The Book of Judges

Introduction

    It is very important to understand when studying the book of Judges that you understand first how they (Israel) got where they were and why they continue in the book of Judges to have the same problems over and over, from generation to generation.

   God’s plan from the beginning was to place a people for his name’s sake in the land that would one day bring forth the Saviour of the world, who would one day sit on a throne in Jerusalem ruling the nations for a thousand years in perfect peace and harmony.

   He promised them (Israel) that if they would hearken unto his words that he would make them (Israel) a peculiar treasure unto him, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, but Israel did not hearken unto God and became like the nations around them and went a whoring after other gods. Exodus 19:5-6

   Promises were made and kept by God to protect Israel and to drive out her enemies from the land as long as she kept his word, but Israel did not keep up her end of the covenant made with God at Mount Sinai, and she has paid the price ever sense.

   God then left Israel’s enemies in the land to test Israel to see if she would keep the covenant they made with him.

   This is the story of Israel after she had initially given up the fight against her enemies after Joshua’s death and then decided to try to live together with their enemies in the land God had promised to them.

   This led Israel continually to do evil in the sight of the LORD.

Chapter One

Who shall go up for us?

   First there was Moses and later Joshua, but now Israel is without a leader for the first time in over eighty years. They are in the land, and some may have thought they didn’t need anyone now, just leave us to ourselves. This was foolish thinking because you are easy prey for your enemies when you are divided.

1 Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass, that the children of Israel asked the LORD, saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them? 2 And the LORD said, Judah shall go up: behold, I have delivered the land into his hand. 3 And Judah said unto Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my lot, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I likewise will go with thee into thy lot. So Simeon went with him. 4 And Judah went up; and the LORD delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand: and they slew of them in Bezek ten thousand men.

    I applaud Israel for their asking the LORD who should lead them. It would not be long before they would forget God and cry out for deliverance over and over. Judah is chosen by God, not the person but the tribe. Judah the person has been dead for five hundred years by now.

   I believe that Judah was chosen by God to begin to prepare Israel’s heart to one day follow a King that would come from this tribe, namely David.

   After being chosen by the LORD to go up first to fight the Canaanites, the leadership in the Tribe of Judah asks their cousins from the Tribe of Simeon to join them in the battle and in return Judah promised to help the Tribe of Simeon fight the enemies that would be in the land allotted to Simeon’s descendants.

   Judah and Simeon were tribes that both descended from Leah, Jacob’s first wife. Joshua 19:1-9 records the lots for each of the Tribes and because Judah’s lot was too big for them, God gave Simeon a part of the inheritance allotted to Judah.

   They fought together in this battle because they shared a portion of the same allotment. The Kohathites and other priests were given thirteen cities from Judah, Benjamin, and Simeon for the Levites to live in that were near Jerusalem.

 5 And they found Adonibezek in Bezek: and they fought against him, and they slew the Canaanites and the Perizzites. 6 But Adonibezek fled; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes. 7 And Adonibezek said, Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died.

   Adonibezek means the Lord of Bezek. He was an evil king and cut the thumbs and big toes off seventy kings before God humbled him in the same way.

8 Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem, and had taken it, and smitten it with the edge of the sword, and set the city on fire. 9 And afterward the children of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites, that dwelt in the mountain, and in the south, and in the valley. 10 And Judah went against the Canaanites that dwelt in Hebron: (now the name of Hebron before was Kirjatharba:) and they slew Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai.

   To the person who studies their Bible these four names should be very familiar, but to the person who just reads their bible they may not remember them.

   Arba is the father of Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai. They were giants, mighty men of renown as Joshua records. These were offspring of the Sons of God and the daughters of men as first recorded in Genesis chapter six.

   Those offspring were all killed in the flood, but Satan just commissioned a bunch of new ones to do the same thing as they did back in Genesis.

   After the flood God would then have a nation with an army to deal with the Giants so they didn’t spread like they did before the flood.

   This is why God had Israel at times utterly destroy both man, woman, and child in many places because he is destroying the corrupted flesh from these Anakim/Giants. God has no joy in the destruction of the wicked, but he must prevent Satan from destroying humanity.

   Hell was created as a deterrent to the Sons of God doing this very thing. It was not created for man. It was created for the Devil and his angels.

Matthew 25:41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

11 And from thence he went against the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before was Kirjathsepher: 12 And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjathsepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife. 13 And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife. 14 And it came to pass, when she came to him, that she moved him to ask of her father a field: and she lighted from off her ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wilt thou? 15 And she said unto him, Give me a blessing: for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the nether springs.

   God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him and ask of him. We can learn from these two in that God’s word says that we have not because we ask not.

   Of course, we are not Israel, and our blessings are in heavenly places but that doesn’t mean we cannot be blessed for our faithfulness while we are pilgrims down here.

16 And the children of the Kenite, Moses' father in law, went up out of the city of palm trees with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah, which lieth in the south of Arad; and they went and dwelt among the people.

   I believe this is a reference to the place that had seventy palm trees where the children of Israel (all seventy of them) camped on their way to Egypt. Exodus 15:27

17 And Judah went with Simeon his brother, and they slew the Canaanites that inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed it. And the name of the city was called Hormah. 18 Also Judah took Gaza with the coast thereof, and Askelon with the coast thereof, and Ekron with the coast thereof. 19 And the LORD was with Judah; and he drave out the inhabitants of the mountain; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron.

   Were the chariots too much for them? No! God had said he would allow the inhabitants of the land to be a snare unto Israel because they did not initially do as they were told in the tearing down of their altars.

20 And they gave Hebron unto Caleb, as Moses said: and he expelled thence the three sons of Anak. 21 And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day.

   Here it says that Caleb expelled the three sons of Anak while if we will remember in verse ten of this same chapter it says that they slew Anak’s sons, Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai.

   Is this a contradiction? No! Caleb did indeed expel them, but the tribe of Judah was credited with killing the three sons. There are no contradictions in the Bible, only hidden truths available to those who will diligently search them out.

   Notice that the Jebusites were not driven out of the land, they were natives of the city of Jerusalem and are mentioned throughout the remainder of the New Testament. Many times, in a favorable light.

   David purchased the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite to sacrifice on to stay the anger of the LORD. 2 Samuel 24:16

22 And the house of Joseph, they also went up against Bethel: and the LORD was with them. 23 And the house of Joseph sent to descry Bethel. (Now the name of the city before was Luz.) 24 And the spies saw a man come forth out of the city, and they said unto him, Shew us, we pray thee, the entrance into the city, and we will shew thee mercy. 25 And when he shewed them the entrance into the city, they smote the city with the edge of the sword; but they let go the man and all his family. 26 And the man went into the land of the Hittites, and built a city, and called the name thereof Luz: which is the name thereof unto this day.

   Bethel is of course the second place that Abraham built an altar at, and it is there the Bible records that Abraham called upon the LORD. Genesis 12:8

   Bethel is the place where Lot argued with Abraham over water and the land was divided and Lot chose the land of Sodom. Lot if you will remember should have never been allowed to come with Abraham.

   Jacob also first heard from God while he was here as he was heading to find a bride from Laban’s house back in Haran as he dreamed and saw the LORD at the top of a ladder that reached unto Heaven which has the Angels of God descending and ascending on the ladder. Genesis 28:19

   Joshua had sent men near to Bethel to spy on the city of Ai because they were near one another. Saul fought here, and Jeroboam set up one of the golden calves here. 1 Kings 12:29

    It was here that Elijah was taken up from Elisha 2 Kings 2:3 King Josiah, the boy king, tore down the Altar erected by Jeroboam. 2 Kings 23:15

   Amos prophesied Israel’s future captivity while he was in Bethel and was told not to prophesy against Israel from Bethel any more for the King’s court and chapel were there (Amos 7:10-13). It was not just some city. Satan wanted this city and God did as well.

27 Neither did Manasseh drive out the inhabitants of Bethshean and her towns, nor Taanach and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Ibleam and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns: but the Canaanites would dwell in that land. 28 And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out.

   Israel did not utterly destroy all her enemies, many she only had to drive out of the land, but she became weary in battle and after their surrenders Israel would compromise and allow their enemies to stay among them. This lesson still plagues Israel today.

