name, Belial. That is how Paul renders it in 2 Corinthians –

“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? ¹⁵ And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said:
‘I will dwell in them
And walk among *them*.
I will be their God,
And they shall be My people.’” 2 Corinthians 6:14-16

And yet, throughout the Bible, people describe an object by its predominant characteristic as a “son” of that quality. That is surely what is being conveyed here. These are sons of worthlessness because they are worthless people. And...

²² (con’t) They spoke to the master of the house, the old man, saying, “Bring out the man who came to your house, that we may know him *carnally*!”

vayomru el ha’ish baal ha’bayith hazaqen lemor hotse eth ha’ish asher ba el beitekha v’nedaenu – “And say unto the man, lord the house – the old – to say, ‘Bring out the man who came unto your house, and we will know him.’” This is exactly what happened to Lot in Sodom –

“Now before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house. ⁵ And they called to Lot and said to him, ‘Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them *carnally*’.” Genesis 19:4, 5

The meaning of “know him” signifies an experiential event. They want to have sex with him, contrary to natural law and the Law of Moses. They are perverts bent on acting out their lusts, which is exactly how some translations state it, saying, “the perverted men of the city” (NKJV et al.). Because of the horror of the request, an appeal for mercy is made...

²³ But the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, “No, my brethren! I beg you, do not act so wickedly!

vayetse alehem ha’ish baal ha’bayith vayomer alehem al akhay al tareu na – “And goes out unto them, the man – lord the house – and says unto them, ‘Not, my brothers, not evilize, I pray.’” The old man bravely stood his ground and appealed to the unruly bunch. In his words, he uses a form of the verb *ra’a’*, to be evil or bad, that has only been seen once, in Genesis 19:7. It is in an imperfect form *tareu*, thus, it is to evilize. They had formed an evil plan and they came forward to work it out.

²³ (con’t) Seeing this man has come into my house, do not commit this outrage.

akhare asher ba ha’ish hazeh al beithi al taasv eth hanvalah hazoth – “after which came the man, the this, into my house. Not do the foolishness, the this.” The word *nevalah* is used. It signifies a form of moral wickedness, and thus senselessness, disgrace, etc. It is

what Shechem did when he raped Dinah, Israel's daughter, and what Achan did when he took the devoted things at the destruction of Jericho.

To lessen the charges against them when they stand before God, he offers them a chance to turn from their evil intent...

²⁴ Look, *here is my virgin daughter and the man's concubine*; let me bring them out now. Humble them, and do with them as you please; but to this man do not do such a vile thing!"

The words contain a gender discord: *hineh viti ha'b'thulah u-philagshehu otsiah na otham v'anu otham vaasu lahem ha'tov b'enehem v'laish hazeh lo taas devar hanvalah hazoth* – "Behold! My daughter, the virgin, and his concubine. I will bring out, I pray, them (masc.). And abase them (masc.), and do to them (masc.) the good in your eyes. And to the man, the this, not do word, the foolishness, the this."

So deeply ingrained in the culture was the protection of guests that he was willing to offer the women to secure the safety of the Levite. This is also what was seen in eerily similar circumstances in Sodom –

"So Lot went out to them through the doorway, shut the door behind him, ⁷ and said, 'Please, my brethren, do not do so wickedly! ⁸ See now, I have two daughters who have not known a man; please, let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them as you wish; only do nothing to these men, since this is the reason they have come under the shadow of my roof.'" Genesis 19:6-8

Without attempting to defend his actions, but simply from a point of reason, if the man did not make his offer, the desired outcome would have been realized anyway, and things could have been even worse.

The perverted men would have prevailed, fulfilled their evil desire, and then abused the women and everyone else in the home as well. If there were enough men to surround the entire house, any attempt to fight against them would have enraged them and ended in total disaster for all inside. Thus, the old man did what he could to pacify the situation.

Of the gender discord, Keil says, "The masculine is used ... as the more general gender, instead of the more definite feminine." This makes no sense when the parallel account in Genesis uses the feminine form. It must be that typology is being conveyed.

²⁵ But the men would not heed him.

v'lo avu ha'anashim lishmoa lo – “And no willed the men to hear to him.” What the old man already knew is confirmed with these words. The perverted men would not heed even his offer, and disaster loomed upon them. Therefore...

²⁵ (con't) So the man took his concubine and brought *her* out to them.

vayakhazeq ha'ish b'philagsho vayotse alehem ha'khuts – “And seizes the man, in his concubine, and brings to them the outside.” The word *khazaq* is used. It signifies to seize, catch, lay hold of, etc. Time and again, when this form of the verb is used, it implies a strong action –

“Now when she had brought *them* to him to eat, he took hold of her [*vayakhazeq*] and said to her, ‘Come, lie with me, my sister.’” 2 Samuel 13:11

The Levite didn't just lead her to the door. He seized her and probably dragged her to it. Lange's commentary rightly states –

“The Levite who, notwithstanding her wanton disposition, runs after her, is now obliged to give her up to others.”

²⁵ (con't) And they knew her and abused her all night until morning; and when the day began to break, they let her go.

Another reflexive verb is used: *vayed'u othah vayithal'lu vah kal halaylah ad haboqer vayshalkhuha baaloth hashakhar* – “And know her, and gleaning in her all the night until the morning. And sends her in ascending the sun.” As before, to know means experientially.

The entire gang had their way with her throughout the entire night, but in an attempt to hide the shame of their crime, as soon as the faintest dawning of the sun began to show, they sent her away...

²⁶ Then the woman came as the day was dawning, and fell down at the door of the man's house where her master *was*, till it was light.

vatavo ha'ishah liphnoth ha'boqer vatipol petakh beith ha'ish asher adoneha sham ad ha'or – “And comes, the woman, to turning the morning. And falls, door house the man,

where her lord there, until the light.” The designation *adoneha*, her lord or her master, is used to describe her husband. Previously, he was called *ishah*, her husband.

This verse shows that it was the earliest of the morning, even before daybreak, that the men let her go. Their bravado of the night hours is belied by their cowardice in the morning light. Of these words, Matthew Poole says, “Thus the sin she formerly chose, Judges 19:2, is now her destruction.” She acted as a harlot and died from forced harlotry.

²⁷ When her master arose in the morning, and opened the doors of the house and went out to go his way, there was his concubine, fallen *at* the door of the house with her hands on the threshold.

The words are precise and again use the term “her lord”: *vayaqam adoneha baboqer vayiphtakh daltoth ha’bayith vayetse lalekhet l’darko v’hineh ha’ishah philagsho nopheleth petakh ha’bayith vayadeha al hasaph* – “And arose, her lord, in the morning, and opened doors the house, and goes out to walk to his way. And behold! The woman, his concubine, falling door the house, and her hands upon the threshold.” The words at first appear cold and uncaring, but the pitiful final words redirect the mind to the horror of the event.

She had the strength to get to the house and even placed her hands on the threshold, reaching out for safety. However, she could muster no more strength, and she expired.

The word translated as threshold is *saph*. It signifies a basin or goblet. It is also used to describe a vestibule, as in a limit. It comes from a primitive root signifying to snatch away, i.e. terminate. Her life was snatched away at the time she came to the termination of the house.

Of her, John Lange says, “The same woman, whose sensuality was heretofore unsatisfied, is now killed by excess of illicit intercourse. ... She who would not live for him, must now die for him.”

²⁸ And he said to her, “Get up and let us be going.” But there was no answer. So the man lifted her onto the donkey; and the man got up and went to his place.

vayomer eleha qumi v’nelekhah v’ein oneh vayiqakheha al ha’khamor vayaqum ha’ish va’yelekh limqomo – “And says unto her, ‘Arise and we will walk.’ And not answering. And takes her upon the donkey. And arises, the man, and walks to his place.” He was

surely surprised that she was at the door. Assuming she was asleep, he wanted nothing more than for her to get up and get moving before the crowd had a chance to return.

However, once he realized she was dead, he had no choice but to load her up and head toward home. It was on his journey back that he decided what had to be done. Therefore...

²⁹ When he entered his house he took a knife, laid hold of his concubine,

vayavo el beito vayiqakh eth hamaakheleth vayakhazeq b'philagsho – “And comes unto his house, and takes the knife, and seizes his concubine.” The seemingly horrific act he needs to accomplish was expedient, and it was intended to bring about a result that would otherwise not have been realized.

The word translated as knife is not a common one, being used only four times. It is derived from *akal*, to eat. It was one used specifically for slaying and dividing a sacrifice, as in when Abraham was to offer Isaac.

Also, the word translated as seizes, *khazaq*, is the same, and in the same verbal form, as was used in verse 25 when either the man of the house or the Levite seized her and brought her out to the men of the city. It seems this is a purposeful way of connecting the first action with this one.

²⁹ (con't) and divided her into twelve pieces, limb by limb, and sent her throughout all the territory of Israel.

vaynatkheha laatsameha lishnem asar n'thakhim vayshalkheha b'khol gevul Yisrael – “and dismembers her to her bones – to two and ten pieces – and sends her in all border Israel.” The word used to describe her dismemberment, *nathakh*, is one that is used in Leviticus when dividing up sacrificial animals at the sanctuary. The purpose of this deed is to give a tangible witness to what occurred, thus increasing the horror in the minds of the recipients.

It is a warning that if such an action is not handled, the same could happen to any person in Israel. The Levite had been threatened, and his concubine had been killed. The situation must be handled appropriately by all twelve tribes as both a statement of judgment and a warning to all should such a situation again arise.

As for how she was divided, my assumption would be two feet, two hands, two lower legs, two upper legs, two forearms, and two upper arms. That would alleviate the need to send her torso or head. Each tribe would receive enough to have a truly shocking emblem of the horrific deed that had taken place.

³⁰ And so it was that all who saw it said, “No such deed has been done or seen from the day that the children of Israel came up from the land of Egypt until this day.

v’hayah khal haroeh v’amar lo nihy’tah v’lo nirathah kazoth l’miyom aloth b’ne Yisrael meerets mitsrayim ad hayom hazeh – “And was all the seeing, and said, ‘No happened and no seen, according to this, to from day ascends sons Israel from land Egypt until the day, the this.’” Upon receiving the pieces of the woman, all who saw the sight agreed that this was unprecedented, noting that nothing like it had ever taken place in the history of the covenant people. Therefore, a unanimous cry went out...

^{30 (fin)} Consider it, confer, and speak up!”

simu lakhem aleha utsu v’daberu – “Set to you upon her. Consult and speak!” The words are feminine, upon her, are translated by all as “it.” Thus, it would be referring to the matter (no happened – it). However, it could be referring to the state of the woman as they gazed upon her pieces, “Set to you upon her state.” Either way, a new and rare word, *uts*, is used. It signifies to take counsel together or plan. It will only be seen again in Isaiah 8:10.

Based on the horror and tragedy of the event, they unitedly call for there to be consideration of the matter and then for the recipients to speak up concerning what to do.

*Here is my concubine, unfaithful is she
Despite that, I will appeal to her heart
Maybe I can win her allegiance only to Me
And from there, we can make a true start*

*But time is passing, it is ebbing away
And she has a choice to make
And too quickly pass the hours of the day
Putting things off is a big mistake*

I want none to perish, but free is the will

*And so I petition again and again
And yet, I will petition still
Looking for a change in my wayward children*

II. Pictures of Christ

Chapter 19 begins with the same general thought presented in verses 17:6 and 18:1, that there was no king in Israel. It is a true statement concerning the church age. Even if Jesus is the King of Israel, He is not actively sitting on the throne ruling His people.

We are allowed to do our own thing and He doesn't interfere in our decisions, even if He is spiritually making judgments continuously. Therefore, the words that there is no king in Israel are appropriate to the narrative if it typologically pictures the church age. Thus, with only a slight variation in the terminology of verses 17:6 and 18:1, this chapter opens saying, "And is, in the days, the those, and king naught in Israel."

Still in verse 1, the Levite was sojourning in the flanks of Mount Ephraim. As has been repeatedly seen, Mt. Ephraim signifies the church, a gathering of people from Jew and Gentile, saved through the work of Christ.

Being in the flanks of Ephraim means the remote side from Bethlehem which is the focus of the narrative. We can assume, then, that this is toward the end of the church age, being further from the place of Christ's birth. That will be borne out as we continue.

For this narrative, the unnamed Levite, Attached, anticipates Christ, the Firstborn to whom the church is attached. Noting he took for himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah means that she is not a wife with full rights. She pictures those who are in the church but not of the church. They are not true believers, something the church is full of.

As noted, *pilegesh*, concubine, is supposed by some to be a compound of the word *palag*, to split or divide, and *nagash*, to draw near or approach. If so, it would mean that the man divided his attention between his wife and his concubine.

Likewise, the church is divided between believers and non-believers. And the Lord is attentive to both, in various ways. Thus, the term *pilegesh*, concubine, is an accurate descriptor. For example, the Pope speaks about being a part of the church, the Bride of Christ, but who of those who truly understand things as they are actually believes that?

In Judges 19, we have a scenario that is essentially the opposite of the story of Micah and his Levite. The Levite taken in by Micah of Mount Ephraim was from Bethlehem. Now a Levite from Mount Ephraim takes in a concubine from Bethlehem.

Micah's Levite committed harlotry against the Lord through idol worship. Now the concubine of the Levite is said to commit harlotry against her husband. Harlotry, in a spiritual sense, signifies turning from the Lord, usually in idolatry.

Being gone for four months, four being the number of material completeness, it sets the complete time and scope of the church. There is an apostate group that claims Jesus, even if they don't belong to Him.

Verse 3 says that the Levite arose to speak kindly to his concubine and bring her heart back to Him. It reflects the words of Peter –

“The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” 2 Peter 3:9

Just as the Lord speaks comfort to His people Israel in Hosea to return to Him, so the Lord speaks to those in the church. He does this through His word, sound preaching of the word, etc.

The servant and a couple of donkeys accompanying him picture the Holy Spirit (as in Genesis 24) and the two testaments of Scripture that testify to Christ the second Adam. He is the Red One depicted in both testaments.

The very welcoming but super annoying father of the woman is a picture of time, *zeman* in Hebrew and *kairos* in Greek, both indicate a set time. Both nouns are masculine. The Greek *chronos*, which indicates time in general, is as well.

Time is often considered an enemy, but delaying time can be a friend if the outcome is negative. In this case, the outcome is something that will result in much sadness for some and much joy for others, the father-in-law keeps detaining the set time of the departure which would take the concubine to where she should be.

They stayed with him three days, the number of spiritual perfection. Getting set to leave on the fourth day, the world number, would have been fine, but her father twice delayed them.

On the fifth day, the day of grace, he again detained them. However, as the day of grace waned, they finally got up to leave (for real this time!) and her father tried to detain them again with oddly formed words –

“Lodge [pl.], I pray. Behold, declines the day. Lodge [sg.] here and gladden [sg.] your heart [sg.]. And arise early [pl.] tomorrow to your way [pl.]. And walk [sg.] to your tent [sg.].”

He wants them all to lodge, for the Levite to lodge and be merry, and then they can all arise and go. When they arose, the Levite would walk to his tent. For one to walk to his tent, then it means that the others will be going somewhere else, but not to his tent. When the time to leave is set, there will be changes. The Levite figured this out and left (verse 10).

After departing, it says they came opposite Jebus, Trodden Down, that is Jerusalem, Foundation of Peace, and the day was flattened, very.

The servant suggested going in there. However, the Levite said he would not go into a city of foreigners and that they would go on to Gibeah, Hill. It is a word etymologically associated with Gabbatha. This is a picture of the church age –

“And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” Luke 21:24

Jerusalem is currently trodden down by Gentiles, but when the church age and the tribulation end this will no longer be the case. For now, it is a strange city. In verse 13, Gibeah, Hill, or the Ramah, the Lofty, are suggested as better options as they are looking for security in a place that should be allied with them.

Therefore, they went on their way to the Gibeah which is in Benjamin, Son *of the* Right Hand. That turned out to be a mistake as the people were wholly unwelcoming.

Verse 14 noted that the sun had gone down before they arrived. The fifth day, the day of grace, ended, at least for the unbelieving concubine. The Son *of the* Right Hand brought about judgment, not reconciliation.

Verse 16 noted the old man from the mountains of Ephraim. His question (verse 17) concerning where they were going and where they had come from was met with

curious words. First, the Levite noted he was coming from Bethlehem and going to Mount Ephraim. He then said, “And House Yehovah I walking.”

It is a picture of Christ the Walker among the lampstands during the entirety of the church age –

“These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands.” Revelation 2:1

The Levite said in verse 19 that he had “no deficiency in all word.” They had all the necessary supplies with them but the old man said he would tend to them if they stayed with him, so they did.

While they were having a nice evening, however, there was a beating on the door (verse 22). This and all of the surrounding details closely mirror the events of Genesis 19. In this case, it is sons of *beliyaal*, sons of worthlessness, that surround the home.

As we saw in Paul’s words, “what accord has Christ with Belial.” Those outside the door separate from what the Lord intends for His people. Like the messengers of the Lord in Sodom, these perverts want to defile the Levite, picturing Christ, in this passage.

An appeal for reason was made, along with an offer of a virgin daughter. In this case, it also included the offer of the concubine (verse 24). In both stories, the offer was rejected. In Genesis 19, the two messengers pulled Lot back into the house and into the presence of the Lord (as was clearly indicated in the text).

In this case, the Levite seized his concubine and sent her out to them. It is a picture of those who failed to come to Christ in the acceptable time, the day of salvation. As John Lange correctly stated, “The Levite who, notwithstanding her wanton disposition, runs after her, is now obliged to give her up to others.”

Christ pursues those in the church despite their rejection of Him. However, eventually, the price must be paid by those who fail to come to Him. This was during the night. As Jesus said, “I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; *the night is coming when no one can work*” (John 9:4).

As the day began to arise, even before the sun’s appearance, she was sent away from her abusers and came to the house, falling down at the door where *adoneha* (her lord) was. It is the same symbolism as Genesis 19. The Door is Christ the Lord and Christ the

Lord is inside, behind the door. She got even to the threshold itself but did not go through the door.

As noted, the word translated as threshold *saph*, comes from a root signifying “to snatch away.” It is the exact words that both Strong’s and the NAS Concordance use to describe the rapture of 1 Thessalonians 4 –

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together [*harpazó*: to snatch away] with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.” 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

In Genesis 19, Lot was snatched back through the door while those outside were struck *ba’sanverim*, “in the blindnesses.” It was a picture of the world being sent spiritual blindnesses at the time of the rapture. In Judges 19, the unbelieving church is left on the other side of the door. They claim to have Jesus, but they don’t have Him at all.

This then, is an opposing picture of the same event. It is why the two accounts are so strikingly similar. With this understood, the man lifted his concubine onto her donkey, the Red One, and went to his place. She was apostate from Christ in her life, but He has a purpose for her in her death.

It says in verse 29 that the Levite took his knife, a particular knife intended for slaying and dividing a sacrifice. He cut her up, dismembering her to her bones in twelve pieces, and then he sent her throughout the twelve tribes of Israel.

The focus of the redemptive narrative changes after the rapture. It goes from the church to Israel. There is a rapture of the true church, but there will be no rapture of the false church. And yet, it is the church, true or false, that will alert Israel to their need for Christ –

“For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.” Romans 11:25

While post-rapture spiritual blindness of the great deception will cover most of the world, there are many Gentiles who will see through it. Likewise, the blindness upon Israel will finally start to come undone.

The church has not replaced Israel. It participates in the commonwealth of Israel. As such, verse 30 says, “No such deed has been done or seen from the day that the children of Israel came up from the land of Egypt until this day.”

From the time of Christ’s coming, until the day in which the rapture occurs, things have gone on as normal. However, a great and cataclysmic change will take place in both the physical and the spiritual world. At that time, Israel will be forced to say, “Set to you upon her. Consult and speak!”

Israel will awaken, understanding that building the church is what God has been doing since the ascension of Christ. That will become their focus at some point in the not-so-distant future when the true church is taken home to glory.

As I said at the beginning, I was completely surprised by the typology, expecting it to be totally different. In fact, I was rather certain of it. But once laid out, I have to go where the story is heading.

The church is an entity separate from Israel. Though it shares in Israel’s commonwealth, it is not Israel. Therefore, it cannot replace her. That is, once again, plainly evident from what is being pictured here.

Of course, when dealing with typology, a person can be completely wrong in his analysis of what is being said. In this case, I have presented to you what I honestly feel is being pictured. Now, it’s your turn to go back and check things out.

Be a Berean and ensure that what you have been presented matches what Scripture teaches. But above all, be sure that you are a part of the true church. A whole world full of people are deluding themselves that they belong to Jesus for various reasons.

Some think they belong to Him because they were raised in a Christian home. Some, because they give to the church they attend. Others are so filled with pride that they assume God loves them. And if God loves them, then Jesus must be crazy about them too.

Consider your standing before the Lord. Be sure that your heart is right with Him. The faith of your family does not transfer to you. You cannot buy your way into God's favor. And you are not really as special as you may seem.

Without Jesus, that is for certain. Once you come to Him, that all changes. So be sure to get things right with Jesus today! Let me tell you how...

Closing Verse: *"They are deeply corrupted, As in the days of Gibeah. He will remember their iniquity; He will punish their sins." Hosea 9:9*

Next Week: Judges 20:1-18 *There is the sound of a coming war bell. So be ready, Tom, Mark, or Kevin...* (No King in Israel, Part VII) (54th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

No King in Israel, Part VI

As they were enjoying themselves
Suddenly certain men of the city, perverted men
Surrounded the house and beat on the door
They should be locked up in the pen

They spoke to the master of the house
The old man, saying
"Bring out the man who came to your house
That we may know him carnally!" Thus they were relaying

But the man, the master of the house
Went out to them and said to them (trying to assuage)
"No, my brethren! I beg you, do not act so wickedly!
Seeing this man has come into my house, do not commit
-----this outrage

Look, here is my virgin daughter and the man's concubine
Let me bring them out now. Yes, them I will bring
Humble them, and do with them as you please
But to this man do not do such a vile thing!
But the men would not heed him

So the man took his concubine and brought her out to them. Oh no!
And they knew her and abused her all night until morning
And when the day began to break, they let her go

Then the woman came
As the day was dawning, this just wasn't right
And fell down at the door of the man's house
Where her master was, till it was light

When her master arose in the morning
And opened the doors of the house and went out to go his way
There was his concubine, fallen at the door of the house
With her hands on the threshold, sad to say

And he said to her, "Get up and let us be going
But there was no answer, such was the case
So the man lifted her onto the donkey
And the man got up and went to his place

When he entered his house he took a knife
Laid hold of his concubine, a sad story to tell
And divided her into twelve pieces, limb by limb
And sent her throughout all the territory of Israel

And so it was that all who saw it said
"No such deed has been done or seen from the day
That the children of Israel came up from the land of Egypt
Until this day. Consider it, confer, and speak up! Speak up I say!

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 20:1-18 (NO KING IN ISRAEL, PART VII)

In the passage today, Benjamin will be presented with the choice to give up the sons of worthlessness that led to the Levite's concubine being dismembered and sent throughout Israel. As you know, they were not willing to do so.

Israel cannot allow this to stand. Thus, preparations for war are made. As we have seen throughout Judges to this point, the physical trials and battles presented have typologically anticipated real spiritual events that have taken place or will take place.

The world is often at war, but the true war that all people face is a spiritual one. This then extends to families and family members, political parties and politicians, churches and congregants, and so forth.

Anyone who can't see the spiritual implications of the moral wars we are facing right now simply doesn't want to see them. The very existence of the United States is dependent on whether we will stand against the unholy tide of perversion being thrust upon us or not.

The same is true with denominations and churches. Many have completely capitulated to the moral perversion they were originally set up to fight against. Thus, they are Christian in name only with no actual connection to Christ Jesus.

If leaven is introduced into bread, it will spread throughout the whole lump. If sin is allowed into a Christian entity, the entire body will eventually yield to sin. Walk into a church in most major denominations, and you will see sin is either on the rise or has fully taken over. They are becoming or have become lifeless bodies without Christ and are set for a sad end.

Text Verse: *"For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? ¹³ But those who are outside God judges. Therefore 'put away from yourselves the evil person.'"* 1 Corinthians 5:12, 13

Paul warned the churches about what was coming. He did so concerning direct sin, such as in 1 Corinthians 5, and also about sin and wickedness in general as well. He warns against the inclinations of the heart. He explains the remedy for immorality and

wickedness, and he implores his audience to hold fast to the word of God, never yielding to the temptations of this world.

And his words aren't just "judgmental Paul being Paul." Rather, he repeats and expands on what the Bible has warned against all along, including the words of Jesus. The unbalanced "Jesus of love without consequences" proclaimed in churches today is not found in Scripture.

Israel will prepare for war because the tribe of Benjamin is unprepared to purge wickedness from his own house. When Jesus returns for His church at the rapture, He will for those who have accepted Him by faith. When Jesus returns after that, it will be to purge wickedness from the world.

We all have choices to make. In the passage today, Benjamin will make a choice that will be costly. For now, let us get into it. Sobering lessons are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Machination and Foolishness (verses 1-11)

Chapter 19 ended with these words –

“When he entered his house he took a knife, laid hold of his concubine, and divided her into twelve pieces, limb by limb, and sent her throughout all the territory of Israel. ³⁰ And so it was that all who saw it said, ‘No such deed has been done or seen from the day that the children of Israel came up from the land of Egypt until this day. Consider it, confer, and speak up!’” Judges 19:29, 30

With the terrible evidence of the misdeeds of Benjamin reported throughout Israel, the narrative of Chapter 20 begins with...

¹ So all the children of Israel came out,

The NKJV jumbles the clauses: *vayetse kal b'ne Yisrael vatiqahel ha'edah k'ish ekhad* – “And come all sons Israel, and assemble the congregation according to man one.” The meaning here is that all of the men of the households, and in particular, the men of war have assembled, as will be seen in the coming verses.

Also, two words are used that have similar meanings. The first is *qahal*, to assemble. That is the verb form of the noun *qahal*, an assembly. The other is *edah*, a congregation. That is derived from *yaad*, to appoint.

The words are used almost synonymously in the Pentateuch, but there is a subtle difference that necessitates care in how the words are translated and considered. In this case, they have assembled as a congregation...

1 (con't) from Dan to Beersheba,

l'midan v'ad b'er sheva— “to from Dan and until Beersheba.” This is the first of seven times this phrase is used in the Old Testament. It will be used twice in reverse in the Chronicles, saying, “from Beersheba to Dan.” It signifies the entirety of the land and people of Israel within the borders of Canaan. Dan is the northernmost point of reference, while Beersheba is the southernmost.

This may indicate that the migration of Dan, as recorded in Judges 18, may have already occurred chronologically, or it may mean that the author, who is probably Samuel, may have used it based on his time compiling the narrative. Either way, it is used to speak of Israel within Canaan in an all-encompassing way.

1 (con't) as well as from the land of Gilead, and the congregation gathered together as one man before the LORD at Mizpah.

v'erets ha'gilad el Yehovah ha'mitspah – “and land the Gilead unto Yehovah the Mizpah.” The term land the Gilead is used in reference to the two-and-a-half tribes east of the Jordan. Thus, the assembled congregation now refers to the entirety of Israel, minus the tribe of Benjamin. They have united together unto the Lord at the Mizpah.

This is a different Mizpah than was seen in the Jephthah narrative in Judges 11. It is believed to be a location from which Jerusalem is visible. It is likely the same location ascribed to Judah in Joshua 15:38 and Benjamin in Joshua 18:26. Thus, it is a border city.

The meaning of “unto the Lord” is debated. Does it mean the ark was brought there? Does it refer to the use of the Urim and Thummim? Or is it simply that as a congregation, they are gathered, acknowledging the Lord as their Head?

Verse 27 will place the ark at Bethel, but this doesn't mean it was not brought to the Mizpah for this gathering, but if it was, it would be a giant omission in the text.

Regardless, these men have gathered to discuss what happened and to decide on what to do to rectify the situation.

Israel means He Strives With God. Dan means Judge. Beersheba means both Well of Seven and Well of Oath. The Gilead means The Perpetual Fountain. The Mizpah means The Watchtower.

² And the leaders of all the people, all the tribes of Israel,

vayithyatsvu pinoth kal ha'am kol shivte Yisrael – “And station, corners all the people, all tribes Yisrael.” Here is a word being used in a new way, *pinnah*. It signifies a corner. As a corner provides strength, support, and stability to a wall or a side of something, so is the leader of a group of people. Thus, the word is used to describe Christ –

“The stone *which* the builders rejected
Has become the chief cornerstone [*pinnah*].

²³ This was the LORD's doing;
It is marvelous in our eyes.” Psalm 118:22, 23

These corner supports from all of Israel's tribes stand to hear the details and render a decision concerning the matter at hand.

² (con't) presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand foot soldiers who drew the sword.

The way the sentence reads, the words are difficult because it seems like the corners are defined by the number being mentioned: *biqhal am ha'elohim arba meoth eleph ish ragli sholeph kharev* – “in assembly people the God: four hundreds thousand man afoot, drawing sword.”

The words say, “the God.” Thus, it refers to those who are in a right standing with God. This assembly has come together as the people of the God, meaning Yehovah, to prepare for war. The number defines the entire assembly, not the corners within the assembly.

“And station, corners all the people, all tribes Yisrael, in assembly people the God: four hundreds thousand man afoot, drawing sword.”

Although translations are all over the place, this appears to be the intent of the words. Otherwise, the “corners” would be referring to all four hundred thousand. If so, it would mean that each is the “corner” of his own home, which is unlikely. The only other option is to add words or rearrange things within the verse.

Of the number of men, Cambridge says, as if they were there filming the whole encounter, “The number 400,000 is obviously exaggerated.” Rather, a short study will show the number is perfectly in line with what would be expected at this time.

The number is derived from four and ten, four being the number of material completeness, the world number, and the city number. Ten signifies “Completeness of order, marking the entire round of anything... It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete” (Bullinger).

³ (Now the children of Benjamin heard that the children of Israel had gone up to Mizpah.)

vayishmu b’ne Binyamin ki alu b’ne Yisrael ha’mitspah – “And hear, sons Benjamin, for arisen sons Israel the Mizpah.” Most scholars agree that this means Benjamin was summoned to the meeting but willfully avoided coming. If that was so, why wouldn’t the text simply say that?

Rather, it appears that they were purposefully not summoned because a decision had to be made, which would then be presented to them. The gathering of Israel is strategically positioned in a location on the border of Benjamin. As such, the note that Benjamin heard they had gone up to the Mizpah would be a result of the choice of the assembly’s location.

Benjamin means Son of *the* Right Hand. Whether they were invited to this gathering or not, once gathered, it next says...

^{3 (con’t)} Then the children of Israel said, “Tell us, how did this wicked deed happen?”

vayomru b’ne Yisrael daberu eikhah nihy’tah ha’raah hazoth – “And say, sons Israel, ‘Speak how the wicked, the this?’” The address is in the plural, and so it either means the Levite and his servant (who isn’t mentioned) or something like, “Any of you who knows what’s going on, speak up.” Next, it says...

⁴ So the Levite, the husband of the woman who was murdered, answered and said, “My concubine and I went into Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin, to spend the night.

vayaan ha'ish ha'Levi ish ha'ishah ha'nirtskhah vayomar ha'givatha asher l'binyamin bathi ani uphilagshi lalun – “And answers, the man, the Levite, husband the woman, the murdered, and says, ‘The Gibeah-ward which to Benjamin went, I and my concubine, to lodge.’” Saying “husband” must be inferred. It simply says, “man.”

However, in the previous chapter, it noted that he was the affinity of the old man in Bethlehem. Thus, it is a relationship through marriage. However, despite being a husband, she is clearly also called his concubine.

As noted in Chapter 19, the word is *pilegesh*. It is supposed by some to be a compound of the word *palag*, to split or divide, and *nagash*, to draw near or approach. If so, it would mean that the man divided his attention between his wife and his concubine. She is technically a wife but without the rights of a full wife.

Gibeah means Hill. It is etymologically connected to the word Gabbatha. Together they were traveling toward Gibeah from Bethlehem, intending to lodge there. Though unstated, the implication is that they did arrive and lodge. That is evidenced from the next words...

⁵ And the men of Gibeah rose against me, and surrounded the house at night because of me.

vayaqumu alay baale ha'givah vayasobu alay eth ha'bayith lay'lah – “And arise upon me, masters the Gibeah, and surround upon me the house night.” Without giving all the details of being taken in, tended to, enjoying the evening, and so forth, he goes directly to the evil of the event that was requested in verse 3.

The *baale*, masters or lords, of Gibeah arose upon him. The meaning is on account of him. They wanted to violate him. In using the term masters, he appears to be implying that it is the leaders of the city. If so, whether he means this literally or not isn't said, but the implication is that they were either the ones who came against him or they were accountable as if it were so.

^{5 (con't)} They intended to kill me, but instead they ravished my concubine so that she died.

oti dimu laharog v'eth pilagshi inu vatamoth – “Me intended to kill, and my concubine abased, and died.” He doesn’t give all the facts, but the substance is essentially correct.

Though nothing was said of killing him, they wanted to know him carnally. He would have refused, and they would have either raped him and killed him or simply killed him. Anything less is unlikely. Instead of getting the chance, they took out their intentions on his concubine, leading to her death. Because of this...

⁶ So I took hold of my concubine, cut her in pieces, and sent her throughout all the territory of the inheritance of Israel,

Rather: *vaokhez b'philagshi vaanatkheha vaashalkheha b'khal s'deh nakhalath Yisrael* – “And grasp in my concubine, and divide her and send her in all field, inheritance Israel.”

The concubine was dead. As such, to alert all of Israel to what occurred, he divided her up and sent her out. In the previous chapter, it said *g'vul*, border. Now it says *s'deh*, field. All of the field, meaning the inheritance where Israel is, had received a tangible portion of what took place...

⁶ (con't) **because they committed lewdness and outrage in Israel.**

ki asu zimah unvalah b'Yisrael – “for did machination and foolishness in Israel.” The word is *zimah*. Rather than lewdness, which may describe the act depending on the situation, it means a plan, especially a bad one. The word comes from *zamam*, to consider, purpose, devise, etc. As such, it is a machination.

In other words, this was with purposeful intent, not just some impulsive event in a moment of indiscretion. As such, a decision about what should be done in response is needed...

⁷ Look! All of you *are* children of Israel; give your advice and counsel here and now!”

hineh khulakhem b'ne Yisrael havu lakhem davar v'etsah halom – “Behold! All you sons Israel, give to you word and counsel hither.” The word “are” is inserted by many translations. Thus, it would give the sense of, “Because you are this, therefore do this.” But that is unnecessary. Rather, he is making an appeal, “Hey, you all, render a decision.” That seems apparent from the next verse...

⁸ So all the people arose as one man, saying,

vayaqam kal ha'am k'ish ekhad l'mor – “And arise all the people according to man one, to say,” The call was made for a unified decision. That is exactly what transpires...

⁸ (con't) **“None of us will go to his tent, nor will any turn back to his house;**

lo nelekh ish l'aholo v'lo nasur ish l'beito – “Not walks man to his tent and not veers man to his house.” The entire congregation arises and speaks in unison. Tent and house are to be taken synonymously for one's residence. It is a poetic way of saying that everyone felt the same, regardless of his profession, location, or abode. They will remain as they are until this matter is resolved...

⁹ **but now this is the thing which we will do to Gibeah: We will go up against it by lot.**

Despite translations which complicate these words in one way or another, the words are simple, direct, and emphatic: *v'atah zeh ha'davar asher naaseh lagivah aleha b'goral* – “And now, this the word which do to the Gibeah, “Upon her in lot!” The men of Gibeah have committed great wickedness and they must be held to account. This is perfectly understood and agreed upon.

Therefore, they will let the Lord decide who will engage the battle against them. Despite this being contextually obvious from the coming verses, some scholars imply that this is incompatible with going to Benjamin in verse 13 and telling them to deliver the inhabitants of Gibeah.

But the battle is not against Benjamin yet. It is only against Gibeah. The Lord, through the lot, will determine who is to go up against Gibeah if Benjamin refuses to give them up.

Others say that using the lot means “to divide its territory when conquered” (Ellicott, et al). This cannot be the meaning. By law, the inheritance of one tribe was never to be transferred from one tribe to another. Rather, this is simply a call to have the Lord determine who will come against the city for destruction.

Though under a different context, this is essentially what is referred to in Deuteronomy—

“If you hear someone in one of your cities, which the LORD your God gives you to dwell in, saying, ¹³ ‘Corrupt men have gone out from among you and enticed the inhabitants of their city, saying, “Let us go and serve other gods”’ —which you have not known— ¹⁴ then you shall inquire, search out, and ask diligently. And *if it*

is indeed true *and* certain *that* such an abomination was committed among you, ¹⁵ you shall surely strike the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying it, all that is in it and its livestock—with the edge of the sword. ¹⁶ And you shall gather all its plunder into the middle of the street, and completely burn with fire the city and all its plunder, for the LORD your God. It shall be a heap forever; it shall not be built again. ¹⁷ So none of the accursed things shall remain in your hand, that the LORD may turn from the fierceness of His anger and show you mercy, have compassion on you and multiply you, just as He swore to your fathers, ¹⁸ because you have listened to the voice of the LORD your God, to keep all His commandments which I command you today, to do *what* is right in the eyes of the LORD your God.” Deuteronomy 13:12-18

Though Gibeah is not under a total and permanent ban and will be reinhabited, the city is to be judged for its wickedness. The Lord determines who will be the executors of that judgment.

¹⁰ We will take ten men out of every hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, a hundred out of every thousand, and a thousand out of every ten thousand,

v'laqakhnu asarah anashim lameah l'khol shivte Yisrael u-meah la'eleph v'eleph larvavah – “And took ten men to the hundred to all tribes Israel, and hundred to the thousand, and thousand to the myriad.” These words are given in anticipation of battle.

The people had gathered to decide what to do about a matter. They had not gathered to engage in warfare. Therefore, before taking that course of action, they had to have supplies. As such, the entire congregation would except for ten percent, meaning forty thousand, of them...

¹⁰ (con't) to make provisions for the people, that when they come to Gibeah in Benjamin, they may repay all the vileness that they have done in Israel.”

laqakhath tsedah laam laasoth l'voam l'geva Binyamin k'khal hanvalah asher asah b'Yisrael – “To take provision to the people to do to their coming to Geba Benjamin according to all the foolishness which done in Israel.” The ten percent who are drawn off are to obtain provisions and provide them to whoever is chosen by lot to engage in the battle.

Provisions are especially needed if the city has to be besieged, something that could take an extended period. As for the name of the city, it is now spelled differently –

Gibeah - גִּבְעָה

Geba - גִּבְעָה

The fifth letter, *hey*, is missing. However, the meaning of the name, Hill, remains unchanged. With the supplies gathered, it next says...

¹¹ So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, united together as one man.

vayeaseph kal ish Yisrael el ha'ir k'ish ekhad khaverim – “And gathered all man Israel unto the city according to man one –comrades.” Only with the provisions for battle secured does it say this, as evidenced from verse 17 which again cites the number as four hundred thousand. True to their word, none returned home but stayed where they were, preparing for battle.

In these words is a new adjective, *khaver*. It signifies an associate, coming from the verb *khavar*, to be joined together. Using this word is intended to show that they are not just warriors ready for battle, but they are united in fraternal bonds over an issue that directly affects them all. Because these are fighting men, translating the word as comrades more appropriately conveys the sense.

One can get the feel of the word from Ezekiel 37 –

“As for you, son of man, take a stick for yourself and write on it: ‘For Judah and for the children of Israel, his companions [*khaver*].’ Then take another stick and write on it, ‘For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and *for* all the house of Israel, his companions [*khaver*].’ ¹⁷ Then join them one to another for yourself into one stick, and they will become one in your hand. ¹⁸ “And when the children of your people speak to you, saying, ‘Will you not show us what you *mean* by these?’ — ¹⁹ say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Surely I will take the stick of Joseph, which *is* in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions [*khaver*]; and I will join them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand.”’ ²⁰ And the sticks on which you write will be in your hand before their eyes.” Ezekiel 37:16-20

*None of us will return to his tent
Nor will any go back to his house
Until our energy is spent
This raging fire to douse*

*If we don't quench it now
Things will get thoroughly out of hand
And so we must adamantly avow
That we will comply with the Lord's demand*

*We must purge the sin from us
And live for the Lord all of our days
Let us walk in a manner pleasing to Jesus
And not let sin set our lives ablaze*

II. Slinging the Stone (verses 12-18)

**¹² Then the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying,
“What is this wickedness that has occurred among you?”**

The word “Then” may not be correct: *vayishlekh shivte Yisrael anashim b'khal shivte Binyamin lemor mah haraah hazoth asher niyethah bakhem* – “And sends, tribes Israel, men in all tribes Benjamin, to say, ‘What the evil, the this, which done in you?’”

It may be that these words were sent out when those who went out for supplies were sent out. Otherwise, it seems like there would be an unnecessary waste of time while people sat around waiting for a reply. Regardless, the offer of peace between the tribes is made in this manner.

As for the plural “tribes of Benjamin,” this is not without precedence. In Numbers 4:18, it says, “Do not cut off the tribe [*shevet*] of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites.” The Kohathites were a family within the tribe of Levi, but they are called a tribe in that verse.

There are two general words for tribe, *mateh* and *shevet*. The meanings are very similar, but *mateh* looks more to the genealogical side of the tribe whereas *shevet* looks more to the political side. Thus, the use of *shevet* makes sense. The political entities within the overall tribe are inquired of.