29 Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them. 30 Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol; but the Canaanites dwelt among them, and became tributaries. 31 Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho, nor the inhabitants of Zidon, nor of Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor of Helbah, nor of Aphik, nor of Rehob: 32 But the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: for they did not drive them out. 33 Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Bethshemesh, nor the inhabitants of Bethanath; but he dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: nevertheless the inhabitants of Bethshemesh and of Bethanath became tributaries unto them.

   These became cheap labourers to Israel much like the Palestinians were in recent days. Truly the words of Noah had come to past when he prophesied that the sons of Canaan would serve the sons of Shem.

Genesis 9:25 And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. 26 And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

34 And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain: for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley: 35 But the Amorites would dwell in mount Heres in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim: yet the hand of the house of Joseph prevailed, so that they became tributaries. 36 And the coast of the Amorites was from the going up to Akrabbim, from the rock, and upward.

   There was no place in God’s plan for Israel to have all these peoples to remain in the land he had promised to Israel, but because of Israel’s sin they remained as thorns to them.

Chapter Two

Why have ye done this?

   Chapter two is rather unique in that it is a summary of the whole book of Judges. The Angel of the LORD is of course a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ.

1 And an angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I sware unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you. 2 And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this? 3 Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you.

   Notice an angel of the LORD turns out to be the angel of the LORD as he identifies himself as the one who made Israel go up out of Egypt. No other angel did that but God himself.

4 And it came to pass, when the angel of the LORD spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept. 5 And they called the name of that place Bochim: and they sacrificed there unto the LORD.

   Bochim means, the place of tears. They were not weeping for their past sins, but they were weeping because they would now have to suffer for their sin. We spend a lot of time weeping about messes that we have made when we knew all along, we should not be doing what it was the got us into that mess.

6 And when Joshua had let the people go, the children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land. 7 And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel. 8 And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old. 9 And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathheres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash. 10 And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.

   As you shall see it is a very important thing to raise our children up knowing the LORD. Israel decided to let their children find God for themselves and it has cost them dearly.

11 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: 12 And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. 13 And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth. 14 And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. 15 Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed.

   If you are looking for a reason to blame God and to say he is unfair you will not find it here. God told Israel at Mount Sinai that if they would keep his covenant that they made with him on that day that they would be a peculiar treasure unto him.

    He promised to protect them from their enemies as well but that was a conditional Covenant. If Israel chose not to obey his word, then the very things we are reading about God promised would happen to chasten Israel to get them to return unto him.

16 Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. 17 And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; but they did not so. 18 And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them.

   Good leadership is important in any country. The desire to be like all the other countries around them was what led to Israel’s downfall over and over.

19 And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way. 20 And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice;21 I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died: 22 That through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not. 23 Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua.

   Israel’s enemies not served to prove Israel whether they would keep the way of the LORD to walk therein. At times, it seemed liked the whole nation would be given over to idolatry, but God always had a remnant.

   He always had a Daniel, an Elijah or Elisha, a prophet named Hosea, a King named Josiah, an Uncle named Mordecai and his niece named Esther. God did not leave Israel without a witness.

Chapter Three

Othniel & Ehud

1 Now these are the nations which the LORD left, to prove Israel by them, even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan; 2 Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof; 3 Namely, five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites that dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baalhermon unto the entering in of Hamath. 4 And they were to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses. 5 And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites: 6 And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods. 7 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgat the LORD their God, and served Baalim and the groves. 8 Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Chushanrishathaim eight years. 9 And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.

   Of course, Caleb’s younger brother, what a great place to find someone to lead Israel out of the mess they had gotten themselves into.

  Othniel had the same faithful family that instilled in Caleb to trust in the LORD, and he would have known all the stories of his brother’s service to the LORD and to his people.

10 And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war: and the LORD delivered Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushanrishathaim. 11 And the land had rest forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

   Notice that the land had rest for forty years while Othniel was still alive. The Devil fears men of faith like Othniel and will sometimes wait them out. Forty is the number of testing in the Bible and you will see it over and over in this book as Israel is tested in the land.

   Going over Jordan is not a picture of going to heaven because the children of Israel had to deal with their sin of disobedience continually by fighting the enemies they let stay in the land.

   There will be no more enemies when we leave this world behind because Jesus has defeated them at the Cross.

12 And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD. 13 And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek, and went and smote Israel, and possessed the city of palm trees.

   Notice it was the LORD who strengthened Eglon the king of Moab (descendants of Lot) against Israel to chastise Israel for doing evil in the sight of the LORD.

   He strengthened Eglon and the Moabites by allowing them to unite with the children of Ammon, (Lot’s other son from his incestuous relation with his daughters) and who else but the Amalekites (Israel’s enemy from generation to generation).

   Abram should have never brought Lot with him out of Ur of Chaldees. If he hadn’t there would have never been any Moabites or Ammonites to oppose Israel continually. Disobedience to God early on in Israel’s beginnings has caused problems for her unto this day.

14 So the children of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years. 15 But when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised them up a deliverer, Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man lefthanded: and by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon the king of Moab. 16 But Ehud made him a dagger which had two edges, of a cubit length; and he did gird it under his raiment upon his right thigh. 17 And he brought the present unto Eglon king of Moab: and Eglon was a very fat man. 18 And when he had made an end to offer the present, he sent away the people that bare the present. 19 But he himself turned again from the quarries that were by Gilgal, and said, I have a secret errand unto thee, O king: who said, Keep silence. And all that stood by him went out from him. 20 And Ehud came unto him; and he was sitting in a summer parlour, which he had for himself alone. And Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee. And he arose out of his seat. 21 And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly: 22 And the haft also went in after the blade; and the fat closed upon the blade, so that he could not draw the dagger out of his belly; and the dirt came out. 23 Then Ehud went forth through the porch, and shut the doors of the parlour upon him, and locked them. 24 When he was gone out, his servants came; and when they saw that, behold, the doors of the parlour were locked, they said, Surely he covereth his feet in his summer chamber. 25 And they tarried till they were ashamed: and, behold, he opened not the doors of the parlour; therefore they took a key, and opened them: and, behold, their lord was fallen down dead on the earth. 26 And Ehud escaped while they tarried, and passed beyond the quarries, and escaped unto Seirath. 27 And it came to pass, when he was come, that he blew a trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mount, and he before them. 28 And he said unto them, Follow after me: for the LORD hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand.

   Notice that Moab’s brothers the Ammonites are nowhere to be found now, and the children of Amalek they have fled as well. Why is that?

   God promised that even though Israel would rebel against him that if they would cry out unto him and repent then he would send someone to deliver them, a judge, and that is exactly what he did.

And they went down after him, and took the fords of Jordan toward Moab, and suffered not a man to pass over. 29 And they slew of Moab at that time about ten thousand men, all lusty, and all men of valour; and there escaped not a man. 30 So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest fourscore years.

   Notice the land of Israel had rest for 80 years (40 + 40) because God had raised up Ehud to deliver Israel after she had served Eglon for 18 years under the king of the Moabites.

   God knew that when Israel would suffer the consequences of their sin and be punished long enough that they would eventually cry out unto God in repentance, and he would then send them a deliverer.

   It never lasted very long however because of mankind’s sinful nature. This book should encourage every freedom loving person to pray for their country and for its leaders.

Shamgar the son of Anath

31 And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad: and he also delivered Israel.

   Just who was this judge named Shamgar that only gets one verse of recognition in this chapter? The problem is that sometimes the chapter divisions come at an inopportune time. Shamgar is mentioned again in the Bible, but only in one other verse found in chapter 5.

Judges 5:6 In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through byways.

   We will look at the situation that was going on during the days of Shamgar who ruled during the days of Jael who was instrumental to Israel’s deliverance in his days.

Chapter Four

Deborah and Barak

1 And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, when Ehud was dead. 2 And the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host was Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles. 3 And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel.

   Notice again after Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD that it was the LORD that sold Israel into the hand of the Canaanites.

   God was allowing different nations that remained in the land promised to Israel to rise up against Israel to bring them to a place of morning which would lead them to repentance and to a turning back to the LORD.

   Notice also that Sisera, the captain of the Canaanite Army had nine hundred chariots (Merkavahs) of Iron with which he mightily oppressed the children of Israel with.

  These were like Tanks to the defenseless Israelites. The modern-day Tank in Israel is called the Merkavah Tank, or chariot.