¹³ Now therefore, deliver up the men, the perverted men who *are* in Gibeah,”

v'atah t'nu eth ha'anashim b'ne v'liyaal asher bagivah unmithem – “And now, give the men, sons worthlessness, who in the Gibeah. And we will put them to death.” The

petition acknowledges the sovereignty of Benjamin as a people and in relation to their tribal inheritance.

Thus, it is appropriate to go to all tribes within the tribe to make this appeal. The onus for relinquishing the worthless men of Gibeah falls on the entire tribe. The petition is made so...

13 (con't) that we may put them to death and remove the evil from Israel!"

There is no article before "evil": *unvaarah raah miyisrael* – "and we will consume evil from Israel." A state of evil exists which cannot be tolerated. For the tribes of Benjamin to turn down the petition for its removal would be to take the side of evil. As such, it would be an acceptance of war against Israel in defense of the indefensible.

13 (con't) But the children of Benjamin would not listen to the voice of their brethren, the children of Israel.

Rather: *v'lo avu Binyamin lishmoa b'qol akhehem b'ne Yisrael* – "And no willed, Benjamin, to hear in voice their brothers, sons Israel." The word "sons" (of Benjamin) is inserted into the verbal reading of the Hebrew, but that is an unwarranted addition. The tribal name, Benjamin, stands for the tribes of Benjamin. They have collectively stood against Israel.

And more, it says that this was *avah*, willingly. There was a purposeful rejection of the offer of peace. Benjamin sided with evil and thus they have assumed the state of being evil. It is an intolerable state for Israel to accept. Benjamin knew this...

14 Instead, the children of Benjamin gathered together from their cities to Gibeah, to go to battle against the children of Israel.

vayeeasphu v'ne vinyamin min hearim ha'givathah latseth lamilkhamah im b'ne Yisrael – "And gather, sons Benjamin, from the cities the Gibeah-ward to go to war with sons Israel." The words are not intended to mean there were none who dwelt outside of cities. Rather, the cities stand for the area in which they exist, just as they do today. All of those in Benjamin who were able to fight came forward and headed toward Gibeah for battle.

15 And from their cities at that time the children of Benjamin numbered twenty-six thousand men who drew the sword,

vayithpaqdu v'ne vinyamin bayom ha'hu mehearim esrim v'shishah eleph ish sholeph kharev – “And visited, sons Benjamin, in the day, the it, from the cities twenty and six thousand man drawing sword.” The word *paqad* means to visit, but that has many connotations. In this case, it would be to number or muster.

The repetition of the phrase “from the cities,” is probably noted to highlight the close affiliation and affection with their brothers in the Gibeah. Cities are places where peoples and ideas coalesce and unite in thought, direction, and purpose. The other cities of Benjamin are united with their brothers in these ways.

As for the number 26,000, its basic units are two, ten, and thirteen. Ten has been explained. Two is the number of division or difference. As for thirteen, Bullinger says that “every occurrence of the number thirteen, and likewise of every multiple of it, stamps that with which it stands in connection with rebellion, apostacy, defection, corruption, disintegration, revolution, or some kindred idea.”

¹⁵ (con't) **besides the inhabitants of Gibeah, who numbered seven hundred select men.**

The verb is reflexive: *l'vad miyoshve hagivah hithpaqdu sh'va meoth ish bakhur* – “to separation from dwellings the Gibeah – visited themselves seven hundred man, selected.” The meaning of *l'vad*, to separation, is besides or apart from. There are an additional seven hundred men from the Gibeah who appointed themselves to participate in the battle as well. Seven is the number of spiritual perfection.

The term *bakhur*, selected, signifies choice. Those of Gibeah, despite being sexual deviants, were apparently good in battle.

¹⁶ **Among all this people were seven hundred select men who were left-handed; every one could sling a stone at a hair's breadth and not miss.**

mikol ha'am hazeh sh'vah meoth ish bakhur iter yad y'mino kal zeh golea ba'even el hasaarah v'lo yakhati – “From all the people, the this, seven hundreds man, selected, shut hand his right. All this, slinging the stone unto the hair, and no miss.” Because the same number was used in the previous verse, many scholars and some translations unite the men of both verses, saying it is the same group.

This is convenient, but it hardly could be the case. It would then mean that every person from Gibeah was left-handed. But more, the Hebrew doesn't bear it out. It says, “from

all the people.” It would be a pointless thing to say this if it was intended to mean the entire seven hundred from Gibeah.

Rather, there are seven hundred select men from Gibeah and there are seven hundred select lefties from all of Benjamin. This means there are the 26k of the other cities in Benjamin who draw the sword. There are seven hundred from Gibeah added to the total who are choice men. From this total, there are seven hundred who are also capable of slinging the stone.

In this verse are a few words of note. The first is *iter*, an adjective meaning shut up, and thus impeded. It is used for the second and last time in Scripture. The other use described Ehud of Judges 3.

It either means each is 1) defective in his right hand, 2) lefthanded (this being an idiomatic expression), or 3) that he is ambidextrous. It is probably an idiom, but it may mean ambidextrous. It is unlikely that seven hundred men of Benjamin had defective right hands.

Therefore, it may be an ironic trait common in Benjamin, Son of the Right Hand, to have lefthanded or ambidextrous offspring. Or it may be that they purposefully worked to improve their left hands as a play on their name – “Hey, there is Lefty, the Son of the Right Hand.”

The next word is new, *qala’*. It signifies to sling. It also means to carve as if in a singular motion or into light forms. The third word, *saarah*, signifies a hair. It is derived from *se’ar*, hair, but this word speaks of it in an individual manner.

The meaning is clear. These men could sling lefthanded and hit a target as if it was a single hair. As hair in the Bible signifies an awareness, especially of sin, a single hair would most likely speak of acute awareness.

That is an interesting lead-in to the words *v’lo yakhati*, and no miss. The word *khata*, to miss, also means to sin, as in when one misses the mark. This is a common connotation of the word and it answers to the Greek *hamartia* which has the same dual meaning. It is “sin, forfeiture because missing the mark” (HELPS Word Studies).

¹⁷ Now besides Benjamin, the men of Israel numbered four hundred thousand men who drew the sword; all of these were men of war.

Again, as in verse 15, the verb is reflexive: *v'ish Yisrael hithpaqdu l'bad mibinyamin arba meoth eleph ish sholeph kharev kal zeh ish milkhamah* – “And man, Israel, visited themselves, to exception from Benjamin, four hundreds thousand man drawing sword. All this man war.” Apart from Benjamin, there were 400k of Israel who mustered themselves, all drawing the *kharev*, sword, like the 26k from Benjamin.

18 Then the children of Israel arose and went up to the house of God to inquire of God. They said, “Which of us shall go up first to battle against the children of Benjamin?”

Rather: *vayaqumu vayaalu beith el vayishalu belohim vayomru b'ne Yisrael mi yaaleh lanu batkhilah lamilkhamah im b'ne vinyamin* – “And arise and ascend Bethel, and ask in elohim. And say, sons Israel, ‘Who ascend, to us, in the beginning to the war with sons Benjamin?’” Some translations say “the house of God” instead of Bethel.

This is incorrect as there is no article to justify this. Rather, they went up to Bethel to inquire of God there. This is more certain because it says in verse 27 that the ark of the covenant was there in those days. It would be superfluous to say this if the ark was at the house of God in Shiloh, especially because Shiloh is never mentioned.

The people, whether a delegation or the entire army, went to Bethel and asked God who was to go up to the war. This explains the lot mentioned in verse 9. They would have someone cast the lot before the Lord in order to seek His will. In doing so, the divine response is given...

18 (fin) The LORD said, “Judah first!”

vayomer Yehovah Yehuda batkhilah – “And says, Yehovah, ‘Judah in the beginning.’” The words form a pun. Judah means Praise. The Lord is saying that Praise is to go first. Nothing is said of victory or defeat. The people asked the question and the Lord gave His response.

That is the end of our verses today. We are left in suspense as to what lies ahead concerning the engagement which is sure to take place. But we can see that Benjamin has placed his tribal priority over his duty to the nation and the Lord.

This is something not uncommon in politics and the church. In politics, we are all aware of staunch conservatives who have a family member who turns out to be a morally questionable adult. Instead of holding firm to their convictions, they suddenly begin to support more liberal views on a particular issue.

In the church, people waffle on issues when they touch close to home or with people in their families, in their church, and so forth. Instead of standing up for what is morally right, they modify their doctrine. Entire church denominations have taken this path.

For most, it happens slowly and the individual or congregants simply go along with the subtle changes going on around them. Over time, however, the difference in the person, church, seminary, denomination, etc. is completely contrary to its beginning.

Each of us needs to be settled in our morals, sound in our doctrine, and unwilling to tolerate that which the Lord finds intolerable. Unless we do this, disaster lies ahead. For those who take the right stand, there may be problems as well.

When there is a battle ahead, people will usually not come out unscathed, but it is far better to suffer loss for the sake of the Lord than to suffer temporary supposed gain in this world and have to face the Lord on unhappy terms in eternity.

Israel took a stand in today's passage and a battle against their own kin lies ahead, but that is far preferable than allowing the infection to fester. Let us remember this. The most unloving thing we can do is to tolerate sin in those we love.

When people in today's world use catch phrases like "love wins," they have no idea what they are talking about. The kind of love they are attempting to defend, like Benjamin and the Gibeonites, will only lead to a bad end.

But there is a remedy for the sin problem: Jesus. Without Him in the mix, things will not go well. But when He is properly included in every decision, life will be pleasing to God. Let us remember this and be people of faith who live out our faith faithfully.

Closing Verse: *"Do not be deceived: 'Evil company corrupts good habits.' ³⁴ Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame." 1 Corinthians 15:33, 34*

Next Week: Judges 20:19-35 This story is so swell, ain't it great? (No King in Israel, Part VIII) (55th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

(No King in Israel, Part VII)

So all the children of Israel came out
From Dan to Beersheba, as well as from the land of Gilead
And the congregation gathered together as one man
Before the LORD at Mizpah, because of the news so sad

And the leaders of all the people
All the tribes of Israel with one accord
Presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God
Four hundred thousand foot soldiers who drew the sword

(Now the children of Benjamin heard
That the children of Israel had up to Mizpah gone)
Then the children of Israel said
“Tell us, how did this wicked deed happen? What is going on?”

So the Levite, the husband of the woman who was murdered
Answered and said about the plight
“My concubine and I went into Gibeah
Which belongs to Benjamin, to spend the night

And the men of Gibeah rose against me
And surrounded the house at night because of me
They intended to kill me
But instead they ravished my concubine so that she died, sadly

So I took hold of my concubine, cut her in pieces
And sent her throughout all the territory (so to you I tell)
Of the Israel’s inheritance
Because they committed lewdness and outrage in Israel

Look! All of you are children of Israel
Give your advice and counsel here and now – please tell!

So all the people arose as one man, saying
“None of us will go to his tent, so we are relaying

Nor will any turn back to his house

But now this is the thing (this is our plot)
Which we will do to Gibeah:
We will go up against it by lot

We will take ten men out of every hundred throughout
-----all the tribes of Israel
A hundred out of every thousand from 'neath the steeple
And a thousand out of every ten thousand
To make provisions for the people

That when they come to Gibeah in Benjamin as well
They may repay all the vileness that they have done in Israel

So all the men of Israel were gathered according to the plan
Against the city, united together as one man

Then the tribes of Israel sent men
Through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying
“What is this wickedness that has occurred among you?
A price for this you will be paying

Now therefore, deliver up the men, the perverted men who
-----are in Gibeah
That we may put them to death and remove the evil from Israel!”
But the children of Benjamin would not listen
To the voice of their brethren, the children of Israel as they did tell

Instead, the children of Benjamin gathered together
From their cities to Gibeah
To go to battle against the children of Israel
Maybe shouting out a big oorah

And from their cities at that time
The children of Benjamin numbered twenty-six thousand men
Who drew the sword, besides the inhabitants of Gibeah
Who numbered seven hundred select men, that is seventy times ten

Among all this people were seven hundred select men
Who were left-handed, slinging like this...

Every one could sling a stone
At a hair's breadth and not miss

Now besides Benjamin
The men of Israel numbered four hundred thousand men, a big
-----number for shor
Those who drew the sword
All of these were men of war

Then the children of Israel arose
And went up to the house of God to inquire of God to be versed
They said, "Which of us shall go up first to battle
Against the children of Benjamin?" The LORD said, "Judah first!"

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 20:19-35 (NO KING IN ISRAEL, PART VIII)

A day before typing this sermon, an assassination attempt was made against President Trump. It was incredible to see how the media and those in the government portrayed this from the moment it occurred.

They, including Biden just days earlier, had been openly calling for a target to be placed on Trump. They had incited rage against him since before he was elected to office in 2016 and continued to do so right up until the day of the attempt, and they then blamed the right for inciting the hatred that caused it!

Many on the left, even after full evidence of the shooter and what he had done was seen by the public, said that the shooting was staged by President Trump.

There was no true call for harmony within the nation, even by Biden when he held an Oval Office address to call for harmony. Instead, he continued to blame Trump and those who support him, citing examples of recent political violence, all incited by the US government, as reasons why people need to reelect Biden and not the man who had just been shot in the ear.

Instead of an attitude of mourning and repentance towards God, the rabid left simply doubled down on their violent rhetoric and hatred towards the values of freedom and democracy.

Text Verse: *“Now, therefore,” says the LORD,
“Turn to Me with all your heart,
With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.” Joel 2:12*

Because of the abundance of information heaped upon the reader, as well as how the Bible is laid out, an interesting point concerning Moses and Aaron can easily be overlooked in Judges.

In Judges 18:30, the grandson of Moses was a key figure in the surrounding narrative. We saw that he had completely departed from any hint of sound theology under the Law of Moses.

In this passage, Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron is a key figure in the narrative, and it is in his time as high priest that Israel has a major problem with morality. Israel also has a problem with properly seeking the Lord.

Although the text doesn't explicitly say of Moses' grandson Jonathan that he had crossed the Jordan into the land of promise, both of these men certainly did. During their lives, things had devolved so much that there was already a major problem with Israel's interactions with the Lord.

In today's passage, it will take a great loss of life before the people actually humble themselves and properly petition the Lord before engaging in battle against Benjamin. Today, it's not sure how much loss, destruction, and disaster it will take for the violent and hate-filled left to turn from their ways, if they ever do, but they are the ones that will have to reap what they have sown.

Unfortunately, nations fall into judgment collectively. What happens to the left because of their lawlessness, murders, immorality, and violence will also happen to those who just want to live in peace, have prosperity, and hold to the sound Christian values that established our nation.

Unless the rapture happens, it seems that all in America are set to face troubled times as the days unfold. It just doesn't seem that we are willing to humble ourselves before the glorious God who established us.

We are not at all unlike Israel. Such somber truths are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Ark of the Covenant of God (verses 19-25)

¹⁹ So the children of Israel rose in the morning and encamped against Gibeah.

vayaqumu v'ne Yisrael baboqer vayakhanu al hagivah – “And rise, sons Israel, in the morning, and encamp upon the Gibeah.” Verse 17 said that besides Benjamin, the number of fighting men of Israel was four hundred thousand. This appears to include the ten percent who went to get supplies. Thus, the entire force has gathered against Gibeah.

The leaders inquired of the Lord which tribe should go up first to battle. There is no reason to assume that meant only one tribe would go up, but that in the ranks, this tribe, meaning Judah, would go first ahead of the others.

As such, the entire array of Israel came upon the single city of Gibeah which would have been filled with Benjamites from other cities...

²⁰ And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin,

vayetse ish Yisrael lamilkhamah im Binyamin – “And goes out, man Israel, to the war with Benjamin.” These words are not a repeat of verse 19. Rather, the men of Israel first sought the word of *elohim*. Upon receiving it, they then encamped around Gibeah. Now, they are actually deploying lines for the battle. After a day of battle, the men would need a camp to return to. Once encamped...

²⁰ (con’t) and the men of Israel put themselves in battle array to fight against them at Gibeah.

vayaarkhu itam ish Yisrael milkhamah el hagivah – “And arrange them, man Israel, war unto the Gibeah.” Now the men depart from their camp and actually arrange themselves according to battle lines. The first of these lines would be Judah, according to the word of the Lord.

With the battle lines drawn, there would probably be a call out to Benjamin to surrender or face battle against this massive force arrayed against them. Whatever transpired in words or through messengers, Benjamin chose war...

²¹ Then the children of Benjamin came out of Gibeah, and on that day cut down to the ground twenty-two thousand men of the Israelites.

vayetsu v’ne vinyamin min hagivah vayashkhithu b’Yisrael bayom hahu shnayim v’esrim eleph ish artsah – “And go out, sons Benjamin, from the Gibeah. And ruin in Israel, in the day, the it, two and twenty thousand man earthward.” It is an amazing rout of the forces arrayed against them.

There are twenty-six thousand men of Benjamin against four hundred thousand of Israel. This means that there was almost one man lost in Israel for each man of Benjamin who participated in the war. The words say nothing of how many of Benjamin may have fallen, but the number would be extremely low based on the coming verses.

As for the word translated as “cut down” or “ruin,” it is *shakhath*. It means something like “to go to ruin.” This probably means killed, but it could be a casualty that is no longer capable of fighting, even if he lives.

However, based on the use of the same word later in the narrative, the likely meaning is that these soldiers died in battle. It is an enormous cost for having come against the city without a suitable plan of attack.

As for the number 22,000, it is a factor of 2, 10, and 11. Two is the number of division or difference. Ten is the number of perfection of divine order where there is “nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete” (Bullinger), and eleven is the number of disorder, disorganization, imperfection, and disintegration.

²² And the people, that is, the men of Israel, encouraged themselves and again formed the battle line at the place where they had put themselves in array on the first day.

vayithkhazeq ha’am ish Yisrael vayosiphu la’arokh milkhamah bamaqom asher arkhu sham bayom harishon – “And strengthens, the people, man Israel. And add to arrange war in the place where arranged there in the day, the first.” The words allow for a meaning that this is not necessarily the next day.

In other words, it doesn’t say “on the morrow.” Rather, it says that they have arranged as they were on the first day. Thus, it may be there was time to regather, go over their failures, prepare for another battle, and then set up lines as they previously had.

However, the term “the second day” in verse 24 has to be clarified. Would this mean the second day in a row or the second day of engaging the battle? It is hard to be dogmatic, but it does not appear that the term “the second day” means the day following the first.

At least one full day must have occurred between the battles. Thus, it could be one or more days between engagements. Regardless, they have reformed their lines, and they are now prepared to once again engage Benjamin. Either way, the determination of the Lord is sought prior to the second engagement...

²³ Then the children of Israel went up and wept before the LORD until evening, and asked counsel of the LORD,

vayaalu v'ne Yisrael vayivku liphne Yehovah ad ha'erev vayishalu b'Yehovah – “And ascend, sons Israel, and weep to faces Yehovah until the evening. And ask in Yehovah.” The weeping appears to be more than just for their loss, but may also be because of a misunderstanding of the initial words of the Lord. That will be seen in the next clause.

Of the words, there are at least a couple of possibilities. One is that they arrayed in formation and then went up to Bethel to seek the Lord, or the words could be parenthetical and what is next said determined that they should then array in battle. There is a progression of thought in regard to the previous visit to Bethel –

Vs. 18 – And ask in elohim.

Vs. 23 – And ask in Yehovah.

Despite the use of the word *elohim* of verse 18, the response there was from Yehovah. In their state of confused distress, Israel again petitions for divine instruction...

²³ (con't) **saying, “Shall I again draw near for battle against the children of my brother Benjamin?”**

l'mor haosiph lagesheth lamilkhamah im b'ne vinyamin akhi – “to say, ‘Add to approach to the war with sons Benjamin my brother?’” The inclusion of the word *akhi*, my brother, may be one of questioning the rightness of their first engagement.

Did they misunderstand the Lord’s intent? To be sure that no mistake is made this time, they acknowledge again that Benjamin is the target and, more, that he is a brother in Israel. They had ascended to the battle against him by the word of Yehovah. Is it right to do so a second time?

²³ (con't) **And the LORD said, “Go up against him.”**

vayomer Yehovah alu elav – “And says, Yehovah, ‘Ascend unto him.’” The divine response settles the matter. The rout of the first day was not in error, and the intention to reengage a second time is appropriate. Thus, without requesting any further instruction or explanation, it next says...

²⁴ **So the children of Israel approached the children of Benjamin on the second day.**

vayiqr'vu v'ne Yisrael el b'ne vinyamin ba'yom ha'sheni – “And approach, sons Israel, unto sons Benjamin in the day, the second.” As noted above, it seems that this means

the second day of battle, but not necessarily the second day of all of the events being recorded.

Israel was encamped against Benjamin. They must again strap on their gear and array themselves for battle. Once so arrayed...

²⁵ And Benjamin went out against them from Gibeah on the second day, and cut down to the ground eighteen thousand more of the children of Israel;

vayetse vinyamin liqratham min hagivah bayom ha'sheni vayashkhithu vivne Yisrael od shmonath asar eleph ish artsah – “And goes out, Benjamin, to encounter them from the Gibeah in the day, the second. And ruin, sons Israel, again eight ten thousand man earthward.”

The same terminology is used as before. The men were ruined earthward, the most likely meaning of which is that these were not merely wounded casualties, but slain in battle. As for the number 18000, it is derived from two, nine, and ten, or three, six, and ten.

Two and ten have been defined. Three “stands for that which is solid, real, substantial, complete, and entire” (Bullinger). It is, thus, the number of divine completeness or perfection. Six is the number of man, especially fallen man. Nine is the number of finality or judgment.

²⁵ (con't) all these drew the sword.

kal eleh shol'phe kharev – “All these drawing sword.” These words hearken back to verse 17 where it noted that the four hundred thousand of Israel were those who drew the sword. As a reminder, the word *kharev*, sword, is identical in spelling to Horeb, the mountain where the law was given, and thus, it stands for the Law of Moses.

The total number slain equals forty thousand. Thus, ten percent of the men gathered from Israel have been wiped out. Forty speaks of probation, trial, and chastisement. It is grace (5) leading to revival and renewal (8), or enlarged domain/extended rule (4 x 10).

*Without the Lord Jesus in the war
There is no way the battle can be won
Without Him, man is rotten to the core
Because of all the things we've done*

*Adam brought us into a bad state
But we have heaped more upon ourselves
And yet, it is never too late
Glory awaits, like treasure rested upon heaven's shelves*

*Our sin can be forever secreted away
If we just yield ourselves to Jesus
And then, on some glorious day
He will descend, and to Himself bring us*

II. I Will Deliver Them Into Your Hand (verses 26-35)

²⁶ Then all the children of Israel, that is, all the people, went up and came to the house of God and wept.

Rather: *vayaalu khal b'ne Yisrael v'khal ha'am vayavou beith el vayivku* – “And ascend, all sons Israel and all the people, and come Bethel, and weep.” Rather than “house of God,” it is the location, Bethel, even if Bethel means House of God. That will be made clear in the next verse.

The second rout of Israel was enough to alert the people that they were not right with the Lord. There seems to be no other explanation. Thus, not only the male soldiers, but all of the people went up to Bethel and wept before the Lord...

²⁶ (con't) They sat there before the LORD and fasted that day until evening;

vayeshvu sham liphne Yehovah vayatsumu bayom ha'hu ad ha'arev – “And sit there to faces Yehovah. And fast in the day, the it, until the evening.” Here is a new word, *tsum*. It signifies to not eat, and thus to fast. It comes from a primitive root signifying “to cover over.” As such, it is as if the people cover their mouths to purposefully not eat. For all we know, it could mean they actually covered their mouths as an open display of their fast.

Either way, the people sat and fasted throughout the day until the evening, which started the new day. During that time...

²⁶ (con't) and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.

vayaalu oloth ushlamim liphne Yehovah – “And ascend burnt offerings and peace offerings to faces Yehovah.” The burnt offerings are wholly burnt to Yehovah as a sign of complete submission or dedication to Him.

The peace offerings had a sacred portion removed for the Lord according to the written law and the rest was eaten by the people. Thus, these were probably eaten after ending the fast. As such, the burnt offerings are for restoration and the peace offerings were a sign of renewed fellowship based on that restoration.

²⁷ So the children of Israel inquired of the LORD

vayishalu v'ne Yisrael b'Yehovah – “And ask, sons Israel, in Yehovah.” These words say basically the same thing as verse 23. The sons of Israel “ask in Yehovah.” Therefore, one would expect that the circumstances of the request are the same. However, the words continue with a new thought...

²⁷ (con't) (the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days,

v'sham aron b'rith ha'elohim bayamim ha'hem – “And there, ark covenant the God in the days, the those.” The ark has not been mentioned since Joshua 8:33, and this is the only time it is mentioned in Judges. And more, the exact phrase used here, *aron b'rith ha'elohim*, ark covenant the God, is first seen here. It will only be seen four times in Scripture (1 Samuel 4:4, 2 Samuel 15:24, & 1 Chronicles 16:6).

Like the NKJV, many translations bracket these words, implying they are parenthetical. As such, it would cover the entire narrative we have been following. However, it appears this is not the intent at all. If it was, why wasn't this said in verse 18?

Rather, it seems to be explanatory of the current days. The people had been going to Bethel (House of God) to ask of God (or the Lord), but there was no ark there. Now, with the inclusion of all of the people of Israel, it appears that the ark, too, was carried from its tabernacle in Shiloh to Bethel. That seems more certain based on the next words...

²⁸ and Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days),

u-phinkhas ben Elazar ben aharon omed l'phanav bayamim ha'hem – “And Phinehas, son Eleazar, son Aaron, standing to His faces in the days, the those.” Phinehas has not been mentioned since the final chapter of Joshua. Naming him here definitively places

the narrative earlier in the history of the judges. He is the priest ministering before the Lord at this time.

If the sons of Israel going into battle had been inquiring of the Lord through Phineas earlier in this narrative, we would have been told this previously. However, he is first mentioned now. As such, it appears the ark and Phinehas came up to Bethel with the people for the time of national mourning.

Phinehas means Mouth of Brass, and thus, Mouth of Judgment, because brass signifies judgment. Eleazer means Whom God Helps. Aaron means Very High. Now that the ark and the Lord's high priest are there to be inquired of, they ask...

²⁸ (con't) **saying, "Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of my brother Benjamin, or shall I cease?"**

l'mor haosiph od latseth lamilkhamah im b'ne vinyamin akhi im ekhdal – "to say, 'Add again to go out to the war with sons Benjamin, my brother, if cease?'" Now that the people are in a right standing with the Lord, the question is again asked. Israel collectively asks (Shall I) if he should go again to fight against his brother or if the matter should end...

²⁸ (con't) **And the LORD said, "Go up, for tomorrow I will deliver them into your hand."**

Rather, it is singular: *vayomer Yehovah alu ki makhar etnenu b'yadkha* – "And says, Yehovah, 'Ascend, for tomorrow I will give him in your hand.'" This time, Israel is not only told to ascend against his brother but that he will prevail over him.

Saying "tomorrow" does not contradict the words "third day" of verse 30. The word means tomorrow, but it is a tomorrow that follows, not necessarily the following day. The battle began on the second day and continued on the tomorrow of the second day. With this, one can see the progression of thought –

Vs. 18 – "And arise and ascend Bethel, and ask in elohim. And say, sons Israel, 'Who ascends, to us, in the beginning to the war with sons Benjamin?' And says, Yehovah, 'Judah in the beginning.'" (Only the soldiers ask of God in general, even if the Lord responds. They also, ask who should go first, not whether they should go or if they will have victory).

Vs. 22 – “And strengthens, the people, man Israel. And add to arrange war in the place where arranged there in the day, the first.” (They strengthen themselves apart from the Lord).

Vs. 23 – “And ascend, sons Israel, and weep to faces Yehovah until the evening. And ask in Yehovah, to say, ‘Add to approach to the war with sons Benjamin my brother?’ And says, Yehovah, ‘Ascend unto him.’” (Having already strengthened themselves, the soldiers ask of Yehovah, but without sacrifices or offerings. Also, they only ask if they should fight, not if they will have victory).

Finally, in verse 28 the entire nation comes before the Lord with the “ark of the covenant of the God” along with the high priest, fasts until evening, and offers burnt offerings and sacrifices. Now, the Lord tells them to ascend, and that in doing so, they will prevail. Therefore...

²⁹ Then Israel set men in ambush all around Gibeah.

vayasem Yisrael orvim el hagivah saviv – “And sets, Israel, ambushings unto the Gibeah around.” The strategy of the battle is similar to Joshua’s battle against Ai in Joshua 8. First, those who lie in wait around the city are placed. This was done in advance in order to ensure they were unseen and, thus, prepared for what comes next...

³⁰ And the children of Israel went up against the children of Benjamin on the third day, and put themselves in battle array against Gibeah as at the other times.

vayaalu v’ne Yisrael el b’ne vinyamin bayom hashlishi vayaarkhu el hagivah k’paam b’paam – “And ascend, sons Israel, unto sons Benjamin in the day, the third. And arrange unto the Gibeah according to beat, in beat.” Gibeah is a city on a hill. Thus, Israel must ascend against it. Once arrayed as before, they would have announced their intentions...

³¹ So the children of Benjamin went out against the people, *and* were drawn away from the city.

vayetsu v’ne vinyamin liqrath ha’am hant’qu min ha’ir – “And went, sons Benjamin, to meet the people – drawn away from the city.” As with the battle of Ai, the inhabitants had prevailed previously. Therefore, they felt confident to go out and leave the city undefended. In this case, it had happened twice, certainly bolstering their confidence greatly. And more...

31 (con't) They began to strike down *and* kill some of the people, as at the other times,

vayakhelu l'hakoth meha'am khalalim k'paam b'paam – “And begin to strike from the people, pierced according to beat, in beat.” The idiom is rightly translated as “at the other times.” The “in beat” is the current event. The “according to beat” is what has occurred in the past. Benjamin is striking the enemy, certainly intensifying their excitement to pursue...

31 (con't) in the highways (one of which goes up to Bethel and the other to Gibeah) and in the field, about thirty men of Israel.

Rather: *bamshiloth asher akhath olah beith el v'akhath givathah ba'sadeh kishloshim ish b'Yisrael* – “in the highways which one ascending Bethel and one Gibeah-ward, in the field, according to thirty man in Israel.” It is debated what “Gibeah-ward in the field” means, but that is what it says.

They would not be fleeing toward Gibeah which is where they are drawing the inhabitants from, and so some think it is a daughter city known as Gibeah ‘In the Field.’ That sounds plausible. Whatever the meaning, Benjamin prevailed against Israel to the tune of thirty pierced in the highways...

32 And the children of Benjamin said, “They *are* defeated before us, as at first.”

vayomru b'ne vinyamin nigaphim hem l'panenu k'barishonah – “And say, sons Benjamin, ‘Struck, they, to our faces according to in the first.’” Benjamin, having initial success as before, proclaimed victory almost from the outset. However, the next words have the verb in the perfect tense with a couple of cohortatives to boot...

32 (con't) But the children of Israel said, “Let us flee and draw them away from the city to the highways.”

uvne Yisrael amru nanusah unthaqnuhu min ha'ir el hamsiloth – “And sons Israel said, ‘We shall flee, and we shall draw him from the city unto the highways.’” This clause precedes the previous clause and even the previous verse chronologically, but in order to build the narrative up to the fevered pitch, it is logically placed here.

The verb is in the perfect aspect. It is what was said. That is followed by the details – “Here is the plan. This is what we are going to do.” It worked and Benjamin was drawn away from the city into the highways...

³³ **So all the men of Israel rose from their place and put themselves in battle array at Baal Tamar.**

v'khol ish Yisrael qamu mimqomo vayaarkhu b'vaal tamar – “And all man Israel rose from his place and array in Baal Tamar.” The diversionary force accomplished its mission of pulling the troops away from the city. Having drawn them into the predetermined location, the rest of the men of Israel arrayed at that spot, Baal Tamar.

The name Baal Tamar means Lord (or Master) of Palm. However, the palm is a symbol of uprightness, meaning righteousness. Thus, without directly saying it, the name means Lord (Master) of Uprightness or Lord (Master) of Righteousness.

³³ (con't) **Then Israel's men in ambush burst forth from their position in the plain of Geba.**

The words are debated: *v'orev Yisrael megiaakh mimqomo mimareh gava* – “and ambushing Israel gushes from his place from nudity Geba.” The word, as pointed by the Masoretes, is *maareh*, a word found only here in Scripture. It means nudity or a naked place, coming from *arah*, to be naked or bare. As such, some call it a meadow.

Some say the pointing is rong and it should read *mearah* – a cave. It is spelled the same but pointed differently. As such, the Israelites sprang from the cave of Geba. Considering there are thousands of men all in spots of ambush, that doesn't seem likely. Others amend it to read “from the west.”

What seems best is to apply the word to the state of Gibeah because that is what applies to the situation. They were hiding in ambush. Once Benjamin was seduced into being drawn from the city, the city stood naked. It is the nudity of the city that calls out for them to act.

As in verse 10, the name is spelled differently –

Gibeah - גִּבְעָה

Geba - גִּבְעַ

The fifth letter, *hey*, is missing. However, the meaning of the name remains unchanged.

³⁴ **And ten thousand select men from all Israel came against Gibeah,**

vayavou mineged lagivah asereth alaphim ish bakhur mikal Yisrael – “And come from front to the Gibeah ten thousands man, selected from all Israel.” Here we have the total number of those in ambush, ten thousand. It is a factor of ten which has already been described.

These men have come “from front to the Gibeah.” In other words, they are now facing Gibeah as a force, ready to go in and destroy it. These words seem to confirm the analysis of the previous verse, that “the nudity” of Geba is referring to it being exposed–

Vs. 33 – “...from nudity Geba.”

Vs. 34 – “...from front to the Gibeah.”

Both uses of from are being used in relation to the city.

³⁴ (con’t) **and the battle was fierce. But *the Benjamites* did not know that disaster was upon them.**

Rather: *v’hamilkhamah kabedah v’hem lo yedu ki nogath alehem haraah* – “And the war weighted, and they not knew that touching upon them the evil.” The meaning of weighted is heavy or burdensome. The battle was pressing upon them, crushing them. As such...

³⁵ **The LORD defeated Benjamin before Israel.**

vayigoph Yehovah eth Binyamin liphne Yisrael – “And strikes, Yehovah, Benjamin to faces Israel.” The words credit the battle to Yehovah. He assured the victory before the battle began, and thus He knew the outcome, directing it according to His plans and purposes.

³⁵ (con’t) **And the children of Israel destroyed that day twenty-five thousand one hundred Benjamites;**

vayashkhitu v’ne Yisrael b’vinyamin bayom ha’hu esrim v’khamishah eleph u-meah ish – “And ruins, sons Israel, in Benjamin in the day, the it, twenty and five thousand and hundred man.” Up to this point, the narrative of this final day of battle has been given as an overall summary of what transpired.

From verses 36-45 the narrative will repeat the battle, giving a more detailed record of what transpired. This is a common way of conveying things in Scripture, as seen from

early Genesis. Once an overall summary is given, the reexplanation informs the reader of further details.

The number given here does not match the total stated in verse 46. Nor do the numbers that have been provided match what has been presented concerning Benjamin and the final tally of the size of Benjamin. An explanation of those things will be given next week. For now, the number is stated and it doesn't provide any typological hints. However, of the total, we next read...

^{35 (fin)} **all these drew the sword.**

kal eleh sholeph kharev – “All these drawing sword.” This leaves us with two possibilities based on verse 15. It said a total of twenty-six thousand who drew the sword along with seven hundred select men from Gibeah. From this total, verse 16 said seven hundred could also sling with stones.

Therefore, either none of the slingers were killed, or – more likely – the slingers also carried a sword for the battle. This appears to be the case based on how the numbers are recorded in verses 15 and 16. They are included in those who carried the sword.

This ends the verses for today. More minute details of this final day of battle will be seen next week. As for what we looked into today, it was refreshing to see Israel, as a nation, consider their state before the Lord and humble themselves before trying to weed out the wickedness of just one of their tribes.

The world needs fewer finger-pointers and more people willing to recognize that we all have faults and we all stand against God in our hearts and souls. There is no point in trying to excise evil from the land by those whose own inclinations are already evil.

Instead, only after we come to the Lord for cleansing can we identify what else needs to be cleaned up. Just imagine a nation without the Lord trying to do what is right. The day before I typed this sermon, I read an article where North Korea executed 30 teens for watching South Korean TV shows.

Imagine that! One of the most wicked nations on the planet trying to police its own affairs by executing children. People and nations may make right decisions to conduct their affairs, but without God, it is simply grading on a curve.

With God, there is no curve. There is right and wrong. Until we are right with Him, we cannot actually know what is truly right and wrong. We just live and judge in shades of gray. That which makes the difference is Jesus. He takes us from the proverbial black to white in the eyes of God.

However, even after that, unless we learn what God expects of us through His word, we are still dealing with our own personal views on what is right and wrong. We continue to judge based on shades of gray. Therefore, let us do the right thing by first coming to Jesus and being purified.

From there, we can purify our minds through a study and right application of His word. May we do this to the glory of God, who loves us enough to have sent Jesus to make this possible.

Closing Verse: *"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."* Romans 12:2

Next Week: Judges 20:36-48 *An amazing story to tell, line by line...* (No King in Israel, Part IX) (56th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

(No King in Israel, Part VIII)

So the children of Israel rose in the morning and encamped
-----against Gibeah
And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin
And the men of Israel put themselves in battle array
To fight against them at Gibeah, hoping they would be done in

Then the children of Benjamin came out of Gibeah
And on that day cut down to the ground
Twenty-two thousand men of the Israelites
Their brothers they did pound

And the people, that is, the men of Israel

Encouraged themselves and again formed the battle line
At the place where they had put themselves
In array on the first day, to fight a second time

Then the children of Israel went up and wept before the LORD
-----until evening
And asked counsel of the LORD, saying
“Shall I again draw near for battle against the children of
-----my brother Benjamin?”
And the LORD said, “Go up against him, so He was relaying

So the children of Israel approached the children of Benjamin on
-----the second day
And Benjamin went out against them from Gibeah
-----on the second day
And cut down to the ground eighteen thousand more of
-----the children of Israel
All these drew the sword who perished in the fray

Then all the children of Israel, that is, all the people
Went up and came to the house of God and wept
They sat there before the LORD
And fasted that day until evening, a time of mourning was kept

And they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings
Before the LORD on that day, such were their ways
So the children of Israel inquired of the LORD
(The ark of the covenant of God was there in those days)

And Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron
Stood before it in those days, he did not surcease
Saying, “Shall I yet again go out to battle
Against the children of my brother Benjamin, or shall I cease?”

And the LORD said, “Go up, please understand
For tomorrow I will deliver them into your hand

Then Israel set men in ambush all around Gibeah
And the children of Israel went up against (for their crimes)

The children of Benjamin on the third day
And put themselves in battle array against Gibeah
-----as at the other times

So the children of Benjamin went out against the people
And were drawn away from the city
They began to strike down and kill some of the people
As at the other times, showing no pity

In the highways (one of which goes up to Bethel and the other
-----to Gibeah)
And in the field, about thirty men of Israel
And the children of Benjamin said
“They are defeated before us, as at first, things are going well!

But the children of Israel said
“Let us flee and draw them away from the city to the highways
So all the men of Israel rose from their place
And put themselves in battle array at Baal Tamar for this phase

Then Israel’s men in ambush burst forth
From their position in the plain of Geba, ready to pierce
And ten thousand select men from all Israel
Came against Gibeah, and the battle was fierce

But the Benjamites did not know that disaster was upon them
Benjamin was defeated before Israel by the LORD
And the children of Israel destroyed that day
Twenty-five thousand one hundred Benjamites; all these
-----drew the sword

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown

Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 20:36-48 (NO KING IN ISRAEL, PART IX)

The 21st of July was a marvelous day, long and tiring, but all Sundays are. I start at 3:30 am, and there is something to do right through 6 pm. There is no such thing as a 20-minute break, except here at church before the sermon, and that usually involves me taking care of something or someone.

Needless to say, at 6:10 pm, I was quite happy to shut down the computer and say, "Time for a shower, dinner, and then I can sleep." Unfortunately, at 6:12 pm, Hideko walked up and asked why there was a puddle under Grandpa's car.

I had no idea what she was talking about, but when I walked out, I saw the whole driveway was flooded there. When I moved his car, the bricks were bulging up like Mr. Creosote. That meant digging up the driveway at 6:30 pm to try and stop an obviously huge water leak.

If I just left it alone, we'd have a one or two-thousand-dollar water bill and possibly no water for the entire night. I had work to do. No shower, no food, no sleep...

Text Verse: *"O Israel, you have sinned from the days of Gibeah;
There they stood.
The battle in Gibeah against the children of iniquity
Did not overtake them." Hosea 10:9*

The battle of Gibeah will deal with works. That will be seen as we continue through the verses and explain the typology. There are some works we must do, such as fixing the water line. It could not be fixed Sunday night, and so we had no water. I got a temporary fix on it Monday morning, interrupting sermon typing. But at least it got done.

The entire driveway, from the road to the house needed to be dug up to replace the copper line that was now over 50 years old and which needed to be replaced. Then the entire parking lot of paver bricks needed to be re-laid, but that would be contracted out.

It will be a lot of hard, hot, tiring work, and it will be expensive. But it is nothing compared to what Jesus did. He did all the work necessary for man to be saved. All of it. To say otherwise is to essentially slap God in the face.

We cannot earn our way to heaven, and we cannot outdo what Jesus has done. To attempt to do so will result in condemnation. People who think they are meriting God's favor through the law are deluded. They have rejected Jesus and bear the spirit of antichrist.