    Sisera would use these Chariots to control the highways that ran through Israel to control the rebellious house of Israel until Israel would turn and seek God and he would send a deliverer. This one would be a woman named Deborah, but she had some help.

4 And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time. 5 And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.

    Deborah was one of seven women in the Bible called a prophetess (they were not the wives of the prophets by the way).

   She was the judge in that if someone had an issue with their brethren, they might go to her and she would hear their case, but she judged during the time of Israel’s being oppressed, she had not delivered them yet.

   Actually, it was God who delivered Israel every time, but he would use people in many instances such as the one you are about to see as God spoke to her to begin to deliver Israel as she had finally met the requirement for God to intervene on her behalf.

6 And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedeshnaphtali, and said unto him, Hath not the LORD God of Israel commanded, saying, Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun? 7 And I will draw unto thee to the river Kishon Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand.

   First, Deborah asks Barak a question that was rhetorical in nature. God had indeed said to her that Barak was to amass an army from the children of Naphtali and Zebulun of ten thousand men, and that Barak was to lead them toward Mount Tabor (the mount of transfiguration).

   Secondly, Deborah tells Barak that she will draw Jabin’s Army unto the river Kishon, led by Sisera to deliver Sisera into Barak’s hands.

   That sounds like she had the easy job of just telling Sisera that Barak has an Army marching toward Mount Tabor, so you better go out to meet him at the river, but there is more to this than first meets the eye. Let’s read on.

8 And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go. 9 And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour; for the LORD shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.

   Barak wanted Deborah with him, I believe, to encourage the men of Naphtali and Zebulun to rally behind them because they all knew God had given Deborah to be a mother over Israel and to be their judge.

   Because Barak would not do as he was initially told the story changes from God delivering Sisera into Barak’s hands into God delivering him into the hands of a woman, Deborah, and she would get the honour not him.

And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh. 10 And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and he went up with ten thousand men at his feet: and Deborah went up with him.

Heber the Kenite

11 Now Heber the Kenite, which was of the children of Hobab the father in law of Moses, had severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, which is by Kedesh. 12 And they shewed Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to mount Tabor.

   Mount Tabor is a very tall mountain in Israel, and you have a great vantage point to see your enemies’ approach from all sides as they would come through the valley.

   Hobab had served Moses as a set of eyes for Israel in the wilderness because Hobab knew the land better than anyone coming out of Egypt because none of them save Moses had ever been outside of Egypt all their days. Numbers 10:29-33

    And now we see his descendant turning his back of the very same people his family helped so many years ago. This brought about on him the curse of Genesis 12:1-3 I will curse him that curseth thee (Abraham’s descendants).

13 And Sisera gathered together all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles unto the river of Kishon. 14 And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which the LORD hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the LORD gone out before thee?

  Barak and Deborah had faith that God was going to do another miracle on this day because Deborah states to Barak that the LORD has gone out before thee.

  How would God deliver Sisera into their hands? This question won’t be fully answered until we hear the song of Deborah that she sings in the following chapter.

So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him. 15 And the LORD discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; so that Sisera lighted down off his chariot, and fled away on his feet. 16 But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles: and all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword; and there was not a man left.

    Tanks are great in valleys or in the plains, but they didn’t do as well trying to fight up a very dense mountain covered in trees from top to bottom and the soldiers could easily use the trees to pounce upon their enemies or to hide behind.

  As the chariots passed by, the Israelites they could then attack from behind with their swords, but God would not just use the terrain to help Deborah and Israel on this day as we shall soon see in the following chapter.

Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite

17 Howbeit Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite: for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. 18 And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said unto him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not. And when he had turned in unto her into the tent, she covered him with a mantle. 19 And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink; for I am thirsty. And she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, and covered him. 20 Again he said unto her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and enquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here? that thou shalt say, No.

    Jael doesn’t have to ask how the battle went as their Captain was standing before her without his Chariot or his Army. Jael then covers Sisera up in some blankets after giving him some warm milk to drink instead of the water he requested.

  What happens to a tired baby after it drinks of its Mother’s milk? It goes to sleep. As soon as Sisera went to sleep Jael proceeded to enact operation Nail and Hammer.

21 Then Jael Heber's wife took a nail of the tent, and took an hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground: for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died. 22 And, behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said unto him, Come, and I will shew thee the man whom thou seekest. And when he came into her tent, behold, Sisera lay dead, and the nail was in his temples. 23 So God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Israel. 24 And the hand of the children of Israel prospered, and prevailed against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

   As Jael blessed Abraham’s descendants she would be blessed. And now we see a little more about just how God gave Barak’s Army the victory on that day as we look at the Song of Deborah and Barak.

Chapter Five

The Song of Deborah and Barak

1 Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day, saying, 2 Praise ye the LORD for the avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves.

   The children of Naphtali and of Zebulun willingly offered themselves to fight against the chariots of Sisera and God gave them the victory on that day.

3 Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes; I, even I, will sing unto the LORD; I will sing praise to the LORD God of Israel. 4 LORD, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchedst out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water. 5 The mountains melted from before the LORD, even that Sinai from before the LORD God of Israel. 6 In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through byways. 7 The inhabitants of the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel, until that I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel.

    Notice the mention of the clouds dropping water after the heavens dropped. That I believe is one of the ways God neutralized the Chariots of Sisera, by making the hills and valleys all muddy so they would be slow and ineffective in battle. Israel is a very dry place and when it rains heavily there are always flash floods.

   Here we see Deborah and Barak mention the previous Judge Shamgar who defeated six hundred men of the Philistines with an Ox Goad.

   Scriptures do not tell us how this happened, but we can be sure that one versus six hundred could mean only one thing, God was with Shamgar as he would be with Samson in defeating the Philistines.

8 They chose new gods; then was war in the gates: was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel? 9 My heart is toward the governors of Israel, that offered themselves willingly among the people. Bless ye the LORD.

   Israel had gone after other Gods and because of that God allowed them to be oppressed by their enemies. The very same ones they did not drive from the land. Once they had repented after being oppressed for many years then God would raise up another deliverer.

   This time it was Deborah and Barak, and the leaders of Naphtali and Zebulun here are praised for coming with them to the battle, unlike the others who stayed at home.

10 Speak, ye that ride on white asses, ye that sit in judgment, and walk by the way. 11 They that are delivered from the noise of archers in the places of drawing water, there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the LORD, even the righteous acts toward the inhabitants of his villages in Israel: then shall the people of the LORD go down to the gates. 12 Awake, awake, Deborah: awake, awake, utter a song: arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam. 13 Then he made him that remaineth have dominion over the nobles among the people: the LORD made me have dominion over the mighty. 14 Out of Ephraim was there a root of them against Amalek; after thee, Benjamin, among thy people; out of Machir came down governors, and out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer. 15 And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah; even Issachar, and also Barak: he was sent on foot into the valley. For the divisions of Reuben there were great thoughts of heart. 16 Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks? For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart. 17 Gilead abode beyond Jordan: and why did Dan remain in ships? Asher continued on the sea shore, and abode in his breaches.

   What a rebuke to those that remained behind when it was known in Israel that two tribes alone would face the mighty army of the Canaanites.

   It seems to me that two verses ten seems to be a reoccurring theme with Israel. Ten spies versus two spies, ten Northern Tribes and two in the South.

   If they all would have gone to the battle, then where would the victory go to? They would have praised themselves instead of God.

18 Zebulun and Naphtali were a people that jeoparded their lives unto the death in the high places of the field. 19 The kings came and fought, then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo; they took no gain of money. 20 They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera. 21 The river of Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon. O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength. 22 Then were the horsehoofs broken by the means of the pransings, the pransings of their mighty ones. 23 Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the LORD, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the LORD, to the help of the LORD against the mighty.

    Praise again for Naphtali and Zebulun who fought near the waters of Megiddo which is the valley to the west of mount Tabor.

   While these two tribes stood against the whole of the army of Jabin the Canaanite, the stars (the very angels of heaven) also fought in the spirit realm against spiritual wickedness in high places that were assisting Sisera, but they were routed on that day because when God heard Israel’s plea for help, he intervened, and God won the battle.