Such truths as this are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Rock of Rimmon (verses 36-48)

These verses reexplain the battle described in verses 30 to 35, providing more detail than previously.

³⁶ So the children of Benjamin saw that they were defeated.

vayiru v'ne vinyamin ki nigaphu – “And see, sons Benjamin, that struck.” There are two possibilities as to who “they” is referring to. The first is Benjamin, seeing that they have been defeated before Israel based on verse 35, which said, “And strikes, Yehovah, Benjamin to faces Israel.”

The second, correct, view is that this is speaking of the men of Israel being struck before Benjamin as stated in verse 32, “And say, sons Benjamin, ‘Struck, they, to our faces according to in the first.’”

Israel feigned defeat as in the previous days of fighting. This has Benjamin confident. They are being lulled into a sense of their own overwhelming superiority to make a bad decision that will cost them the battle...

³⁶ (con') The men of Israel had given ground to the Benjamites, because they relied on the men in ambush whom they had set against Gibeah.

vayitnu ish Yisrael maqom l'vinyamin ki batkhu el ha'orev asher samu el hagivah – “And give man Israel place to Benjamin, for trusted unto the ambushing who set unto the Gibeah.” The men of Israel pretended that they were once again being beaten by Benjamin. As such, they retreated. This would draw Benjamin away from the city and expose it to those lying in ambush...

37 And the men in ambush quickly rushed upon Gibeah; the men in ambush spread out and struck the whole city with the edge of the sword.

v'ha'orev hekhishu vayiphsh'tu el hagivah vayimsokh ha'orev vayak eth kal ha'ir l'pi kharev – “And the ambushing hastened and deploy unto the Gibeah, and draws the ambushing and strikes all the city to mouth sword.” With Benjamin successfully drawn away from the city, the city is left in a state of nudity, as indicated in verse 33, which said, “and ambushing Israel gushes from his place from nudity Geba.” Those set in ambush rushed into the city.

Some think the word *mashak*, draw, means they drew a blast on the trumpet to alert all of those ambushing to take the city. The word was used like that in Joshua 6:5. This is incorrect. That would alert Benjamin of the attack.

Rather, the words “and draws the ambushing” mean that those set in the ambush extended themselves, being drawn out, in order to surround and attack the city. This is how the word was used in Judges 4:6, 7. Once the city was sufficiently surrounded, those with access would rush through the gates and begin the job of killing everyone inside with the mouth of the *kherev* (חרב), sword.

38 Now the appointed signal between the men of Israel and the men in ambush was that they would make a great cloud of smoke rise up from the city,

A paraphrase is needed. A direct translation is almost unintelligible. And more, the construction causes all kinds of speculation on what is being said: *v'ha'moed hayah l'ish Yisrael im ha'orev herev [or kherev] l'haalotham masath he'ashan min ha'ir* – “And the appointment was, to man Israel with the ambushing, increase [or sword] to their ascending, ascension the smoke from the city.”

The words, “And the appointment was, to man Israel with the ambushing” refer to what was preset by both parties, meaning the main force of Israel and those set in ambush. They agreed upon the sign. It is the next words, translated as “increase to their ascending,” that are so complicated - תָּרַב לְהַעֲלוֹתָם.

The first word, *herev*, has several problems that are quite complicated. The word itself is spelled *hay, resh, beith*. It is believed to be from *ravah*, to be or become great. One opinion is that it is an apocopated (shortened by omitting one or more sounds at the end) form of an imperative, mixing the direct with the indirect.

Another opinion is that it is an apocopated infinitive. A third is that it is an incorrect repetition of the preceding word as they are similarly spelled –

הָאֶרֶב / הָאֶרֶב
הָרֶב / הָרֶב

A third possibility is that it is simply a gloss (an annotation, a footnote, an explanation, a comment or commentary, etc.). A fourth possibility is that the spelling is actually *kheth*, *resh*, *beith*. The *hay* and the *kheth* are almost identical, ה or כּ.

This would then change the meaning to “sword to their ascending.” This is supported by some Hebrew manuscripts and one Greek manuscript. Each explanation has its detractors and its own pros and cons.

³⁹ **whereupon the men of Israel would turn in battle.**

vayahaphokh ish Yisrael bamilkhamah – “And turns, man Israel, in the war.” The forces of Israel, who had retreated as if they were beaten again by Benjamin, have seen the signal of the smoke ascending. With that, they turn in order to face those chasing them.

³⁹ (con’t) **Now Benjamin had begun to strike *and* kill about thirty of the men of Israel. For they said, “Surely they are defeated before us, as *in* the first battle.”**

u-vinyamin hekhel l’hakoth khalalim b’ish Yisrael kishloshim ish ki amru akh nigoph nigaph hu l’phanenu kamilkhamah harishonah – “And Benjamin began to strike pierced in man Israel, according to thirty man. For said, ‘Surely, striking struck he to our faces according to the war the first.’” This conveys new information, explaining how the defeat of Benjamin took place.

Benjamin was chasing Israel who was fleeing as if they were losing. While chasing them, thirty men of Israel fell. Benjamin thought things were going just as in the previous battles, which encouraged them to continue the chase, knowing they would be victorious.

Bullinger says, “THIRTY being 3 x 10, denotes in a higher degree the perfection of Divine order, as marking the right moment.”

⁴⁰ But when the cloud began to rise from the city in a column of smoke, the Benjamites looked behind them, and there was the whole city going up *in smoke* to heaven.

v'hamaseth hekheleh laaloth min ha'ir amud ashan vayiphen Binyamin akaharav v'hineh alah kh'lil ha'ir ha'shamaymah – “And the ascension began to ascend from the city, column smoke. And turns, Benjamin, behind him. And behold! Ascended whole the city the heaven-ward.” The city was overrun. Once everyone inside was killed, Israel set it on fire. The smoke was the signal for the army of Israel, who is currently pretending to retreat from Benjamin.

With the city on fire, Benjamin saw it. The realization of their error would have completely horrified them. But more...

⁴¹ And when the men of Israel turned back, the men of Benjamin panicked, for they saw that disaster had come upon them.

v'ish Yisrael haphakh vayibahel ish Binyamin ki raah ki nag'ah alav ha'raah – “And man Israel turned. And shuddered man Benjamin, for saw that touched upon him the evil.” Benjamin is facing the entire army of Israel who has assumed the initiative. Gibeon is being consumed by fire, meaning Benjamin's families and homes. They cannot retreat there, and Israel is coming full upon them. Thus, they shudder in fear of what they have to face...

⁴² Therefore they turned *their backs* before the men of Israel in the direction of the wilderness;

vayiphnu liphne ish Yisrael el derekh ha'midbar – “And turn to faces man Israel unto road the wilderness.” The men of Benjamin were facing Israel. Thus, they turned their faces away and fled on the road to the wilderness in an attempt to save themselves...

⁴² (con't) but the battle overtook them, and whoever *came* out of the cities they destroyed in their midst.

Rather: *v'ha'milkhamah hidbiqathu vaasher mehearim mashkhithim otho b'thokho* – “And the war impinged him. And who from the cities, ruined (pl.) him in his midst.” Translations that make the singulars into plurals do so, trying to explain the difficulties, but they only make things worse.

The words “in his midst” are either referring to Benjamin or the wilderness (meaning “in its midst”). If it refers to the wilderness, then everything in between is a circumstantial clause. If it refers to Benjamin, then “who from the cities” would probably mean those of the cities of Benjamin who fled from the cities were destroyed along with the soldiers of Benjamin.

As there is more than one city of Benjamin, and because only Gibeah is said to be burned, the latter seems likely because it would then explain Chapter 21, where there are no women of Benjamin left.

The masculine “him” would be all-encompassing, speaking of the aged, the youth too young to fight, and the women. Anyone who fled the cities was killed along with the warriors of Benjamin.

⁴³ They surrounded the Benjamites, chased them,

The words are obscure and complicated: *kitru eth Binyamin hirdiphuhu m’nukhah* – “Enclosed Benjamin. Pursued his rest.”

There is a new word, *kathar*. It signifies to enclose as if in surrounding or besieging. Benjamin is completely hemmed in. As for the word *menukhah*, it is a noun signifying rest or a resting place. It seems to mean that Benjamin has no place of rest. As soon as he thinks he can stop and rest, Israel is right there to destroy him.

Because of the complicated nature of the words, some translations just say “from Nukhah” which would be the name of a place meaning Rest.

⁴³ (con’t) and easily trampled them down as far as the front of Gibeah toward the east.

hidrikhuhu ad nokhakh hagivah mimizrakh shamesh – “Tread him until front the Gibeah from ascension sun.” Israel chased Benjamin from the point where they had been pursued until they turned back, becoming the pursuers. This continued until they were just in front of the now burned-out city of Gibeah. This pursuit was from east to west. Of those in this pursuit...

⁴⁴ And eighteen thousand men of Benjamin fell; all these were men of valor.

vayiplu mibinyamin shmoneh asar eleph ish eth kal eleh anshe khayil – “And falls, from Benjamin, eight ten thousand man. All these men valor.” The number 18 was explained in the previous sermon.

⁴⁵ Then they turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon;

vayiphnu vayanusu hamidbarah el selah ha’rimmon – “And turn, and flee the wilderness-ward, unto Rock the Rimmon.” This refers to the remaining men of Benjamin who have not yet been killed. Upon coming to the east side of Gibeah and realizing there was no haven left where they could retreat, they turned and fled in the direction of the wilderness as far as Rock the Rimmon.

The name Rimmon means Pomegranate. But the pomegranate symbolizes harvest-ready fruit, and so it can further mean Mature Mind or Harvest Ready. The type of rock is a *sela*, or craggy rock. That comes from a root signifying to be lofty.

⁴⁵ (con’t) and they cut down five thousand of them on the highways. Then they pursued them relentlessly up to Gidom, and killed two thousand of them.

vayol’luhu bamsiloth khameshet alaphim ish vayadbiqu akharav ad gidom vayaku mimenu alpayim ish – “And he gleanes in the highways five thousands man. And impinge after him until Gidom. And strike from him two thousand man.” The meaning of glean is that the army was already picked through like in a harvest. Anything left is then gleaned, or picked clean, one berry or stalk at a time.

Of those not killed on the way to Gibeah and who were in flight towards the wilderness, five thousand more were killed. Once in the area of Gidom, two thousand more were killed. The name Gidom is derived from the account. It signifies Cut Off or Exterminated, coming from *gada*, to hew down or cut off. Benjamin had been cut off at this location.

Five thousand is a multiple of five, grace, and ten, completeness of order where “nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete” (Bullinger).

⁴⁶ So all who fell of Benjamin that day were twenty-five thousand men who drew the sword; all these were men of valor.

vayhi khal ha’nophlim mibinyamin esrim vakhamishah eleph ish sholeph kherev bayom ha’hu eth kal eleh anshe khayil – “And is all the falling from Benjamin twenty and five

thousand man drawing sword in the day, the it. All these men valor.” The number matches: $18+5+2 = 25$. The number is a multiple of fives and ten. This is a record of only those killed on the third day of battle. The more precise number on this day was stated in verse 35, 25,100.

⁴⁷ But six hundred men turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon, and they stayed at the rock of Rimmon for four months.

vayiphnu vayanusu hamidbarah el sela ha'rimmon shesh meoth ish vayeshvu b'sela Rimmon arbaah khodashim – “And turn, and flee the wilderness-ward unto Rock the Rimmon six hundreds man. And sit in Rock Rimmon four months.” There are only six hundred male soldiers of Benjamin who survived. They fled as far as the rock, and that is where they remained.

The number is derived from six, the number of man, especially fallen man, and tens. Four is the number of material creation, the world number, and especially the city number.

The numbers now total 25,700 because of the number in verse 35. But Judges 20:15 said there were 26,700 total. Of course people complain about this, adjust the text, claim whoever recorded the narrative was a doof, etc. However, it is simple to explain. In the previous two battles, it would be unthinkable that tens of thousands of Israel died in each engagement, but none of Benjamin died.

As such, the additional 1000 are a rounded figure who certainly perished during those conflicts. There being less than one thousand on the two days, the numbers were not recorded to indicate the superlative nature of the rout of Israel by Benjamin.

⁴⁸ And the men of Israel turned back against the children of Benjamin, and struck them down with the edge of the sword—from every city, men and beasts, all who were found.

Rather: *v'ish Yisrael shavu el b'ne vinyamin vayakum l'pi kherev meir m'thom ad b'hemah ad kal hanimtsa* – “And man Israel turned unto sons Benjamin, and struck them to mouth sword from city, completion until beast until all the found.” The words mean that the men of the army of Israel turned back to destroy any remaining survivors in Benjamin, killing them all. This was in every city, and it included every beast and every person that breathed. No memory of Benjamin beyond the six hundred at Rock the Rimmon remained.

⁴⁸ (fin) **They also set fire to all the cities they came to.**

gam kal hearim hanimtsaoth shilkhu ba'esh – “Also, all the cities, the found, sent in the fire.” With the people dead in each city, they then proceeded to burn them down. It speaks of utter destruction. With that, the narrative is complete.

Benjamin reaped the rewards of their wickedness, and Israel seemingly has a void in her tribes because of it. The final chapter of the book of Judges will detail how that void is dealt with. The entire narrative is a sad indictment of human sin and man’s failure to deal with it properly.

*There is an inheritance that is coming to us
And it has already been granted: the deal is done
We have received the promise because of Jesus
It is based on His work alone – that of God’s own Son*

*There is no need to worry if we will enter glory
It is guaranteed because we believed what was told to us
We heard the word of faith, the gospel story
And we believed on the glorious name of Jesus*

*The inheritance is given to all who are sanctified
It has been granted because of what God has done
It has come through the blood of Jesus, He who died
And who rose again! In Him the victory is won*

II. Explaining the Typology

The chapter is long and filled with an enormous amount of detail. To explain every verse in detail would take three full sermons. But we can get the picture through broad brushstrokes of what is being presented.

The first thing to remember is that the concubine of the Levite was divided and sent out to all Israel. She pictured the apostate church of the church age. She was violated by the Benjamites of Gibeah and died at the threshold of the house. It was a picture of her missing the rapture.

The Benjamites picture those with a false Jesus and a false gospel. They had super no bueno relations with the false church and eventually brought about her demise. The false church not raptured testifies to Israel.

Verse 1 noted that all of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, came out to determine the matter. It speaks of the totality of Israel. If this is after the rapture, then it is inclusive of the tribulation period. If so, then Dan, Judge, represents the time of the rapture, something hinted at by James 5:9 where he says the Judge stands at the door.

Beersheba refers to the seven years of the tribulation initiated by the antichrist as was the case in the story of Genesis 26. This also includes those from the Gilead, The Perpetual Fountain, east of the Jordan. That represents the giving of the Spirit to Israel at the end of the tribulation.

The congregation has gathered at Mizpah, the Watchtower, to decide how to respond. The Lord is monitoring the events of Israel. The congregation includes the corners of the tribes, meaning the main supports, their leaders.

The number of those gathered is four hundred thousand. It is the world number and the number of completion where the whole cycle is complete. The totality of Israel in a final decision is thus the intent. Verse 3 noted that the sons of Benjamin heard about the gathering.

Benjamin represents the messianics of Israel. It is the ideology that a Messiah is coming. Those of Gibeah say that the Messiah is Jesus, but they believe in a false Jesus. Hence, they had relations with the false church. They are law observers who failed to trust in the grace of Christ. The cut-up concubine proves that the false church was not raptured, and these people, aligned with them, were not true believers as well.

In verse 8, the proposal is to destroy Gibeah, who has done these things. The agreement included casting the lot (verse 9) to decide who would go first. This shows that Israel does not have the Spirit to make decisions. Instead, they consult lots for guidance this way. Despite that, it does say the Lord responded. As it says in the Proverb, the Lord directs such things –

“The lot is cast into the lap,
But its every decision *is* from the LORD.” Proverbs 16:33

Verse 10 notes that Gibeah had done foolishness in Israel. They were morally corrupt. As noted, Gibeah is etymologically connected to the word Gabbatha. It has consistently pictured this. However, verse 10 and verse 33 record the name as Geba, not Gibeah.

Geba is missing the *hay* suffix. The letter is the fifth letter of the Aleph Beth, the number of grace. It also is used when referring to a connection to the Spirit. Its meaning is Look, Reveal, and Breath. Each is something connected with the Spirit. As such, it is a note that these people, though claiming the crucified Jesus, have claimed a false Jesus and have no connection to the Spirit.

Israel comes against this false doctrine, even if they don't yet know what is right. In order to do so, they go to Benjamin telling them to give up the sons of worthlessness of Gibeah. Benjamin, the messianics, refuse.

To stop and explain, Israel is looking for a messiah. The problem is that whether they accept a false Jesus of works or another messiah, they are not looking for the true Messiah who has already come. This is the pickle that these people are in.

Thus, Benjamin, at this time, is reflective of the spirit of messiah, even if it is the false Messiah. The nation as a whole, whether messianic or not, is not looking for the Jesus of grace at this point. This story is given to show the resolution of that.

In their refusal, Benjamin musters 26000 soldiers. The meaning of the numbers indicates first a division, that of messianic thinking. Next, of rebellion, apostasy, defection, corruption, etc., that of doctrine. Also, completion of the whole cycle where the division and apostasy will end.

It also noted 700 choice men. These are mentioned separately in order to not mar the meaning of the number 26,000. Seven is spiritual perfection, ten is the completion of the cycle. It is a note that when the cycle is complete, spiritual perfection will be realized.

Out of this total number, there are noted 700 left-handed (actually shut up in the right hand) who could sling a stone at a hair and not miss. The description speaks of someone who is so law-observant that they never miss the mark in sinning. They weed out every sin. But it is still law-observance, and it fails to address inherited sin and the forgiveness of sin through Christ.

This is included to show that even the most meticulous messianic, who also observes every point of the law without fail, still stands opposed to grace and thus to the truth of God in Christ.

Verse 18 had the sons of Israel, meaning the soldiers, go to inquire of *elohim*, God in general, at Bethel (House of God). It is a general appeal to God that anyone, anywhere might do. Despite that, it says the Lord responded that Judah was to go first, meaning Praise is to go first. Unfortunately, one cannot praise God unless he praises Him through Jesus.

In going up, 22,000 of Israel died. There is division in their thinking, there is disorder, disorganization, and imperfection in their actions, and it carries through until the whole cycle is complete.

In their failure, they strengthen themselves. This is a note of self-trust. The Lord is not yet included in their every action. After this, they went up and wept before the Lord. Hooray, they are now acknowledging the Lord.

But it is the Lord in general, the same Lord they have consistently forsaken since Sinai, and the Lord they failed to recognize at His incarnation. The weeping is for their own loss, not for the Lord. They ask Him if they should go up against their brother again or not.

They acknowledge the brotherly affiliation, even if there is a point of strife between them. The answer from the Lord is to go up. No promises are made in the process. On this second day, 18,000 are killed. The number 18,000 is derived from two, nine, and ten, or three, six, and ten.

No matter which way eighteen is divided, there is the sense that man is not under the Lord but under transgression (2) and thus under judgment (9), and that it is for a divinely perfect period of time (3) where he remains fallen and destitute of God (6). That is seen in the words of Paul –

“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.” Galatians 4:4, 5

This state will be resolved when the whole cycle is complete (10). Verse 17 said, “all these drawing the sword.” The sword, *kherev*, has consistently pictured Mt. Horeb, the

mount of the law. They were law observers who died under law. There is defeat from the messianics because of a failure to trust in Jesus.

Next, “all Israel” went up. The writing is on the wall. The messianics are wrong, but Israel under the law is just as wrong. And so they all go up to Bethel (House of God – think of the temple) and weep before the Lord, fasting till evening, and offering burnt offerings and peace offerings.

But this time, there is a new note. They inquire of the Lord, “And there, ark covenant the God in the days, the those.” This anticipates Israel acknowledging Jesus, the true Ark of the covenant of “the” God. The article always expresses those who are in a right relationship with Him or contrasts those who are not in a right relationship with Him. In this case, they now are.

It also noted the presence of Phinehas (Mouth of Judgement) the son of Eleazar (Whom God Helps), the son of Aaron (Very High). Each name anticipates Jesus, the true High Priest. He speaks the Judgment of God, He is the Help of God for His people –

“But I *am* poor and needy;
Make haste to me, O God!
You *are* my help [*ezri*] and my deliverer;
O LORD, do not delay.” Psalm 70:5

Jesus is the Son of the Most High (Luke 8:28). In finally consulting God through Him, the promise is made that God will deliver Benjamin into Israel’s hand. Verses 29-35 detailed the battle that would be conducted by setting an ambush.

Verse 31 had the unusual words “Gibeah-ward in the field.” The field is representative of the world (Matthew 13:38). The false doctrine of law observant messianics will be rooted out and wiped out.

Also, Israel arrayed in Baal Tamar, Lord of Righteousness, which pictures them standing on the merits of Christ and not their own righteousness. At that time, those ambushing are able to come against the nudity (the unprotected state) of Geba – the false belief in a Jesus inclusive of works, lacking grace and the Spirit.

From verse 36 through 46, the battle was reexplained in greater detail. Without going through every detail, verse 37 noted that all in the city were struck with the mouth of the sword. They died by the law observance they clung to.

Verse 38 had the unusual words, “And the appointment was, to man Israel with the ambushing, increase [or sword] to their ascending, ascension the smoke from the city.” As various texts read differently, it shows the confusion of the words. It would make no sense from the context to say a “sword” was ascending unless one understands that it is picturing the elimination of law observance.

Works of the law are completely burned up through acknowledging the grace of God in Christ. Only His works are sufficient to please God in the process of salvation. The ascension of the law in flames is what prompts Israel to turn and defeat the enemy.

Thirty of Israel were said to be struck down before this occurred. In other words, that moment was “the right moment,” marking “the perfection of Divine order.” The city that stood opposed to God was destroyed in fire.

Israel enclosed Benjamin and pursued his rest (verse 43). It is a nice touch. They were completely hemmed in and found no rest. Hebrews 4:3 says, “we who have believed do enter that rest.” Those who trust in self are not believers in the true Jesus. Rather, they follow a false Jesus.

Also, in verse 43, it noted they were trodden “until front the Gibeah from ascension sun [(*mizrakh*, from *zarakh*) sun (*shemesh*)]”. It is a perfect description of Christ from His coming (*zarakh*) until His cross (represented by Gibeah) –

“But to you who fear My name
The Sun [*shemesh*] of Righteousness shall arise [*zarakh*]
With healing in His wings.” Malachi 4:2

Faith in the Messiah will destroy the doctrines of the false messianics. The number of those who fell in verse 44 is 18,000, a number which fits perfectly. In verse 45, those remaining soldiers of Benjamin fled toward Rock the Rimmon.

That signifies Lofty of the Mature Mind and will be fully explained in Chapter 21. On the way to Rock the Rimmon, it noted that 5,000 were gleaned. Five is the number of grace. One might think, “Where is grace in that?” But gleaning implies a thorough going over. In this case, some will be spared. So even if there is slaying, there is grace in the process.

From Rock the Rimmon, 2,000 were pursued to Gidom (Cut Off). It is the final number of the battle, and it signifies that this is the end of the destruction. The division and difference (2) are ended, and the whole cycle is complete (10).

In verse 46, the final tally for the third day is recorded, 25,000. Again, a number of grace mixed with completion. Despite the destruction, there is grace in the preservation at the end of the cycle. That is seen in the number noted in verse 47, six hundred.

These men will be used to re-establish the tribe of Benjamin in the next chapter. They are men who will enter into a new economy with a new direction. Despite that, verse 48 closes with a note that everyone and everything else of Benjamin and its cities was destroyed and burned in the fire.

It speaks of the complete removal of all the false messianic beliefs found in Israel. There is one Messiah, and He has come. And in His coming, He ended the law. Adherence to the law is no longer what God expects.

Rather, He wants His people to understand and accept the grace He has given in the coming of Jesus Christ. Nothing else will do and all else will be destroyed. This is what is being conveyed to us in Judges 20.

Yes, there is a real tribulation period coming on the world. It will involve real battles and a great loss of life on earth, but there is a spiritual battle that God is focusing on above all else. All worldly battles are simply an extension of failing to submit in the spiritual realm.

Out of curiosity, I counted the number of times that Israel is mentioned in this chapter. The total is 42. It is the number associated with the antichrist. Although this is speculation, it is reasonable to assume that God is giving us a hint.

Until Israel gets to the end of the tribulation period, they will still be under the law. Even those messianics who claim to know Jesus but still teach law observance are of the spirit of antichrist.

I have explained this before, but this is a good reminder: If you say you must do deeds of the law to be right with God, you are essentially denying the deity of Christ. If Christ is God, and if God fulfilled the law (in His humanity, meaning Jesus Christ), then to say that you must observe the law testifies that you do not believe Jesus is truly God.

It is the spirit of antichrist. How many ways God has shown us this is almost astonishing. And yet, more stories keep coming up with the exact same result in the typology. Judges is a book about judging. God judges us based on what we do. And the one thing He wants us to “do” is to believe in His Son. Nothing else will do.

Come to Jesus and be saved. Everything else leads to a bad end.

Closing Verse: *"Then they said to Him, 'What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?' ²⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.'"* John 6:28, 29

Next Week: Judges 21:1-19 *For Jay, this is uncharted territory, as he knows well – yes and amen...* (No King in Israel, Part X) (57th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

(No King in Israel, Part IX)

So the children of Benjamin saw that they were defeated
The men of Israel had given ground to the Benjamites
Because they relied on the men in ambush
Whom they had set against Gibeah like noble knights

And the men in ambush quickly rushed upon Gibeah
The men in ambush spread out and struck
The whole city with the edge of the sword
Benjamin was out of luck

Now the appointed signal between the men of Israel
And the men in ambush was that they would make
A great cloud of smoke rise up from the city
Whereupon the men of Israel would turn in battle and
-----strong action they would take

Now Benjamin had begun to strike and kill
About thirty of the men of Israel
For they said, "Surely they are defeated before us
As in the first battle, so the signs seemed to tell

But when the cloud began to rise from the city
In a column of smoke, this was no joke
The Benjamites looked behind them

And there was the whole city going up to heaven in smoke

And when the men of Israel turned back
The men of Benjamin panicked, things were not swell
For they saw that disaster had come upon them
Therefore they turned their backs before the men of Israel

In the direction of the wilderness
But the battle overtook them, so it didst
And whoever came out of the cities
They destroyed in their midst

They surrounded the Benjamites, chased them, and easily
-----trampled them down
As far as the front of Gibeah toward the east
And eighteen thousand men of Benjamin fell
All these were men of valor from the greatest to the least

Then they turned and fled toward the wilderness
To the rock of Rimmon
And they cut down five thousand of them on the highways
Then they pursued them relentlessly up to Gidom

And killed two thousand of them
So all who fell of Benjamin that day
Were twenty-five thousand men who drew the sword
All these were men of valor, but with their lives they did pay

But six hundred men turned and fled
Toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon
And they stayed at the rock of Rimmon
For four months all alone

And the men of Israel turned back against the children of Benjamin
And struck them down with the edge of the sword
-----running them through
From every city, men and beasts, all who were found
They also set fire to all the cities they came to

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 21:1-19 (NO KING IN ISRAEL, PART X)

The narrative in Judges 21 brings in a point of doctrine that seems to escape a surprisingly large portion of the church. It is such a critical point to understand, that in misunderstanding the precept, it has brought in some of the nuttiest thinking imaginable to various denominations, sects, and cults.

Benjamin has been reduced from a number of 26,700 fighting men, plus women, children, and the aged, to only 600 men. So, does the tribe of Benjamin still exist after the battle? It would be hard to find a single person who would say, "No, Benjamin no longer exists."

Until those 600 died, Benjamin would still be a tribe. But what if the number was only 120? Would Benjamin still exist? Again, the answer is affirmative. But what if there were only 17, 8, or 2? The answer would remain the same. Even if only one man of Benjamin survived, the tribe would still be considered a tribe.

This is understood in the world today. A couple of times in my life, I have heard of someone thought to be the last remaining person of a particular tribe of people, like the Eskimos, for example. When that person dies, that particular tribe dies out. Until then, the tribe remains.

Text Verse: *"...though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: ⁵circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; ⁶concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." Philippians 3:4-6*

The apostle Paul was of the tribe of Benjamin. So, applying the logic, did the tribe of Benjamin exist at the time of Paul? Obviously! Even if Paul was the only Benjamite left (which he wasn't), the tribe would still exist until he died.

In Luke 2:36, a woman of Asher, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, is named. Thus, Asher remained. In fact, after the exile of the ten northern tribes of Israel by Sennacherib, King of Assyria, members of almost every tribe in Israel are mentioned. In other words, even though the majority of the tribe was exiled and their land inheritance was lost, there were still people from those tribes residing in the southern area of Judah.

That fact continued on through the time of the apostles. In Acts 26:7, Paul said, “To this *promise* our twelve tribes, earnestly serving *God* night and day, hope to attain. For this hope’s sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews.” Likewise, the book of James is written to “the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad.”

Despite the exile, there were no “lost tribes.” And yet, denominations, sects, and cults within the supposed Christian church claim that they comprise the gathered lost tribes of Israel. This is true of British Israelism, the Worldwide Church of God, the Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses (in one respect), and others.

They all claim something that they are not, and they base it on a faulty understanding of Scripture. Benjamin did not die out at the time of Judges, despite what took place in Judges 20. And none of the tribes of Israel died out at the exile of the ten northern tribes.

They continued on through the time of Jesus and the apostles, and they are being regathered to the land of Israel today. A good life lesson for the church would be to stop co-opting things belonging to Israel to which it has no right.

If one wonders why there is so much disunity in the church today, it is because people fail to read the Bible, and even when they do, they take much of it out of its proper context. Do not do this! Great and reliable truths such as this are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. What Shall We Do? (verses 1-7)

Chapter 20 ended with the total defeat of the army of Benjamin and the complete destruction of the tribe and all its people. The only exception was noted in the final verses, saying –

“But six hundred men turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon, and they stayed at the rock of Rimmon for four months. ⁴⁸ And the men of Israel turned back against the children of Benjamin, and struck them down with the edge of the sword—from *every* city, men and beasts, all who were found. They also set fire to all the cities they came to.” Judges 20:47, 48

With that remembered, we now enter into the contents of the final chapter of the book of Judges...

¹ Now the men of Israel had sworn an oath at Mizpah, saying,

v'ish Yisrael nishba bamitspah l'mor – “And man, Israel, sworn in the Mizpah, to say.” In this chapter, it is apparent that there are two oaths that had previously been made by the congregation at Mizpah but which had not been recorded. These oaths form the underlying structure of what will be recorded throughout the chapter. The first of these two oaths is noted next...

¹ (con't) “None of us shall give his daughter to Benjamin as a wife.”

ish mimenu lo yiten bito l'binyamin l'ishah – “Man from us not gives his daughter to Benjamin to wife.” The oath was fortunately not one of *kharem*, the total devotion of the tribe to God. If that were the case, the six hundred at the Rock of Rimmon would have been hunted down and killed as well.

However, the people made an oath that Benjamin was cut off from marriage rights among the tribes of Israel, at least at this time. Of this practice, John Lange provides an explanation –

“They abrogated the *connubium* (the right of intermarriage) with the tribe. They determined to treat Benjamin as a heathen people, or as heathen nations, in the absence of special treaties (ἐπιγαμία [*epigamia*]), were accustomed to look upon each other. There were instances of heathen tribes who did not at all intermix. Such cases were found among Germanic tribes also, until Christianity had fully conquered them. It was the church that brought East-Goths and West-Goths, Anglo-Saxons and Britons, Franks and Romans, to look upon each other as tribes of one Israel. Very great, therefore, must have been the indignation of the collective Israel, when they thus, as it were, cast Benjamin out of their marriage covenant.”

The oath was made, and it could not be taken back. As such, it has left Israel with a problem because they had killed all of the women and children of Benjamin. This left these six hundred men without any ability to continue the existence of the tribe beyond themselves.

Israel means He Strives with God. The Mizpah means The Watchtower. Benjamin means Son of the Right Hand.

² Then the people came to the house of God, and remained there before God till evening. They lifted up their voices and wept bitterly,

vayavo ha'am beith el vayeshvu sham ad ha'erev liphne ha'elohim vayisu qolam vayivku b'khi gadol – “And comes, the people, Bethel. And sit there until the evening to faces the God. And lift their voice and weep, ululation whopping.” Here, it says, “the people.” Thus, it is inclusive of soldiers, men, women, and children.

The people came out collectively to Bethel and spent the entire day there before the God, meaning the One True God, among those who are in a right relationship with Him. Of this, the meaning is that the ark was still there after the battle as it was in Judges 20:27. This time before the Lord was one of mourning and sadness.

First, the verb is *bakah*, to weep. That is enhanced by the next word, the noun *b'khi*, a weeping. Such a weeping, when it involves an entire congregation, has a lot of noise and emotion. Thus, the word ululation fits perfectly. It has a particular onomatopoeic quality that matches the Mideastern weeping expressed here: ulululululu. Along with this ululating, there are deep searchings of heart and questions to God...

³ and said, “O LORD God of Israel, why has this come to pass in Israel,

Rather: *vayomru lamah Yehovah elohe Yisrael hay'thah zoth b'Yisrael* – “And say, ‘Why, Yehovah God Israel, came this in Israel?’” Of these words, Adam Clarke incorrectly says –

“This was a very impertinent question. They knew well enough how it came to pass. It was right that the men of Gibeah should be punished, and it was right that they who vindicated them should share in that punishment; but they carried their revenge too far, they endeavored to exterminate both man and beast.” Adam Clarke

However, they did exactly as the law stipulated. They eradicated the evil from Israel. There was nothing unjust in their actions and there was nothing rude in the question. The Lord directed the battles, He oversaw the events, and He knew what the outcome would be. The question isn't why the battle took place or came out as it did. Instead, the question involves national integrity...

^{3 (con't)} that today there should be one tribe *missing* in Israel?”

The words are a sloppy paraphrase: *l'hipaqed hayom miYisrael sheveth ekhad* – “To visit the day from Israel tribe one?” The word is *paqad*, to visit. It is one of the most widely applied words in the Bible and each instance has to be considered from the context to understand the word's signification.

In this case, the visitation means in judgment leading to near eradication. It cannot mean “one tribe *missing* in Israel” because the one tribe still exists, even if in a completely degraded and seemingly hopeless, cut-off state. Benjamin was visited, and the concern is that he will check out of the tribal enumeration at some point in the future.

The triple repetition of the name Israel in this one verse stresses the matter in a unique and forceful way that reveals the utter astonishment and confusion in the minds of the people. They were a unified whole, being the twelve sons of Israel. But more than that, this unity was under the headship of the Lord.

The covenant cut with them, and the promises made to them were of a national nature, inclusive of all the tribes. If Benjamin were to be lost entirely, how would that affect the covenant promises and their national identity? This is what is on their minds.

The Lord had covenanted with the twelve tribes at Sinai in Exodus 24. Later in Leviticus 26, He affirmed that they would be kept as a people, noting that even in the distant future, He would be their God –

“But for their sake I will remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God:

I *am* the LORD.” Leviticus 26:45

The sorrow and confusion among the people would be great. How could the words of the covenant be true if Benjamin was set to perish? Therefore, the people come before the Lord in hope of a resolution...

⁴ So it was, on the next morning, that the people rose early and built an altar there, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings.

vayhi mimakhorath vayashkimu ha’am vayivnu sham mizbeakh vayaalu oloth ushlamim – “And is, from morrow, and arose early the people, and build there altar, and ascend burnt offerings and peace offerings.” These words show, with all certainty, that the translation of some versions as house of God instead of Bethel is incorrect.

If Israel had appeared before the house of God in Shiloh, they would not need to build an altar. Rather, the ark had been brought to Bethel (meaning House of God) while the

rest of the tabernacle remained at Shiloh. Therefore, the people built an altar according to the Law of the Altar found in Exodus 20:24-26.

Once it was built, then the offerings could be presented. The burnt offerings are those wholly burnt to Yehovah as a sign of complete submission or dedication to Him. The peace offerings had a sacred portion removed for the Lord according to the written law, and the rest was eaten by the people.

As such, the burnt offerings are for restoration from sin, and the peace offerings are a sign of renewed fellowship based on that restoration. After these were offered in the presence of the Lord, the second oath that had been made but was not previously recorded is detailed...

⁵The children of Israel said, “Who *is there* among all the tribes of Israel who did not come up with the assembly to the LORD?”

vayomru b’ne Yisrael mi asher lo alah vaqahal mikal shivte Yisrael el Yehovah – “And say, sons Israel, ‘Who which not ascended in the assembly from all tribes Israel unto Yehovah.’” A head count was taken in order for Israel to fulfill an oath that was previously made. This timing of this assembly had to have been at the time of Judges 20:1-3. That is the only time that Mizpah is mentioned in the narrative until this chapter. But that is what is next referred to...

^{5 (con’t)} For they had made a great oath concerning anyone who had not come up to the LORD at Mizpah, saying, “He shall surely be put to death.”

ki hashvuah ha’g’dolah hay’tah laasher lo alah el Yehovah hamitspah l’mor moth yumath – “For the oath, the whopping, made to which not ascended unto Yehovah the Mizpah to say, ‘Dying shall die.” When the assembly was called, it was a matter of national concern. Benjamin had to be dealt with. Any who did not come up would thus be considered as allying with Benjamin. Therefore, as was done to Benjamin was to be done to them.

That vow was put on hold while the matter of Benjamin was dealt with. One can see that verse 5 follows chronologically after verses 6 & 7, but it is placed here to reveal the genesis of the process that would lead to the restoration of the tribe of Benjamin. As such, verses 6 & 7 should be considered parenthetical. One can see this if verses 5 & 6 are reversed –

⁴ So it was, on the next morning, that the people rose early and built an altar there, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. ⁶ And the children of Israel grieved for Benjamin their brother, and said, “One tribe is cut off from Israel today. ⁷ What shall we do for wives for those who remain, seeing we have sworn by the LORD that we will not give them our daughters as wives?” ⁵ The children of Israel said, “Who *is there* among all the tribes of Israel who did not come up with the assembly to the LORD?” For they had made a great oath concerning anyone who had not come up to the LORD at Mizpah, saying, “He shall surely be put to death.” ⁸ And they said, “What one *is there* from the tribes of Israel who did not come up to Mizpah to the LORD?” And, in fact, no one had come to the camp from Jabesh Gilead to the assembly.

⁶ And the children of Israel grieved for Benjamin their brother,

vayinakhamu b’ne Yisrael el Binyamin akhiv— “And sigh, sons Israel, unto Benjamin his brother.” The word *nakham* is variously translated in this verse as repent, lament, grieve, felt sorry, etc. It comes from a primitive root signifying to sigh, as when one breathes heavily. One can see the people with their heads down, worn out from their ululating and simply sighing in anguish. It appears as if there is no hope for Benjamin, and thus, they continue with mournful words...

⁶ (con’t) **and said, “One tribe is cut off from Israel today.**

vayomru nigda hayom shevet ekhad miYisrael – “And say, ‘Hewn, the day, tribe one from Israel.’” The words show that the earlier translation of the NKJV that the tribe was missing is incorrect. The tribe exists, but it is hewn away from Israel, cut off from any discernible future because of their weakened state and the oath concerning wives...

⁷ What shall we do for wives for those who remain, seeing we have sworn by the LORD that we will not give them our daughters as wives?”

mah naaseh lahem lanotarim l’nashim vaanakhnu nishbanu b’Yehovah l’bilti teth lahem mibnotenu l’nashim – “What do to them, to the remainings, to wives? And we sworn in Yehovah to exception give to them from our daughters to wives.” Benjamin exists, but only as “the remainings.” They are a shadowy remnant of the tribe. And with the oath sworn “in Yehovah,” those who gathered could not go back on their word. And more, this was “to exception.”

It was a united and universal proclamation that their daughters were not to be given to Benjamin as wives. However, as it is said, necessity is the mother of invention. There is a need, and a lightbulb of inspiration comes on in the minds of the people. It is where verse 5 logically follows chronologically –

“The children of Israel said, “Who *is there* among all the tribes of Israel who did not come up with the assembly to the LORD?” For they had made a great oath concerning anyone who had not come up to the LORD at Mizpah, saying, “He shall surely be put to death.”

*Four hundred young virgins for six hundred men
It ain't enough to give to all
So, you'll need to plan again
Before you have that six hundred couple wedding ball*

*But it will come about for sure
Because there is no lack in the Lord's plan
Trust in Him, He has the cure
To take care of every man*

*The Lord is faithful, and it will come to pass
And a good end will be the result
For every man, a lovely lass
Because His plan is without fault*

II. Four Hundred Young Virgins (verses 8-14)

⁸ And they said, “What one *is there* from the tribes of Israel who did not come up to Mizpah to the LORD?” And, in fact, no one had come to the camp from Jabesh Gilead to the assembly.

vayomru mi ekhad mishivte Yisrael asher lo alah el Yehovah hamitspah v'hineh lo ba ish el hamakhaneh miyavesh gilad el haqahal – “And say, ‘Who one from tribes Israel, which no ascended unto Yehovah the Mizpah.’ And behold! No came man unto the camp from Jabesh Gilead unto the assembly.”

Two stones can be overturned at one time. The people have made an oath that anyone who didn't come up to the assembly was to be put to death. However, this was not a *kherem*, or total devotion to the Lord. If it was, it would include the entire family along

with all of their possessions. Rather, it was a call for the fighting men to assemble, as is evidenced in Judges 20.

And more, as these men didn't come out, they did not participate in the oath concerning the giving of daughters. As such, they will relinquish their lives while implicitly giving their daughters.