   What method did he use to gain this victory for Israel? Rain. Rain and more rain. So much rain that the river of Kison swept away the chariots of Sisera with all their might soldiers.

   The horse’s hoofs were breaking in the midst of the river and overturning the chariots and Sisera himself had to abandon his chariot and retreat on foot.

24 Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be, blessed shall she be above women in the tent. 25 He asked water, and she gave him milk; she brought forth butter in a lordly dish. 26 She put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workmen's hammer; and with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head, when she had pierced and stricken through his temples. 27 At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down: at her feet he bowed, he fell: where he bowed, there he fell down dead. 28 The mother of Sisera looked out at a window, and cried through the lattice, Why is his chariot so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariots? 29 Her wise ladies answered her, yea, she returned answer to herself, 30 Have they not sped? have they not divided the prey; to every man a damsel or two; to Sisera a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needlework, of divers colours of needlework on both sides, meet for the necks of them that take the spoil? 31 So let all thine enemies perish, O LORD: but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might. And the land had rest forty years.

   What an amazing battle that must have been to watch. It was God alone that won the battle on that day. Deborah was a great woman of faith and God used here mightily but neither she nor Barak won the fight on that day. God did.

   Where would Israel have been without Deborah and Jael? Way to go Ladies. Way to go.

Chapter Six

A Mighty Man of Valour

1 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years. 2 And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel: and because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds. 3 And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them; 4 And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. 5 For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude; for both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the land to destroy it. 6 And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD.

   Notice the cruelty of the Israel’s enemies, they not only rule over them, but they would steal their crops trying to starve them to death. Not only did the Midianites come up against Israel but the Amalekites as well.

   They were the first to come against Israel when they came out of Egypt and God told them that he would have war against Amalek from generation to generation. Ex 17:16

7 And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD because of the Midianites, 8 That the LORD sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage; 9 And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drave them out from before you, and gave you their land; 10 And I said unto you, I am the LORD your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice.

   Remember there were very few copies of the word of the LORD around for the children of Israel to read but they had God’s word passed down unto them from their parents and it wasn’t all that long ago that Joshua had entered into the promised land to possess what God had promised but they disobeyed God’s word and would not drive them out of the land.

11 And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites. 12 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.

   Thou mighty man of valour? How so? Gideon was in hiding trying to feed his family. The angel of the LORD, however, sees Gideon as who he will be and not who he views himself as at the moment.

13 And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.

   This does not sound at all like the words of a mighty man of valour. It also doesn’t sound like a man of faith that would one day appear in the hall of faith in Hebrews 11:34 where it was said of him: “out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.”

14 And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee? 15 And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.

   Gideon sounds like Saul of Tarsus who said he was less than the least of all saints in Ephesians 3:8. That is the kind of person God needs to do his will.

  If Gideon had said, I am your man LORD, I have been training my body to be a weapon of vengeance for the LORD. God needs humble people who will put their trust in the LORD to deliver.

16 And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man. 17 And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me. 18 Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again. 19 And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out unto him under the oak, and presented it. 20 And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so. 21 Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the LORD departed out of his sight. 22 And when Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the LORD, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord GOD! for because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face.

   Gideon was not sure the person speaking to him was an angel of the LORD until he saw the fire consume his offering of a lamb and unleavened bread like he did in Leviticus 9:24.

23 And the LORD said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die. 24 Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovahshalom: unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

   The LORD said Shalom be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die. Shalom is the Hebrew word peace. Gideon then builds an altar unto the LORD, and called it Jehovahshalom because the LORD was at peace with Gideon and did not kill him.

25 And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it: 26 And build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down.

    This would serve as a message to the people of Israel that Gideon was taking a stand against Baal even to the point of going against his own father’s household.

27 Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the LORD had said unto him: and so it was, because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day, that he did it by night.

   Gideon was told that the LORD was with him by the angel of the LORD, but he still doesn’t act like a man that is to lead a rag tag group of men against the massive army of the Midianites.

   He even gets 10 men to give him more of a backbone and does as the LORD tells him in destroying his father’s pagan altar and grove, but he does it at night because he is afraid of his father’s household. Wow!

28 And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that was by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built. 29 And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing? And when they enquired and asked, they said, Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing. 30 Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that was by it. 31 And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning: if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar.

   If he be a god, let him plead for himself. Good for Joash, Gideon’s father, when the men of the city came to kill Joash’s son for tearing down the Altar to Baal.

32 Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar. 33 Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east were gathered together, and went over, and pitched in the valley of Jezreel. 34 But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered after him. 35 And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh; who also was gathered after him: and he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; and they came up to meet them. 36 And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said, 37 Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said.

   Most people give Gideon a hard time at the beginning but let’s take a look at where he is and what he just did. Just a few days ago he was hiding wheat from Israel’s enemy.

   Then he defied his own father by destroying his altar to Baal and his groves were cut down, plus he sacrificed his father’s animals.

   Then he blew a trumpet and gathered the Tribes of Israel together because they heard what he had done in angering the Midianites and Amalekites by tearing down their altars.

   Now we see him asking for a sign that God will deliver his enemies into his hands. He is a Jew, and the Jews require a sign because they were born with signs when they came out of Egypt.

38 And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water.

   Let there be water on the fleece and not the ground. And there was. But that wasn’t enough for Gideon, he wanted another sign just in case that was a coincidence.

39 And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. 40 And God did so that night: for it was dew upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.

   The Apostle Paul was speaking from Israel’s past, and he was correct when he said the Jews require a sign.

   That all started when Moses sought signs to shew the people that God had indeed sent him to be their deliverer. God then did many more signs in the presence of His people, and they began to rely of them even when God would speak to them as he had with Gideon.

Chapter Seven

Three Hundred Men

1 Then Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people that were with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well of Harod: so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley. 2 And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me.

   Gideon now had a nickname thanks to those who heard his father (a former Baal worshipper) defend his own Son against the more serious worshippers of Baal.

   Un-fortunately it stuck with him during his day. “Let Baal plead for himself” At least someone stood up to the Idol worship going on. Gideon wasn’t perfect, but he sparked a nation by his mustard seed of faith.

The fearful and afraid

3 Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.

   Over two thirds of Gideon’s Army left because of fear. Only ten thousand remained and yet that would be too many for God to receive the glory.

The Three Hundred Men

4 And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. 5 So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. 6 And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. 7 And the LORD said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place. 8 So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all the rest of Israel every man unto his tent, and retained those three hundred men: and the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley.

   The three hundred men took victuals in their hands, and their trumpets and the rest of the men returned to their tents, remember the nine thousand and seven hundred that returned to their tents were brave men, but God would not need even man’s bravery. All he needed was their faith.

9 And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand.

   God says to Gideon who is still a little fearful, understandably so, that he has already delivered the host into his hand before it has ever happened because God put the fear of the LORD in the Midianites because the story of Gideon had reached their ears and they trembled at the thought of fighting against a nation whose God was stronger than their god.

A Cake of Barley Bread

10 But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host: 11 And thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host. Then went he down with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the armed men that were in the host. 12 And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude. 13 And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along. 14 And his fellow answered and said, This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host.

   How do you get from hearing dream that a cake of barley bread represents the sword of Gideon, and that God has delivered Midian and all the host into Gideon’s hand? I don’t know but that is how they interpreted the dream.

   That story must have made it all around the host that night or others must have had similar dreams because there was a fear in all the men of Midian.

   Maybe if he said the same thing to his host that Gideon had said there wouldn’t have been any host for Gideon to come up against. Battle is a fearful thing,

15 And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, and returned into the host of Israel, and said, Arise; for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian. 16 And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers. 17 And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall ye do. 18 When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon.

   Nothing is mentioned to Gideon about how God was going to deliver the Midianites into his hand only that he was going to do it and Gideon believed that now and his fear was gone. Maybe one of the reasons for going down to the host was for Gideon to hear them say, this is the sword of Gideon.

   When they would hear this being shouted as a part of God’s plan they would really begin to panic because that would make their dreams and fears seem to be true.

   Large armies mean nothing to God. He will destroy the largest army in the world one day with just the word of his mouth.

The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon

19 So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch; and they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that were in their hands. 20 And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow withal: and they cried, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon. 21 And they stood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried, and fled.

   The host thought they were surrounded by the light show above them and the shouts of the men that carried down into the valley and they ran and cried and fled.

   What an amazing thing it must have been to have witnessed the fear that God put into the hearts of these men.

22 And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled to Bethshittah in Zererath, and to the border of Abelmeholah, unto Tabbath.

   The LORD set every man’s sword against his fellow even throughout all the host and they fled that remained. One Midianite killing another Midianite all throughout the camp until the host was whittled down to nothing.

   When the other Tribes had heard of the great victory of Gideon’s three hundred it encouraged the rest of Israel to join the battle. Maybe some of the original thirty-two thousand decided to return and fight.

23 And the men of Israel gathered themselves together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after the Midianites. 24 And Gideon sent messengers throughout all mount Ephraim, saying, Come down against the Midianites, and take before them the waters unto Bethbarah and Jordan. Then all the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and took the waters unto Bethbarah and Jordan. 25 And they took two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb; and they slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the winepress of Zeeb, and pursued Midian, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side Jordan.

   The rock of Oreb and the winepress of Zeeb did not exist prior to the day they were both slain there.

  The tribe of Ephraim heeded the words of Gideon’s messengers, and they pursued the Midianites and won a great victory for Israel, but they came to Gideon to complain about being left out of the previous battle, but Gideon handled that situation very diplomatically.

Chapter Eight

What was I in comparison of you?

1 And the men of Ephraim said unto him, Why hast thou served us thus, that thou calledst us not, when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites? And they did chide with him sharply. 2 And he said unto them, What have I done now in comparison of you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? 3 God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb: and what was I able to do in comparison of you? Then their anger was abated toward him, when he had said that.

   Wow! They were jealous of Gideon’s victory and his new-found fame, after all they were the second biggest tribe next to Judah and they felt with their men in the battle it would have been a total massacre, and no one would have escaped but God wanted the glory to go to himself not man because man would exalt himself.

   Gideon basically patted their ego on the back and said what they did (The gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim) better than what he did (the vintage of Abiezer).

   Abiezer was the leader of his family and he told them that the best my little family could do (the vintage) could not even begin to compare with just the gleanings of what Ephraim had done in capturing and killing Oreb and Zeeb. This appeased the tribe of Ephraim.

4 And Gideon came to Jordan, and passed over, he, and the three hundred men that were with him, faint, yet pursuing them. 5 And he said unto the men of Succoth, Give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me; for they be faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian. 6 And the princes of Succoth said, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thine army?

   Take a moment to put yourself in the sandals of the people of Succoth. Israel had been ruled over for many years by the Midianites and now they are here at your doorstep asking you to give aid to the very army that the Midianites were ruling over.

   The people of Succoth knew the consequences of aiding the Midianites enemy, death. Whatever the penalty from Israel they probably thought would be far less than that of the Midians, after all they were their countrymen.

7 And Gideon said, Therefore when the LORD hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into mine hand, then I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers.

   Now they had their answer. I guess they figured that since Midianite ruled was what they were used to that the Midianites would probably win in the end, and they had better not upset them. How far Israel had gotten away from trusting in the LORD that they would take sides with their own enemy against themselves.

8 And he went up thence to Penuel, and spake unto them likewise: and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered him. 9 And he spake also unto the men of Penuel, saying, When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower. 10 Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor, and their hosts with them, about fifteen thousand men, all that were left of all the hosts of the children of the east: for there fell an hundred and twenty thousand men that drew sword. 11 And Gideon went up by the way of them that dwelt in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah, and smote the host: for the host was secure. 12 And when Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued after them, and took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and discomfited all the host. 13 And Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle before the sun was up,

   Again, three hundred men here are putting to flight fifteen thousand men, and he was able to discomfit them and captured their kings, Zalmunna and Zeba. Now Gideon would deal with the residents of Penuel and Succoth for their lack of faith and support to their fellow countrymen.

14 And caught a young man of the men of Succoth, and enquired of him: and he described unto him the princes of Succoth, and the elders thereof, even threescore and seventeen men. 15 And he came unto the men of Succoth, and said, Behold Zebah and Zalmunna, with whom ye did upbraid me, saying, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thy men that are weary? 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.

   Gideon taught all of Israel a lesson on that day, especially the elders of Succoth as he punished them as he said he would by tearing their flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and the briers.

17 And he beat down the tower of Penuel, and slew the men of the city. 18 Then said he unto Zebah and Zalmunna, What manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor? And they answered, As thou art, so were they; each one resembled the children of a king. 19 And he said, They were my brethren, even the sons of my mother: as the LORD liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you. 20 And he said unto Jether his firstborn, Up, and slay them. But the youth drew not his sword: for he feared, because he was yet a youth. 21 Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, Rise thou, and fall upon us: for as the man is, so is his strength. And Gideon arose, and slew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the ornaments that were on their camels' necks.

   Gideon’s own family were slain by the Midianites and when he told his Son Jether to kill the kings of Midian he could not because he was yet a youth and was afraid to do it.

   Experience can harden a person and Jether had not killed anyone before. Some of that God given fear wears off every time you do something you should not do until you get to the point that it does not bother you anymore.

Rule over us

22 Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also: for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian. 23 And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the LORD shall rule over you. 24 And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you, that ye would give me every man the earrings of his prey. (For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.) 25 And they answered, We will willingly give them. And they spread a garment, and did cast therein every man the earrings of his prey. 26 And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was a thousand and seven hundred shekels of gold; beside ornaments, and collars, and purple raiment that was on the kings of Midian, and beside the chains that were about their camels' necks.

   The Bible clearly states that during the time of the Judges (Gideon was a Judge) that the Judges ruled over Israel and like it or not, God expected Gideon to rule.

   Gideon however wanted the power and the wealth, but he did not want the responsibilities of a ruler. Gideon lived like a King but would not take all the responsibilities a ruler should take, and it led to his weakening as Israel’s leader and eventually theirs as a nation.

Gideon made an Ephod

27 And Gideon made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, even in Ophrah: and all Israel went thither a whoring after it: which thing became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house. 28 Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more. And the country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon.

   Why would Gideon make an Ephod? Was he establishing a state religion with himself as its priests? Notice the lack of biblical understanding in Gideon’s day.

   The people went a whoring after the Ephod. They idolized it and thought it had special powers. Some probably thought it was the Ephod that gave Gideon his great victories and they attributed power and God’s blessings to it.

   Billions of people today are guilty of this same sin in the Roman Catholic Church by having Idols and relics that they go a whoring after.

29 And Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house. 30 And Gideon had threescore and ten sons of his body begotten: for he had many wives. 31 And his concubine that was in Shechem, she also bare him a son, whose name he called Abimelech.

   Gideon had a concubine from Shechem along with many wives and his concubine bare him a son called, get this, Abimelech.

   Abi means “My Father” and Melech means King. Like it or not. Gideon was the ruler in Israel, and it was probably his concubine that gave their son his name, but it seems interesting that Gideon never rejected the name given to his Son in favor of another name.

32 And Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age, and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. 33 And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and went a whoring after Baalim, and made Baalberith their god. 34 And the children of Israel remembered not the LORD their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side: 35 Neither shewed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, namely, Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had shewed unto Israel.

   Over and over, Israel would turn from God to serve the gods of the former inhabitants of the land and God likened it to spiritual adultery.

   God had a marriage relationship with the nation of Israel, and she would continually go back to follow other gods usually as soon as one of her strong leaders would die, as was the case when Jerubbaal died.

Chapter Nine

Abimelech makes his move

1 And Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem unto his mother's brethren, and communed with them, and with all the family of the house of his mother's father, saying, 2 Speak, I pray you, in the ears of all the men of Shechem, Whether is better for you, either that all the sons of Jerubbaal, which are threescore and ten persons, reign over you, or that one reign over you? remember also that I am your bone and your flesh. 3 And his mother's brethren spake of him in the ears of all the men of Shechem all these words: and their hearts inclined to follow Abimelech; for they said, He is our brother. 4 And they gave him threescore and ten pieces of silver out of the house of Baalberith, wherewith Abimelech hired vain and light persons, which followed him. 5 And he went unto his father's house at Ophrah, and slew his brethren the sons of Jerubbaal, being threescore and ten persons, upon one stone: notwithstanding yet Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left; for he hid himself. 6 And all the men of Shechem gathered together, and all the house of Millo, and went, and made Abimelech king, by the plain of the pillar that was in Shechem.