The name Jabesh (*Yavesh*) comes from the verb *yavesh*, to be dry, dried up, or withered. It is used in the drying up of a river, land, bones, etc. It is also used of the withering of grass. Thus, Jabesh Gilead means something like Dry (Drying) Perpetual Fountain or Withered (Withering) Perpetual Fountain. Its location is east of the Jordan in the tribal allotment of Manasseh.

⁹ For when the people were counted, indeed, not one of the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead was there.

vayithpaqed ha'am v'hineh ein sham ish miyovoshve yavesh gilad – “And visits the people. And Behold! Naught there man from inhabitings Jabesh Gilead.” To visit here means to review them for a full census as you would when counting an army. In this action, they found that, sure enough, Jabesh Gilead failed to come up and prepare for the battle against Benjamin.

As such, it is as if they had allied with Benjamin against Israel. This will become a part of the solution to the dilemma faced by the collective nation...

¹⁰ So the congregation sent out there twelve thousand of their most valiant men,

vayishl'khu sham ha'edah shnem asar eleph ish mibne hekhayil – “And send there, the congregation, two ten thousand man from sons the valor.” The Latin Vulgate says ten thousand. This was probably to avoid a difficulty based on the assumption that there were one thousand drawn off from each tribe.

If so, with Levi and Benjamin excluded, it would leave ten or eleven tribes depending on whether Joseph was reckoned as one or if Ephraim and Manasseh were counted separately. But nothing is said of a set number from each tribe. It appears that they simply mustered twelve thousand out of the whole for the battle ahead.

The number is derived from twelve, perfection of government or governmental perfection, and ten, completeness of order where the whole cycle is complete.

¹⁰ (con't) **and commanded them, saying, “Go and strike the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead with the edge of the sword, including the women and children.**

vaytsavu otham l'mor l'khu v'hikithem eth yoshve yavesh gilad l'pi kherev v'hanashim v'hataph – “And command them, to say, ‘Walk and struck inhabitings Jabesh Gilead to mouth sword, and the woman, and the children.’” There was to be a complete eradication of those in the city by the *kherev*, or sword. However, one exception is to be made, which is implicitly stated next...

¹¹ **And this is the thing that you shall do: You shall utterly destroy every male, and every woman who has known a man intimately.”**

v'zeh hadavar asher taasu kal zakhar v'khal ishah yodaath mishkav zakhar takharimu – “And this the word which doing: All male and all woman knowing bed male – anathematize.” Because of what happened with Midian before entering Canaan, there was no need for the explicit command to retain the living females. This is the same generation that heard the words of Moses –

“And Moses said to them: ‘Have you kept all the women alive? ¹⁶ Look, these *women* caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the LORD in the incident of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD. ¹⁷ Now therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman who has known a man intimately. ¹⁸ But keep alive for yourselves all the young girls who have not known a man intimately.’”

-Numbers 31:15-20

The *kherem*, or anathematized, of the inhabitants was similar to an offering to the Lord. The virgins are to be excepted so they can be presented as an offering to Benjamin, a tribe of the Lord's people...

¹² **So they found among the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead four hundred young virgins who had not known a man intimately;**

vayimtsu miyovoshve yavesh gilad arba meoth naarah v'thulah asher lo yad'ah ish l'mishkav zakhar – “And find, from inhabitings Jabesh Gilead, four hundred damsel, virgin, who not known man to bed male.” The number of dead is unimportant to the narrative and so it is excluded. However, the number of virgins is significant and is thus given.

It is a derivative of four, the number of creation and the world (and city) number, and ten which was just explained. It is also a derivative of forty and ten. Forty is described by Bullinger –

“It is the product of 5 and 8, and points to the action of grace (5), leading to and ending in revival and renewal (8). This is certainly the case where forty relates to a period of evident probation. But where it relates to enlarged dominion, or to renewed or extended rule, then it does so in virtue of its factors 4 and 10, and in harmony with their signification.”

¹² (con’t) **and they brought them to the camp at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan.**

If this is referring to the virgins, as seems natural, there is a gender discord because the pronoun is masculine: *vayaviu otham el hamakhaneh Shiloh asher b’erets k’naan* – “And bring them [masc. pl.] unto the camp, Shiloh, which in land Canaan.” That this is referring to the virgins is more definitively supported by the words of verse 22, which will be seen when we get there.

The main camp of Israel is in Shiloh. With the war ending, that is where Phineas and the ark would return. The girls would be brought there until they were given in marriage to one of the Benjamites.

Shiloh means Tranquility. Canaan signifies Humbled, Humiliated, or even Subdued.

¹³ **Then the whole congregation sent word to the children of Benjamin who were at the rock of Rimmon, and announced peace to them.**

vayishl’khu kal ha’edah vaydabru el b’ne vinyamin asher b’sela rimon vayiqr’u lahem shalom – “And send, all the congregation, and word unto sons Benjamin who in Sela Rimmon. And call to them, ‘Peace!’” This means that the representative elders of each tribe went as a delegation to meet Benjamin, or a messenger went, carrying the words of approval from all the elders.

The time of warfare is over and a guarantee of Shalom, Peace, is granted to the remnant of the tribe.

Rimmon means Pomegranate. But the pomegranate symbolizes harvest-ready fruit, so it can further mean Mature Mind or Harvest Ready. The type of rock is a *sela*, or craggy rock. That word comes from a root signifying to be lofty.

¹⁴ So Benjamin came back at that time, and they gave them the women whom they had saved alive of the women of Jabesh Gilead;

vayashav Binyamin baeth hahi vayitnu lahem hanashim asher khiyu minshei yavesh gilad – “And returns, Benjamin, in the time, the it. And give, to them, the women who lived from women Jabesh Gilead.” The offer of peace would not be considered a ruse. If Israel wanted four hundred from Benjamin dead, they would have simply sent the army and wiped them out.

Rather, it was understood as a binding offer of peace. As a bonus for the process of reconciliation, the damsels kept at Shiloh would be presented to the men. From this, it would be understood that a full state of harmony between the tribes was reestablished...

¹⁴ (con’t) and yet they had not found enough for them.

The words are intentionally sparse to highlight the lack: *v’lo matsu lahem ken* – “And not found to them thus.” Despite having obtained four hundred virgins, they realized they had not found enough wives for all six hundred of the men of Benjamin. As such, there is a lack that will leave two hundred unmarried, so there needs to be another way of obtaining wives for those still without. In the short term...

*No tribe will be rubbed out of Israel
The Lord has covenanted with them forever
And of the faithfulness of the Lord, we can tell
Because He will never fail – no, not ever*

*The Lord’s promises are sure and true
They can be relied upon without any doubt
When they apply personally to me or you
Trust them, you are dealing with the Lord’s clout*

*When He says that you are saved
Why would you ever question it is so?
The road to glory He has paved
Through faith in Christ, that’s all you need to know*

III. A Yearly Festival of the Lord (verses 15-19)

¹⁵ And the people grieved for Benjamin, because the LORD had made a void in the tribes of Israel.

Rather: *v'haam nikham l'vinyamin ki asah Yehovah perets b'shivte Yisrael* – “And the people sighed to Benjamin. For made, Yehovah, breach in tribes Israel.” One can see the people, once they realized that there were more men of Benjamin than available women they had gathered for them, looking in the eyes of the other two hundred, looking away, and sighing.

It is not so much a void in Israel, but a breach. It is as if a dam has cracked, and a certain amount of one of the tribes is being lost downstream. Even if the dam can be repaired, the lost water cannot be retrieved. This is the thought on the minds of the people.

¹⁶ Then the elders of the congregation said, “What shall we do for wives for those who remain, since the women of Benjamin have been destroyed?”

This is probably not a question at all, but an assertion: *vayomru ziqne ha'edah mah naaseh lanotarim l'nashim ki nishm'dah mibinyamin ishah* – “And say, elders the congregation, ‘What do to the remainings to wives, for destroyed from Benjamin women.’” There is a conundrum. It is apparent that they had promised wives to the men in their offer of peace. However, the supply did not meet the demand.

As such, they state where women can be obtained from and how it will be done. All the women of Benjamin were dead, and the virgins of Jabesh Gilead, the only group who did not show up as mandated, were insufficient. It appears impossible, but a solution is available...

¹⁷ And they said, “There must be an inheritance for the survivors of Benjamin, that a tribe may not be destroyed from Israel.

The words are difficult and widely debated: *vayomru y'rushath p'leitah l'vinyamin v'lo yimakheh shevet miyisrael* – “And say, ‘Possession deliverance to Benjamin. And not rubbed tribe from Israel.’” No matter how they are translated, they require insertions or an explanation to be understood.

The words could be as the NKJV indicates, an adamant assertion that there must be more women or the tribe will perish. But this would assume that they honestly believe the tribe could be lost over two hundred men lacking wives. That seems unlikely.

Ellicott and Keil tie the possession to the land itself, “i.e., the tribe-land of Benjamin shall remain an independent possession for the Benjaminites who have escaped the massacre, so that a tribe may not be destroyed out of Israel” (Keil). Thus, they needed to find wives for the men. But that has nothing to do with the context.

And more, the land was given by the Lord to Benjamin. The other tribes of Israel had no right to withhold it or grant it. Cambridge naturally says the text is corrupt, which is their default setting.

Rather than this being an adamant assertion that there must be more women or the tribe will perish, it seems more likely that this is an adamant assurance by the leaders that the tribe will not be rubbed out. “There will be women (a possession) for those of Benjamin who were delivered (a deliverance), and no tribe will be rubbed from Israel. Stop weeping!”

Lange agrees with this, and it makes the most sense based on simple logic, the progression of thought, and the minimally provided Hebrew. Understanding this, it next says...

¹⁸ However, we cannot give them wives from our daughters,

The conjunction is simply “and,” but “however” would rightly explain the thought based on the emphatic “we” that follows: *v’anakhnu lo nukhal latheth lahem nashim mibnothnu* – “And we, not able to give to them wives from our daughters.”

The congregation has vowed that they will not give women to Benjamin. This was understood and cannot be violated. Anyone who gave a daughter to a Benjamite would face the consequences. This was said to confirm the oath and ensure the vow’s validity. The reason for it is again reiterated and expanded upon...

¹⁸ (con’t) for the children of Israel have sworn an oath, saying, ‘Cursed *be* the one who gives a wife to Benjamin.’”

ki nishbu v’ne Yisrael l’mor arur nothen ishah l’vinyamin – “For sworn, sons Israel, to say, ‘Cursed giving wife to Benjamin.’” All in the congregation made an oath. The details were specific. Anyone giving a wife to Benjamin would be in violation of the oath, and a curse would be upon such a person. Despite this...

¹⁹ Then they said, “In fact, *there is* a yearly feast of the LORD in Shiloh,

The name of the location here and verse 21 is spelled without an “h” ending: *vayomru hineh khag Yehovah b’shilo miyamim yamimah* – “And say, “Behold! Feast Yehovah in Shilo from days, days-ward.” This confirms the thought that the previous words were an adamant assertion to alleviate the woes of those who were mourning. In other words, “Stop weeping! We have a plan, and here are the details. It is true that nobody can give away a daughter to Benjamin, but that is not necessary to repair this breach.”

The term “from days” is rightly paraphrased as “yearly.” There were three annual feasts. The next one was coming in the days ahead (days-ward), and a solution to the problem rested there. The ingenious cunning of the plan will be laid out with intricate detail...

^{19 (fin)} **which is north of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goes up from Bethel to Shechem, and south of Lebonah.”**

asher mitsphonah l’beith el mizr’khah ha’shemesh limsilah ha’olah mibeith el sh’khmah u-minegev lilvonah – “which from north-ward to Bethel from ascension-ward, the sun, to highway – the ascending – from Bethel Shechem-ward, and from south to Lebonah.” Of the words, Ellicott rightly says, “This elaborate description of the site of Shiloh, a place which is so often mentioned elsewhere without any addition, is extremely curious.”

Some scholars say the words are a gloss. Others say the elders were being very precise so that Benjamin would know exactly where Shiloh was, but that makes no sense at all. If this is where the annual pilgrim feasts were, everyone would know exactly where Shiloh was.

Instead, it appears that these words are an explanatory parenthesis by the author, not a description by the elders. The location of the Ark of the Covenant had changed by the time Samuel (if he is the chronicler) compiled the narrative. Therefore, he is describing, under inspiration, the layout of the land for the reader.

Tsaphonah means northward, coming from *tsaphon*, north. North is the hidden direction in the northern hemisphere, where the sun moves toward or away from it, depending on the time of year. Thus, the word signifies Concealed.

Mizrakhah signifies eastward, coming from *zarakh*, to rise or come forth.

Shechem means the neck between the shoulders. Thus, it literally means Shoulder or Back. But that comes from *shakam*, to start or rise early, so it gives the sense of (Having a Sense of) Responsibility, as in Personal Interest.

The south, *negev*, signifies Parched.

Lebonah is found only here in Scripture. It comes from the verb *laven*, to be white and to make bricks. Thus, it literally means White or Frankincense (which is white), but the word *laven* has consistently been used in Scripture to describe works, as in man's works, because bricks turn white when they are fired, but bricks are the work of men's hands.

That is the end of our review today. We covered a lot of verses and a great deal of information, but it is time to stop and finish both the chapter and the book of Judges next week. A key lesson that can be discovered in so many commentaries on verses like these is that the Bible is to be taken literally and in its proper context.

We are not to appropriate things from Scripture or apply them to ourselves if we do not know what the subject matter is dealing with.

Obviously, in typology, we may find useful applications in our lives. Despite this, in a clear reading of the Bible, we can easily see that the church has not replaced Israel, and those in the church are not "spiritual Israel" or the ten (supposedly) lost tribes of Israel.

And more, we need more than our subjective opinion that the text has been manipulated, added to, or is missing something. Unless there is objective evidence of this, we should never make such claims. Just because we don't understand what is going on doesn't mean the content is in question.

It may just mean we have no idea what is being conveyed for one of various reasons. Next week, we will go over the typology of the chapter. When we do, if the typology matches the narrative, then all of the commentaries that say the text is in question are wrong.

Rather, we should give the word the benefit of the doubt, trusting that it is reliable. Only with valid evidence that there is a question should we then search out that avenue. Let us hold fast to the word and cherish it as the most valuable treasure, because it is!

Closing Verse: *"Bless God in the congregations,
The Lord, from the fountain of Israel.*

*27 There is little Benjamin, their leader,
The princes of Judah and their company,
The princes of Zebulun and the princes of Naphtali.” Psalm 68:26, 27*

Next Week: Judges 21:20-25 *What a great story it has been to tell, like a slice of heaven...* (No King in Israel, Part XI) (58th and Final Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

No King in Israel, Part X

Now the men of Israel
Had sworn an oath at Mizpah, saying during this time of strife
“None of us shall give his daughter
To Benjamin as a wife

Then the people came to the house of God
And remained before God till evening there
They lifted up their voices and wept bitterly
And said, “O LORD God of Israel” in their prayer

Why has this in Israel come to pass? Do tell
That today there should be one tribe missing in Israel?

So it was, on the next morning
That the people rose early to make their profferings
And built an altar there
And offered burnt offerings and peace offerings

The children of Israel said
“Who is there among all the tribes of Israel, speak the word
Who did not come up
With the assembly to the LORD?

For they had made a great oath concerning anyone
Who had not come up, speaking their shibboleth
To the LORD at Mizpah, saying

“He shall surely be put to death

And the children of Israel
Grieved for Benjamin their brother
And said, “One tribe is cut off from Israel today
As a son taken from his mother

What shall we do for wives
For those who remain, who kept their lives
Seeing we have sworn by the LORD
That we will not give them our daughters as wives?

And they said, “What one is there
From the tribes of Israel
Who did not come up to Mizpah to the LORD?
Speak up! Do tell!

And, in fact, no one had come (and they should be trembly!)
To the camp from Jabesh Gilead to the assembly

For when the people were counted during this affair
Indeed, not one of the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead was there

So the congregation sent out there twelve thousand
Of their most valiant men, and commanded them, saying
“Go and strike the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead
With the edge of the sword, including the women and children
-----so they were relaying

And this is the thing that you shall do:
You shall utterly destroy every male
And every woman who has known a man intimately
Yes, every such female

So they found among the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead
Four hundred young virgins who had not known a man intimately
And they brought them to the camp at Shiloh
Which is in the land of Canaan, north of the Salt Sea

Then the whole congregation sent word
To the children of Benjamin
Who were at the rock of Rimmon
And announced peace to them

So Benjamin came back at that time
And they gave them the women whom they had saved alive
Of the women of Jabesh Gilead
And yet they had not found enough for them
----- (Still missing 40 x 5)

And the people grieved for Benjamin for a spell
Because the LORD had made a void in the tribes of Israel

Then the elders of the congregation said
“What shall we do for wives to be deployed
For those who remain
Since the women of Benjamin have been destroyed?

And they said
“There must be an inheritance, so we tell
For the survivors of Benjamin
That a tribe may not be destroyed from Israel

However, we cannot give them wives from our daughters
For the children of Israel (to their chagrin)
Have sworn an oath, saying
‘Cursed be the one who gives a wife to Benjamin

Then they said, “In fact, there is a yearly feast of the LORD
In Shiloh, which is north of Bethel, oolah!
On the east side of the highway that goes up
From Bethel to Shechem, and south of Lebonah

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

JUDGES 21:20-25 (NO KING IN ISRAEL, PART XI)

While typing the Judges sermons, Sergio was also going through Judges and Ruth. One morning, he messaged me with the Mr. Exploding Head emoji and some great insights he pulled out of his personal study – 🤯

Judges ends with:

- Mourning for Benjamin, no wives/descendants
- Plan for survival: marry daughters of Shilo
- Last verse: “There was no king in Israel”

Book of Ruth:

- Naomi mourns loss of husbands/descendants
- Plan for survival with Boaz; Ruth births Obed
- Last verse: “and to Obed was born Jesse, and to Jesse, David.” -- KING DAVID!

It is a marvelous pattern that exists between the two, and it was a nice catch that I have not seen elsewhere presented. It provides another of several reasons why Ruth, despite occurring during the time of the Judges, is maintained as its own book, separate from and placed after Judges.

God is slowly and methodically presenting us with the developing theme of redemption in Israel as it applies beyond their borders, even encompassing the entire world. In the book of Judges, it says that there was no king in Israel but everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

It would not make sense to put Ruth within the pages of Judges for that reason. In Israel, during the time of the judges, there was no king. In Israel after Christ departed, there has been no king. But a king was anticipated in Judges, and a King is anticipated in Israel’s future.

Everything is going forward, but we can look back in order to see what lies ahead. It is amazing what God has done for us in the pages of Scripture.

Text Verse: *“O Israel, you have sinned from the days of Gibeah; There they stood.*

*The battle in Gibeah against the children of iniquity
Did not overtake them.” Hosea 10:9*

Hurricane Debby arrived while I was typing this sermon on August 5. Despite not being a big hurricane, Sarasota received an inordinate amount of rain. Our backyard was flooded from the high tides and our garage was flooded from the precipitation.

And more, it rained and stormed so much from midnight on that I got almost no sleep at all. In the morning, sermon typing began. When I finished typing, the rains had stopped and the garage was still full of water. Some things are just more important than others.



Today, we will close out the book of Judges. I personally would not have imagined the amount of intricate detail contained in the book when we started. The dispensational model of history is on full display, the rapture is alluded to a few times, and the consummation of all things is clearly seen in several of the stories. God has taken real events and real people’s lives from thousands of years ago and revealed to us truths using human history.

Some of those pictures are future to us now, including those found in the final chapter of Judges. The subject matter is Israel, but the idea of Israel makes no sense without her Messiah, their King. Yes, there is currently no king in Israel, even if Israel has a King. That is destined to change some wonderful day.

What an astonishing and marvelous thing God has presented to us through these types and pictures! Such great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. From the Whirlings (verses 20-25)

²⁰ Therefore they instructed the children of Benjamin,

The written Hebrew does not correspond to the oral reading: *vaysav eth b’ne vinyamin* – “And commands [sg.], sons Benjamin.” The written has the word “command” as spoken by one, “he commands.” The oral has it as spoken by all, “they command.” There is usually no reason to deviate from the written unless there is confusion on the part of the Jewish scribes.

The surrounding verses are all in the plural, so they make this plural as well. However, verse 20:28 noted that Phinehas was at Bethel. He, as the high priest, could very well be the final word on the matter. It said in verse 21:2 that the people came up to Bethel. The next verses indicated the people petitioned the Lord.

As such, there was the implicit understanding that this was all being done with the guidance of the Lord. Thus, it was likely that either the Lord directly, or Phinehas on behalf of the Lord, gave this command.

20 (con't) saying, "Go, lie in wait in the vineyards,

l'mor l'khu v'aravtem bak'ramiym – "to say, 'Walk and lurk in the vineyards.'" The command was for these two hundred Benjamites to go to the area of Shiloh where the annual feast was and hide themselves in the vineyards. Whether this was a feast of Israel or a local feast only, these times of celebrations were when the vineyards were in full leaf. Thus, it would make it easy to hide without being noticed.