   In one day, Gideon’s family is wiped out, with the exception of his youngest legitimate son Jotham, all by their half-brother Abimelech, the Son of his Gentile concubine.

   Abimelech’s name means, my father is King in Hebrew, I assume that his father named him such but what is interesting is the statement made by his father Gideon (Jerubbaal) when he began to deliver Israel. He said neither he, nor his sons would be king over the children of Israel.

    It is very possible that Abimelech’s mother named him that so as to have some clout among her people. Having Gideon as your boyfriend has some perks that go along with it but having him as the father of your child ensured she would be well taken care of.

   Her son could have some claim to power if not for those seventy Jewish sons that were all ahead of Abimelech. Abimelech soon eliminated all of seed of Gideon with one exception.

The Curse of Jothan

7 And when they told it to Jotham, he went and stood in the top of mount Gerizim, and lifted up his voice, and cried, and said unto them, Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you.

Shechem: Rehoboam is made king in Shechem. Is in mount Ebal: The mount of cursing. See 1st Kings 12:1, 25 and Psalm 60:6.

Mount Gerizim: The mount of blessing for Israel if she kept the law. See Deuteronomy 11:29, 27:12, and Joshua 8:33.

The parable of the four trees

8 The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us. 9 But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?

The olive tree: A dove brings an olive leaf to Noah to let him know that the waters were abated from off the earth. See Genesis 8:11.

10 And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou, and reign over us. 11 But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?

The fig tree: See Genesis 3:7 Adam and Eve sewed fig leaves together to cover their nakedness. It wasn't good enough to cover their sin, so God sacrificed some animals to make coats for a covering for them.

12 Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, and reign over us. 13 And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?

The vine: The Butler tells Joseph his dream in which he sees a vine with three clusters on it that budded. See Genesis 40:9-10.

14 Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, and reign over us. 15 And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon.

The bramble: A dried up bush. See Luke 6:44.

   Abimelech is the Bramble that tried to eradicate the Jewish offspring of Gideon. Gideon was most likely the olive tree in the parable, and his eldest son the fig tree and the vine being Jotham as these trees all, in type, represent Israel in the Bible.

   The wickedness in this son of Gideon to attempt to kill seventy of his half-brothers all in a quest for power. Abimelech had a little taste of what it was like to be the son of the ruler of Israel, and he wanted more to the point he was to commit mass murder to achieve it. Power corrupts, Absolute power corrupts absolutely.

Put your trust in my shadow: To seek protection from another. See Ruth 2:12, Psalm 36:7 and Isaiah 30:2-3.

Let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon: See verse 20 below and Isaiah 2:13.

16 Now therefore, if ye have done truly and sincerely, in that ye have made Abimelech king, and if ye have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house, and have done unto him according to the deserving of his hands; 17 (For my father fought for you, and adventured his life far, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian: 18 And ye are risen up against my father's house this day, and have slain his sons, threescore and ten persons, upon one stone, and have made Abimelech, the son of his maidservant, king over the men of Shechem, because he is your brother;) 19 If ye then have dealt truly and sincerely with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, then rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you: 20 But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the house of Millo; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and from the house of Millo, and devour Abimelech. 21 And Jotham ran away, and fled, and went to Beer, and dwelt there, for fear of Abimelech his brother.

   Jotham prophecy’s Shechem’s destruction if they dealt treacherously with his father because God was with him, and he believed God would avenge their treatment of Gideon’s sons as God did to the enemies of Israel using Gideon as his instrument of vengeance.

   Jotham would now have to flee to save his life and wait to see if God would indeed avenge his brother’s lives for his father Gideon’s sake. He would.

God avenges the house of Gideon (Jerubbaal)

22 When Abimelech had reigned three years over Israel, 23 Then God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech: 24 That the cruelty done to the threescore and ten sons of Jerubbaal might come, and their blood be laid upon Abimelech their brother, which slew them; and upon the men of Shechem, which aided him in the killing of his brethren.

   I love how God will use his enemies to destroy his other enemies, or to avenge his saints. God didn’t raise up an army in Israel to avenge Gideon’s sons, instead he took the co-conspirators with Abimelech and turned them against Abimelech, and they came at him just as Jotham had predicted. God is so good!

25 And the men of Shechem set liers in wait for him in the top of the mountains, and they robbed all that came along that way by them: and it was told Abimelech. 26 And Gaal the son of Ebed came with his brethren, and went over to Shechem: and the men of Shechem put their confidence in him. 27 And they went out into the fields, and gathered their vineyards, and trode the grapes, and made merry, and went into the house of their god, and did eat and drink, and cursed Abimelech. 28 And Gaal the son of Ebed said, Who is Abimelech, and who is Shechem, that we should serve him? is not he the son of Jerubbaal? and Zebul his officer? serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem: for why should we serve him? 29 And would to God this people were under my hand! then would I remove Abimelech. And he said to Abimelech, Increase thine army, and come out. 30 And when Zebul the ruler of the city heard the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, his anger was kindled. 31 And he sent messengers unto Abimelech privily, saying, Behold, Gaal the son of Ebed and his brethren be come to Shechem; and, behold, they fortify the city against thee. 32 Now therefore up by night, thou and the people that is with thee, and lie in wait in the field: 33 And it shall be, that in the morning, as soon as the sun is up, thou shalt rise early, and set upon the city: and, behold, when he and the people that is with him come out against thee, then mayest thou do to them as thou shalt find occasion.

   The problem with being in power is not so much the day-to-day responsibilities of being King, but the constant fear and vigilance necessary to keep the power you have attained from those who are just like you that will do anything to gain power. Abimelech was about to receive a little of what he had dished out.

34 And Abimelech rose up, and all the people that were with him, by night, and they laid wait against Shechem in four companies. 35 And Gaal the son of Ebed went out, and stood in the entering of the gate of the city: and Abimelech rose up, and the people that were with him, from lying in wait. 36 And when Gaal saw the people, he said to Zebul, Behold, there come people down from the top of the mountains. And Zebul said unto him, Thou seest the shadow of the mountains as if they were men. 37 And Gaal spake again and said, See there come people down by the middle of the land, and another company come along by the plain of Meonenim. 38 Then said Zebul unto him, Where is now thy mouth, wherewith thou saidst, Who is Abimelech, that we should serve him? is not this the people that thou hast despised? go out, I pray now, and fight with them. 39 And Gaal went out before the men of Shechem, and fought with Abimelech. 40 And Abimelech chased him, and he fled before him, and many were overthrown and wounded, even unto the entering of the gate. 41 And Abimelech dwelt at Arumah: and Zebul thrust out Gaal and his brethren, that they should not dwell in Shechem. 42 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the people went out into the field; and they told Abimelech. 43 And he took the people, and divided them into three companies, and laid wait in the field, and looked, and, behold, the people were come forth out of the city; and he rose up against them, and smote them. 44 And Abimelech, and the company that was with him, rushed forward, and stood in the entering of the gate of the city: and the two other companies ran upon all the people that were in the fields, and slew them. 45 And Abimelech fought against the city all that day; and he took the city, and slew the people that was therein, and beat down the city, and sowed it with salt. 46 And when all the men of the tower of Shechem heard that, they entered into an hold of the house of the god Berith. 47 And it was told Abimelech, that all the men of the tower of Shechem were gathered together. 48 And Abimelech gat him up to mount Zalmon, he and all the people that were with him; and Abimelech took an axe in his hand, and cut down a bough from the trees, and took it, and laid it on his shoulder, and said unto the people that were with him, What ye have seen me do, make haste, and do as I have done. 49 And all the people likewise cut down every man his bough, and followed Abimelech, and put them to the hold, and set the hold on fire upon them; so that all the men of the tower of Shechem died also, about a thousand men and women.

   While it looks like God was not avenging Gideon’s sons here, he was. God had used Abimelech to destroy the very men of Shechem that supported Abimelech in the first place in the killing of Jotham’s older brothers, he would then turn his vengeance towards Abimelech and punish him for his wickedness.