In Scripture, vineyards represent the cultural side of humanity. There are various vineyards that represent various cultures.

21 and watch; and just when the daughters of Shiloh come out to perform their dances,

There is a gender discord in the words. Also, as in verse 19, the name of the location is spelled without an "h" ending: *urithem v'hineh im yetsu b'noth shilo lakhul bamkholoth* – "And seen, and behold, if come [masc. pl.] daughters Shilo to whirl in the dances." The word translated as "come" is masculine even though it refers to the dancing daughters.

The men hiding in the vineyards were to watch for women who whirled while dancing. The women were called the daughters of Shilo. This could mean they were only young women from that location, or if this was a pilgrim feast for the nation, it could extend to women from all over Israel who were staying there during the feast.

21 (con't) then come out from the vineyards, and every man catch a wife for himself from the daughters of Shiloh; then go to the land of Benjamin.

Each of the verbs in this clause are in the perfect aspect: *vitsathem min hakramim vakhataphtem lakhem ish ishto mibnoth shilo vahalakhtem erets Binyamin* – "and came from the vineyards, and seized to them man, his wife, from daughters Shilo. And walked

land Benjamin.” The women were out dancing without male supervision, totally unsuspecting that there were so many men lying in wait.

Because of this, it could not be thought that the men of Israel gave their daughters to the men of Benjamin. Thus, they would be released from any penalty of the oath. The general scholarly opinion is that this is deceitful and inappropriate.

However, if it was the Lord or Phineas who authorized this plan in the previous verse, that argument does not hold up. It is probably the reason why the singular was written in the first place. The verbs being in the perfect aspect make this a done deal.

Also, there is a new word to Scripture here, only found elsewhere in Psalm 10:9, *khataph*. It signifies to clutch, thus, to seize as a prisoner. The men were instructed to grab a girl and not let go. From there, they were to escape with her to the land of Benjamin...

²² Then it shall be, when their fathers or their brothers come to us to complain,

Again, there are gender discords in the words: *vahayah ki yavou avotham o akhehem larov elenu* – “And is when come their [masc. pl.] fathers, or their [masc. pl.] brothers, to contend unto us.” Nothing is noted about the complaints of the mothers. It would be natural that the men or brothers would complain as well as the mothers. The women had been taken away by the men of Benjamin. But that appears to be the only reason why they might complain, as is seen in the next words...

²² (con’t) that we will say to them, ‘Be kind to them for our sakes, because we did not take a wife for any of them in the war; for *it is not as though* you have given the *women* to them at this time, making yourselves guilty of your oath.’”

The words are very obscure and highly debated. Various manuscripts have modified them in an attempt to make sense. Also, depending on the reference, there appears to be another gender discord: *v’amarnu alehem khanunu otham ki lo laqakhnu ish ishto bamilkhamah ki lo atem nathatem lahem kaeth tesamu* – “and we said unto them, ‘Favor us, them [masc. pl.], for not we took man his wife in the war, for not you gave to them, according to the time trespassed.’”

The normal reading would be that the word “them” refers to the women, but it is again in the masculine, “Do us a favor concerning them.”

It could be referring to the men of Benjamin, but even then, the words remain complicated. Regardless, the complaint referred to is not that the daughters have been stolen away, and they miss them in the usual sense. The complaint is because the women have been given to Benjamin contrary to the oath, making the community guilty.

But this plan is not a violation of the vow for anyone whose daughter was seized. As such, there is no culpability on the part of the fathers or brothers. And yet, there has been a resolution to the dilemma of the wifeless men.

The words “according to the time trespassed” seem to mean that, at this time, there is no trespass on the part of these men of Israel. Having said that, the structure of the words is extremely unusual. So much so that Clarke leaves it up to the reader to decide what he prefers –

“It is an obscure sentence; and the reader, if not pleased with what is laid down, may endeavor to satisfy himself with others which he may find in different versions and commentators.” Adam Clarke

His words bear a sentiment I cannot agree with. We must work to determine meaning, not pick and choose.

²³ And the children of Benjamin did so; they took enough wives for their number from those who danced, whom they caught.

vayaasu khen b'ne vinyamin vayisu nashim l'misparam min hamkhol'loth asher gazalu – “And do thus, sons Benjamin. And lift women, to their number, from the whirlings whom they plucked.” The words are somewhat poetically forceful. The women were lifted. This gives the sense of them being in a group where each man of Benjamin sees the one he likes and lifts her out as his own.

There would have been two hundred snatched away according to the number of those in Benjamin still needing wives. They were taken “from the whirlings,” meaning those who came out to dance. And they were, *gazal*, plucked, a word often used to indicate being kidnapped, robbed, or seized away.

²³ (con't) Then they went and returned to their inheritance, and they rebuilt the cities and dwelt in them.

vayelkhu vayashuvu el nakhalatam vayivnu eth hearim vayeshvu bahem – “And walk, and return unto their inheritance. And build the cities, and dwell in them.” It is a later description of what occurred, showing that this was compiled and recorded later, probably by Samuel. Benjamin retained his inheritance. As they grew in number, they would have expanded and continued to rebuild in the land given to them by the Lord.

²⁴ So the children of Israel departed from there at that time, every man to his tribe and family; they went out from there, every man to his inheritance.

vayith’halkhu misham b’ne Yisrael baeth ha’hi ish l’shivto ul’mishpakhto vayesu misham ish l’nakhalatho – “And walk, from there, sons Israel in the time, the it. Man to his tribe and to his family. And go from there, man to his inheritance.” The words end the formal narrative. Benjamin was spared and rescued. The matter of wives for them was settled, so the people of Israel departed and headed home.

The repetition provides its own emphasis concerning the situation:

- And walk (dispersing), from there (Shiloh), sons Israel (all men of all tribes) in the time, the it. Man to his tribe (Judah, for example) and to his family (within the tribe).
- And go from there, man to his inheritance (the land granted by the Lord and which was then divided accordingly).

Saying that each man went to his inheritance is a way of indicating that the tribal inheritances remained intact. Despite almost losing one tribe, the nation remained according to the set design of the Lord. And this occurred, despite the fact that...

²⁵ In those days *there was* no king in Israel;

The words are letter-for-letter identical to Judges 17:6: *bayamim ha’hem ein melekh b’Yisrael* – “In the days, the those, naught king in Israel.” Until there was a king, there was no king. To write that this was in the days when there was no king acknowledges that there was a king when the narrative is being presented.

The words imply that a king would rectify the situation. And this is just what the author (compiler or whatever) next presents...

²⁵ (fin) **everyone did *what was* right in his own eyes.**

ish ha'yashar b'enav yaaseh – “Man the straight in his eyes does.” As there was no king in Israel, everyone saw his own path as the straight one, and then took it. Thus ends Chapter 21 and the book of Judges.

*Be strong and of good courage; I am with you
Fear not and be not dismayed
Others may depart, but I am faithful and true
It is I who have all your debts paid*

*I will bring you into the inheritance
And there I will place you forever
Of Me failing, there is not a chance
Nothing can the bond between us sever*

*Be strong and of good courage, trust in Me
Fear not and be not dismayed; I am with you
The word I have spoken, so shall it be
I am the Lord your God, faithful and true*

II. Pictures of Christ

Verse 1 noted that Israel (He Strives With God) had sworn an oath at Mizpah (Watchtower) that no one would give his daughter to Benjamin as a wife. In Chapter 20, Benjamin pictured those with a messianic hope, even if it was wrongly directed. Mizpah signifies the Lord is watching over the process of what transpires.

To not give a daughter signifies to cut off such a person because there is no one to continue his name. No wife means no continuance. But with the war over, the people have realized that there are those who are of Israel but who have no chance of continuation. Therefore the nation made a great ululation before the God, meaning the true God.

In Verse 3, one tribe in Israel was visited, meaning it was judged. It tells us that messianic law observers will receive their judgment in the tribulation period. Most will be cut off. Israel had come against their false doctrine in Chapter 20, leaving only six hundred.

Six is the number of man, especially fallen man. Ten implies that nothing is wanting, and the whole cycle is complete. In order to restore this tribe in Israel, two separate plans

are devised. The first plan begins in verse 5, where it is asked who among the tribes did not come up to the battle against Benjamin. Anyone who didn't had essentially aligned himself with Benjamin. Such were to be cut off.

Israel grieved for Benjamin because they had no future (verse 6). They had their inheritance, but without wives, there could be no continuance. Verse 7 also noted that they were a mere remnant from Benjamin.

To correct this, it was noted that no one had come up to Mizpah to the Lord from Jabesh Gilead. The meaning is Dry Perpetual Fountain. It was seen in Judges 11 that Gilead, without the article, speaks of Israel, the fountain.

To grasp the meaning, one must think of Israel as the means of providing the Fountain, regardless of whether individuals are included in its transmission or not (Ephesians 2:12). The Spirit is the Mode by which one is included.

Right now, Gentiles are brought into the commonwealth of Israel along with Jews. However, not all Jews nor all Gentiles receive it. Israel is Perpetual Fountain, not The Perpetual Fountain (meaning the Holy Spirit). The use or lack of use of the article tells us this.

Understanding this, Dry Perpetual Fountain would reflect those who have no means of providing the Fountain. There is no possible connection to the Spirit, and that individual is foreign to Israel. These are those who have rejected the Lord in the tribulation and took the mark of the beast. They are to be eliminated.

As such, verse 10 says that twelve thousand valiant men were sent to wipe them out. It is the number of perfection of government or governmental perfection. Ten implies that nothing is wanting, and the whole cycle is complete. It tells us that the millennial government is set and ready to be put in place. The thought is reflected in Matthew 25 –

“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats.” Matthew 25:31, 32

Those who are to be killed will be slain with the mouth of the *kherv*, sword. That has consistently pictured the law given at Horeb. In this case, it is emblematic of Jesus, who fulfilled the law and whom they had rejected –

“And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.”

-Revelation 19:21

Four hundred virgins are spared (40x10). It is derived in two ways, both of which match the tribulation and the beginning of the millennium –

“It is the product of 5 and 8, and points to the action of grace (5), leading to and ending in revival and renewal (8). This is certainly the case where forty relates to a period of evident probation. But where it relates to enlarged dominion, or to renewed or extended rule, then it does so in virtue of its factors 4 and 10, and in harmony with their signification.”

These virgins (implying purity) were brought to Shiloh (Tranquility) in the land of Canaan (Humbled). It signifies they have entered God’s rest, having been humbled before Him through the work of Christ.

With them at Shiloh, in verse 13, terms of peace were announced to Benjamin at the Rock of Rimmon. The Son *of the* Right Hand is accepted because of Christ and their new understanding of Him as the true Messiah. This is seen in the name Sela Rimmon – Lofty of the Mature Mind.

Verse 14 said these men came back and were given the women from Jabesh Gilead. That is explained in the words of Ezekiel 47 –

“‘Thus you shall divide this land among yourselves according to the tribes of Israel. ²² It shall be that you will divide it by lot as an inheritance for yourselves, and for the strangers who dwell among you and who bear children among you. They shall be to you as native-born among the children of Israel; they shall have an inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel. ²³ And it shall be *that* in whatever tribe the stranger dwells, there you shall give *him* his inheritance,’ says the Lord GOD.” Ezekiel 47:21-23

Those of the Dry Fountain are brought into a permanent and right relationship with Israel with full rights in the land. Despite this there is a lack of two hundred women, the number of Insufficiency. The number is never stated, but it is implied. As such, the insufficiency applies to these men of Israel.

Despite the insufficiency, a plan was formed, which was in the form of an adamant assertion that there would be no lack in Israel, even if daughters could not be given to these men. They could not do so based on the oath noted in verse 18 that any who gave their daughter to Benjamin would be cursed.

As such, verse 19 noted the coming feast in Shilo. In that verse and twice more in 21, the location is given without the *hay* (h) ending. Like Geba in Chapter 20, the change in spelling has meaning.

Hay is the fifth letter of the Aleph Beth, the number of grace. It also is used when referring to a connection to the Spirit. Its meaning is Look, Reveal, and Breath. Each is something connected with the Spirit. As such, it is a confirming note that there will be people born in the millennium who do not originally have the Spirit. In any age, one receives the Spirit through faith. There are several verses in the Old Testament that confirm this.

After noting Shilo, the narrator then took the unusual step of explaining its location. Everything about the name Shilo, like its name having no *hay* (h), demonstrates a lack of connection to God, “which from north-ward to Bethel from ascension-ward, the sun, to highway – the ascending – from Bethel Shechem-ward, and from south to Lebonah.”

Northward, *tsaphonah* signifies Concealed, thus “Concealed to the House of God.”

Ascension-ward [*mizrakhah*, from *zarakh*, to arise] the sun [*shemesh*] signifies the time prior to Jesus’ coming, thus the time of the law –

“But to you who fear My name
The Sun [*shemesh*] of Righteousness shall arise [*zarakh*]
With healing in His wings.” Malachi 4:2

Shechem means the neck between the shoulders. Thus, it literally means Shoulder or Back. But that comes from *shakam*, to start or rise early, and so it gives the sense of (Having a Sense of) Responsibility, as in Personal Interest. As seen elsewhere, it speaks of the personal interest and responsibility of those under the law.

The south, *negev*, signifies Parched. It speaks of the time before the giving of the Spirit.

Lebonah means White or Frankincense (which is white), but the word *laven* has consistently been used in Scripture to describe works, as in man's works, because bricks turn white when they are fired, but bricks are the work of men's hands.

The entire verse speaks of being separate from the grace that is finally revealed to Israel at the end of the tribulation period.

The words "Walk and lurk in the vineyards" speak of cultures. As has been seen many times before in Scripture, vineyards represent the cultural side of humanity. There are various vineyards that represent various cultures. As the Jewish culture of today is a group of many cultures gathered together, the words could not be more appropriate.

In verse 21, the gender discord was noted. Such a gender discord, however, was first seen in verse 12. Speaking of the four hundred virgins, it said –

"And bring them [masc. pl.] unto the camp, Shiloh, which in land Canaan."

Next, in verse 21, it said –

"And seen, and behold, if come [masc. pl.] daughters Shilo to whirl in the dances."

When the women are seen, verse 21 said that every man was to seize a wife for himself from the vineyards and go to the land of Benjamin. The verbs were in the perfect aspect. It is a done deal when that takes place.

In verse 22, the highly complicated words contained another gender discord. In the Hebrew, the words are obscure and so there are many texts that have diverted from them –

'Favor us, them [masc. pl.], for not we took man his wife in the war, for not you gave to them, according to the time trespassed.'"

If looked at from the perspective of the end times, they become clear. The daughters were not taken by these men during the time when they were warring against the Lord through false belief. Nor were they given by those who did believe. "According to the time trespassed" describes the state of the men before Christ appeared and cleared up their faulty doctrine.

The gender discords are speaking of people groups. In the Bible, people groups are always referred to in the masculine, such as *goyim*, Gentiles, or *anashim*, peoples. It explains why those gender discords are listed. They are referring to those bodies or groups whom they represent.

In the first four hundred women of verse 12, the men were given the daughters of Jabesh Gilead, Dry Fountain, and thus Gentiles, as noted in Ezekiel 47 cited earlier. In the two hundred additional women, they are obtaining daughters from those born in the millennium from the regathered peoples of Israel.

One can see the true believers in Israel saying, “We vow to not intermarry with anyone who is not a believer in the Lord Jesus. Those who followed false messiahs would be excluded from this covenant. But here, we are presented with ways in which those who make it through the millennium will be able to continue even if such vows were made.

Verse 23 noted that the two hundred Benjamites went, returned to their inheritance, rebuilt the cities, and dwelt in them. It is an appropriate statement in general for after the tribulation. There will be an inheritance for those who survive the ordeal, and they will rebuild and dwell in their cities.

Verse 24 likewise said that all of the children of Israel returned to their inheritances. The two descriptors said –

And walk (dispersing), from there (Shiloh), sons Israel (all men of all tribes) in the time, the it. Man to his tribe (Judah, for example) and to his family (within the tribe).

And go from there, man to his inheritance (the land granted by the Lord, which was then divided accordingly).

This provides the reason for the reexplanation of the tribal inheritances detailed in Ezekiel 48, which refers to the millennial dispensation.

Finally, verse 25 ended with the same thought that ended Judges 17:6, “In the days, the those, naught king in Israel. Man the straight in his eyes does.”

These two verses are bookends that anticipate the time when Israel would reject Jesus as their King even until the end of the tribulation period. That is clearly depicted in their own proclamation to Pilate on the day Christ was crucified –

“When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called *The Pavement*, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. ¹⁴ Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, ‘Behold your King!’

¹⁵ But they cried out, “Away with *Him*, away with *Him*! Crucify Him!”

Pilate said to them, ‘Shall I crucify your King?’

The chief priests answered, ‘We have no king but Caesar!’

¹⁶ Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. Then they took Jesus and led *Him* away.” John 19:13-16

During all this time, Israel has done whatever it wanted. They rejected Moses from the beginning, paying mere lip service to the word of the Lord given through him. Then they rejected the One that Moses clearly wrote about, both explicitly and implicitly.

Further, the Law of Moses continues on in the writings that follow his time of service. In Judges alone, there have been an incredible number of pictures of Jesus, His work, the redemptive plan He laid out, etc.

It would be presumptuous to assume that all of the pictures I have presented in Judges have been interpreted correctly, but it is clear from the overall context of the Bible what is being presented, that the details – even if some were wrongly interpreted – are swallowed up in the surety of the overall pictures.

Among the pictures have been wonderful insights into core doctrines of Scripture, such as the deity of Christ, salvation by grace alone, seeking justification through works of the law only separate us further from God, dispensationalism, and so forth.

Along with those, many other useful doctrines have been presented to clear up the muddy waters of bad theology. There were several references to the rapture that solidified the surety of that teaching. Further, the timing of the rapture, being pre-tribulation, is clarified.

The fact that Israel of the past is the same group of people we see in the world today is also confirmed, demonstrating to us that the church has not replaced it, but is an extension of it. Gentiles are grafted into the commonwealth of Israel, but they remain Gentiles just as Jews remain Jews.

These and so many other points of doctrine have been carefully detailed in these ancient, difficult, and picturesque stories that have excited the minds of believers for

thousands of years. In the order of biblical books, Ruth comes next. That has already been analyzed, and so soon we will begin 1 Samuel.

First, though, we will take a short diversion and head to a new book (or two) for a few weeks to see what is detailed elsewhere. No matter where we are in the Bible, however, we are sure to come across interesting secrets, find hidden treasures, and above all, see the Person of Jesus Christ being presented to us in a vast array of ways.

Everything about this word is centered on Him and what He has done and continues to do for His people. Let us never fail to pick up the Bible daily and search out its marvelous contents, looking for Him as we do.

*I look for you, my Precious Lord
But then again, I lose my sight.
And even though I might get lost
I know you never leave my side.*

*I look for you in my every-days,
In so many moments, so many times.
I know that You are always there,
Yet, I can't see You with my eyes.*

*To hear You, Lord it's not an easy task.
My ears might never hear your voice.
But I know, Lord, that You are here,
Right inside my very soul.*

*I look for You in Your Word.
I look for You in my heart,
And I know Jesus through the cross,
Through transformation of my life.*

*So help me, Lord, to comprehend;
that to see You, Lord
is to know your grace.
That to hear You, Lord
is to know Your Word,
and through the faith
Is to be Yours.*

*So help me Jesus
to hear your voice,
not with my ears
but with my soul.*

*Help me to see
not with my eyes
but with your Spirit
inside my heart.*
~Izabela Bednara

Closing Verse: *"Then say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; ²² and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again."*

-Ezekiel 37:21, 22

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

No King in Israel, Part XI

Therefore they instructed the children of Benjamin, saying
"Go, lie in wait in the vineyards for your chances
And watch; and just when the daughters of Shiloh
Come out to perform their dances

Then come out from the vineyards
And every man catch a wife for himself (we know you're all-in)
From the daughters of Shiloh
Then go to the land of Benjamin

Then it shall be, when their fathers or their brothers
Come to us to complain, that we will say to them, for shor
'Be kind to them for our sakes
Because we did not take a wife for any of them in the war

For it is not as though you have given
The women to them at this time
Making yourselves guilty of your oath
Thus, things will be fine

And the children of Benjamin did so
They took enough wives for their number
From those who danced, whom they caught
They acted and did not slumber

Then they went and returned to their inheritance
And they rebuilt the cities and dwelt in them
-----living out their second chance

So the children of Israel departed from there at that time
Every man to his tribe and family
They went out from there
Every man to his inheritance and his own territory

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And Lord God, thank you for this wonderful book
Judges! What a marvel to have studied it
Into every detail possible we took a look
And to You our thanks and praise we now submit!

Hallelujah to Christ our Lord!
Hallelujah for Judges, a marvelous part of Your superior word!

Hallelujah and Amen!
Indeed, Hallelujah and Amen...