50 Then went Abimelech to Thebez, and encamped against Thebez, and took it. 51 But there was a strong tower within the city, and thither fled all the men and women, and all they of the city, and shut it to them, and gat them up to the top of the tower. 52 And Abimelech came unto the tower, and fought against it, and went hard unto the door of the tower to burn it with fire. 53 And a certain woman cast a piece of a millstone upon Abimelech's head, and all to brake his skull. 54 Then he called hastily unto the young man his armourbearer, and said unto him, Draw thy sword, and slay me, that men say not of me, A woman slew him. And his young man thrust him through, and he died. 55 And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they departed every man unto his place. 56 Thus God rendered the wickedness of Abimelech, which he did unto his father, in slaying his seventy brethren: 57 And all the evil of the men of Shechem did God render upon their heads: and upon them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal.

   How fortunate for Abimelech to be killed by a woman. This was a disgrace in that day and age and would be talked about unto this day.

   A woman, his mother, no doubt inspired his wicked rise to power and a woman would be the one to take him down. What poetic justice.

Chapter Ten

The Land of Gilead

1 And after Abimelech there arose to defend Israel Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar; and he dwelt in Shamir in mount Ephraim. 2 And he judged Israel twenty and three years, and died, and was buried in Shamir. 3 And after him arose Jair, a Gileadite, and judged Israel twenty and two years. 4 And he had thirty sons that rode on thirty ass colts, and they had thirty cities, which are called Havothjair unto this day, which are in the land of Gilead. 5 And Jair died, and was buried in Camon.

   There is a song called, “There is a balm in Gilead” and it was written to answer the questions posed in Jeremiah 8:22 Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

   The question is a rhetorical question because there was balm there, and there were physicians there as well. Why then could not the health of the daughter of his people be recovered?

   God is speaking about his daughter, the children of Israel, and they sinned greatly in committing spiritual adultery with the gods of the lands they possessed. One of those lands was the land of Gilead to the east of the Jordan River.

   Rueben, Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh remained on the east side of Jordan and Manasseh especially settled in the land of Gilead. It was a land good for cattle.

   Israel dispossessed the land from the Amorites because they came out in battle against the children of Israel when Israel came in peace to go across the river to enter the land of Canaan, but the Amorites would not allow it and the Amorites lost their land and Israel possessed it.

   Israel would eventually lose the land of Gilead as it was closer to their enemies who would invade from the east and it would be the first to fall, but no military on earth could defeat Israel if she was not playing the harlot with the gods of the land, which she was at the time of Jeremiah’s prophecies and those of Isaiah:

6 And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the LORD, and served not him. 7 And 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 children of Ammon. 8 And that year they vexed and oppressed the children of Israel: eighteen years, all the children of Israel that were on the other side Jordan in the land of the Amorites, which is in Gilead. 9 Moreover the children of Ammon passed over Jordan to fight also against Judah, and against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim; so that Israel was sore distressed. 10 And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim. 11 And the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Did not I deliver you from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines? 12 The Zidonians also, and the Amalekites, and the Maonites, did oppress you; and ye cried to me, and I delivered you out of their hand. 13 Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more. 14 Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation.

   When the children of Israel would go so far away from God, he would allow their captivity by their enemies and no amount of pleading would cause God to change his mind because he made a covenant with Israel, and he told them what he would do if they continually went as far as they did.

   This is found in Leviticus chapter twenty-six, and it is commonly referred to as the five courses of Judgment. Israel was in the fourth course of judgment at this time where God would allow Israel’s enemies to chastise them and if they would repent, he would restore them. God used a very unique person to do just that for a time and his name was Jephthah:

15 And the children of Israel said unto the LORD, We have sinned: do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day. 16 And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the LORD: and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel. 17 Then the children of Ammon were gathered together, and encamped in Gilead. And the children of Israel assembled themselves together, and encamped in Mizpeh. 18 And the people and princes of Gilead said one to another, What man is he that will begin to fight against the children of Ammon? he shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.

Chapter Eleven

The Son of an Harlot

1 Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valour, and he was the son of an harlot: and Gilead begat Jephthah. 2 And Gilead's wife bare him sons; and his wife's sons grew up, and they thrust out Jephthah, and said unto him, Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house; for thou art the son of a strange woman. 3 Then Jephthah fled from his brethren, and dwelt in the land of Tob: and there were gathered vain men to Jephthah, and went out with him. 4 And it came to pass in process of time, that the children of Ammon made war against Israel. 5 And it was so, that when the children of Ammon made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob: 6 And they said unto Jephthah, Come, and be our captain, that we may fight with the children of Ammon. 7 And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, Did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my father's house? and why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress? 8 And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, Therefore we turn again to thee now, that thou mayest go with us, and fight against the children of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead. 9 And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, If ye bring me home again to fight against the children of Ammon, and the LORD deliver them before me, shall I be your head? 10 And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, The LORD be witness between us, if we do not so according to thy words. 11 Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and captain over them: and Jephthah uttered all his words before the LORD in Mizpeh.

   What an interesting turn of events, Gilead’s son by a harlot is banished by the legitimate sons of Gilead and his wife(s) and he is forced to flee the area with no inheritance and because he has a group of men that can fight those very same half-brothers come to him when they need someone who can fight and lead them against the children of Ammon.

   God would often raise up some very interesting people to deliver his people.

Jephthah gives the King of Ammon a History lesson

12 And Jephthah sent messengers unto the king of the children of Ammon, saying, What hast thou to do with me, that thou art come against me to fight in my land? 13 And the king of the children of Ammon answered unto the messengers of Jephthah, Because Israel took away my land, when they came up out of Egypt, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and unto Jordan: now therefore restore those lands again peaceably. 14 And Jephthah sent messengers again unto the king of the children of Ammon: 15 And said unto him, Thus saith Jephthah, Israel took not away the land of Moab, nor the land of the children of Ammon: 16 But when Israel came up from Egypt, and walked through the wilderness unto the Red sea, and came to Kadesh; 17 Then Israel sent messengers unto the king of Edom, saying, Let me, I pray thee, pass through thy land: but the king of Edom would not hearken thereto. And in like manner they sent unto the king of Moab: but he would not consent: and Israel abode in Kadesh. 18 Then they went along through the wilderness, and compassed the land of Edom, and the land of Moab, and came by the east side of the land of Moab, and pitched on the other side of Arnon, but came not within the border of Moab: for Arnon was the border of Moab. 19 And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, the king of Heshbon; and Israel said unto him, Let us pass, we pray thee, through thy land into my place. 20 But Sihon trusted not Israel to pass through his coast: but Sihon gathered all his people together, and pitched in Jahaz, and fought against Israel. 21 And the LORD God of Israel delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel, and they smote them: so Israel possessed all the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country. 22 And they possessed all the coasts of the Amorites, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and from the wilderness even unto Jordan. 23 So now the LORD God of Israel hath dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel, and shouldest thou possess it?

   Not the words you would expect coming from the mouth of the rejected son of a prostitute, but he spoke the plain truth. What could the people say against Jephthah? Nothing, so they chose to fight instead.

   They didn’t care about justice, they wanted what they wanted and were prepared to ignore what really happen years ago. There have always been historical revisionists and there always will be.

   The winners and losers always tend to taint the story of history, but the winners are usually the ones writing the new history books.

Let Chemosh deliver you if he can.

24 Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever the LORD our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess. 25 And now art thou any thing better than Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? did he ever strive against Israel, or did he ever fight against them, 26 While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her towns, and in Aroer and her towns, and in all the cities that be along by the coasts of Arnon, three hundred years? why therefore did ye not recover them within that time? 27 Wherefore I have not sinned against thee, but thou doest me wrong to war against me: the LORD the Judge be judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon.

   The LORD the Judge was judge on that day and the children of Israel defeated the children of Ammon on that day because the children of Ammon were sore losers.

   For three hundred years they did nothing because they were not strong enough and now that they saw division in the land of Gilead, they thought they could take advantage of the situation and regain lost territory but as Jephthah said, what the LORD dispossesses they will possess.

Jephthah’s Foolish Vow

28 Howbeit the king of the children of Ammon hearkened not unto the words of Jephthah which he sent him. 29 Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead, and Manasseh, and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over unto the children of Ammon. 30 And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, 31 Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD'S, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering.

   What? Whatever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace Jephthah would offer it up for a burnt offering? Did I read that right? Yep.

   It is not as bad as you think. Jephthah was a farmer and had many animals. Animals would run to meet their master when they would see or hear him returning as he was the one that daily fed them and protected them. Jephthah had no idea what would happen next.

32 So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them; and the LORD delivered them into his hands. 33 And he smote them from Aroer, even till thou come to Minnith, even twenty cities, and unto the plain of the vineyards, with a very great slaughter. Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel. 34 And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she was his only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter. 35 And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the LORD, and I cannot go back.

   Have you ever made a dumb vow to God or someone else? We all have. Today we live in the dispensation of grace, and we are not under the Law.

   Israel at this time was under the Law of Moses and under the Law it was better to not make a vow, than to make a vow and not keep it.

   Jephthah, the mighty conqueror returning from a glorious battle was now faced with the biggest dilemma in his life. To keep his foolish vow, he would have to take his daughters life.

   Did God expect Jephthah to offer his daughter to him? Did God want Jephthah to do such a thing? Absolutely not! God forbids such things in his word.

   Jephthah who was not a very good student of the word of God, did not fully know that God knew what Jephthah meant by his vow.

   Jephthah meant that any animal that came to meet him he would offer as a burnt offering, not his daughter. God is all knowing and did not want a human sacrifice so that Jephthah could literally keep his foolish vow.

36 And she said unto him, My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the LORD, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the LORD hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon. 37 And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done for me: let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows. 38 And he said, Go. And he sent her away for two months: and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. 39 And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed: and she knew no man. And it was a custom in Israel, 40 That the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.

   Did Jephthah actually offer his daughter as a burnt offering? It would appear so. For two months she bewailed that she would never know a man and raise a seed up to her carry on her father’s lineage.

Chapter Twelve

The Men of Ephraim

1 And the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and went northward, and said unto Jephthah, Wherefore passedst thou over to fight against the children of Ammon, and didst not call us to go with thee? we will burn thine house upon thee with fire. 2 And Jephthah said unto them, I and my people were at great strife with the children of Ammon; and when I called you, ye delivered me not out of their hands. 3 And when I saw that ye delivered me not, I put my life in my hands, and passed over against the children of Ammon, and the LORD delivered them into my hand: wherefore then are ye come up unto me this day, to fight against me?

   This is not the first time that the children of Ephraim said something similar to their fellow countrymen. They wanted the glory in the days of Gideon and Gideon calmed them down by praising their valiant efforts against Oreb and Zeeb.

   That stayed their quest for glory momentarily but according to Jephthah he did ask for their help, and it was not given and now they come afterwards and complain.

   They stayed out of the battle not sure who would win and when one won, they could then either side with them or try to defeat them, so they could be the dominant people in the region.

   Ephraim because of its vast population didn’t want the two and a half tribes on the east side to Jordan to be considered the leading tribes in Israel so they came against their own countrymen. What a dysfunctional family Israel was at times with all their in -fighting.

4 Then Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead, and fought with Ephraim: and the men of Gilead smote Ephraim, because they said, Ye Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites, and among the Manassites. 5 And the Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites: and it was so, that when those Ephraimites which were escaped said, Let me go over; that the men of Gilead said unto him, Art thou an Ephraimite? If he said, Nay; 6 Then said they unto him, Say now Shibboleth: and he said Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce it right. Then they took him, and slew him at the passages of Jordan: and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand.

   Forty and two thousand brothers, sons of Jacob died at this time all because of a quest for power. Jephthah did not ask to be born of a harlot, nor to be dispossessed from his brothers in Gilead and now his more distant relatives didn’t want him ruling over Israel either. But God had other plans, Amen?

7 And Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then died Jephthah the Gileadite, and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead. 8 And after him Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel. 9 And he had thirty sons, and thirty daughters, whom he sent abroad, and took in thirty daughters from abroad for his sons. And he judged Israel seven years. 10 Then died Ibzan, and was buried at Bethlehem. 11 And after him Elon, a Zebulonite, judged Israel; and he judged Israel ten years. 12 And Elon the Zebulonite died, and was buried in Aijalon in the country of Zebulun. 13 And after him Abdon the son of Hillel, a Pirathonite, judged Israel. 14 And he had forty sons and thirty nephews, that rode on threescore and ten ass colts: and he judged Israel eight years. 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.

   One after another, God set up judges to rule until the time of the Kings. But before King Saul and King David would come to power God would raise up the most famous Judge of them all, Samson, after a period of forty years of oppression by the hands of the Philistines.

Chapter Thirteen

The Nazarite

Judges 13:1 And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years.

   Over and over the children of Israel (the descendants of Jacob) did evil in the sight of the LORD and God is forced by his love for them to chasten them as a father does his son.

   Notice how long Jacob's descendants are delivered into the hand of the Philistines, 40 years. Gideon ruled Israel for forty years, Israel wondered in the wilderness for forty years, David reigned as king for forty years, over and over the number forty appears in relationship to the nation of Israel and God's dealings with them.

2 And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren, and bare not.

   Notice that the scriptures record that Manoah, whose name means ...., was from the tribe of Dan in the North. They were the first to go into idolatry, but this was many centuries before Dan's fall. God had promised that many would go barren in the times when Israel was doing evil in God's eyes.

3 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son.

   The angel of the LORD is almost always a pre-incarnate appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ as the messenger of Jehovah (angel of the LORD).

   The Bible is full of women who were barren until God supernaturally intervened in their life. They were barren because God withheld them from baring until he wanted them to bear a child for a specific purpose in the life of the nation Israel. Such was the case here.

4 Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing: 5 For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.

   Samson would be a Nazarite from the womb. This did not mean he was from the town of Nazareth where Jesus grew up at, it did not even exist as a town in the time when Samson was born.

   The word Nazarite comes from the root Nazar, which means: To separate. A Nazarite was a separated one.

   Notice that Samson's mother who was commanded not to drink wine (grape juice) or strong drink (fermented grape juice) nor to eat anything that was unclean because Samson would be separated unto God from his mother's womb from those things that would defile him.

   His mother had to keep her unborn child from being defiled by not defiling herself with the fruit of the vine. Samson would of course be told by his parents that he was to continue abstaining from the same things his mother had abstained from while she was with child. He could not rest on his mother's obedience.

  God wanted Samson to stay away from the sin of drunkenness, and the best way to stay away from strong drink (fermented grape juice) was to stay away from wine (grape juice) and the best way to stay away from wine (grape juice) is to stay away from grapes. Where there is no ability to get drunk you will not find drunks. Simple and yet so profound.

   The word Nazar was used numerous times when God was instructing Israel to leave the vineyards uncut (Nazar) or untrimmed during the year of Jubilee and during each Sabbath year. They were not to sow or reap the fields in those years.

   Just what did it mean that he would be a Nazarite from the womb? (Be sure to see the video teaching filmed in the city of Nazareth concerning this subject). Moses taught Israel about the law of the Nazarite in the book of Numbers and his words will shed a lot of light on the life of Samson:

Numbers Chapter Six

1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the LORD: 3 He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried. 4 All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk.

   Was there anything wrong with an Israelite eating grapes, or drinking grape juice? Nothing at all. But what is the next step after grape juice sits awhile?

   Fermentation (death) which turns totally harmless grapes into an intoxicating beverage, and which turns men into drunkards unfit to serve God because the alcohol pollutes the mind and opens it up to an altered state of consciousness that weakens the participant and incapacitates them.

5 All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth himself unto the LORD, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow.

   Why did they have to keep their hair long? The word Nazar in Hebrew means "uncut", just like the field was supposed to be during the Sabbath of rest every seven years. They were walking examples of the Sabbath.

   If someone was speaking with a Nazarite and he had violated the Sabbath by reaping from his fields when they were supposed to rest that year, then he would be convicted by the devotion of the Nazarite and reminded of their own lack of devotion to the Law of God.

6 All the days that he separateth himself unto the LORD he shall come at no dead body. 7 He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister, when they die: because the consecration of his God is upon his head. 8 All the days of his separation he is holy unto the LORD.

  Why does a dead thing defile a living thing? More directly, why does a Nazarite who touches something that has died suddenly become unclean?

   When something is dying, it is decaying! It cannot any longer fight off the diseases associated with dead bodies because it no longer has life.

   God created man to live forever but sin brought about death which is in direct opposition to God who is life. Sin destroys and causes death, so a Nazarite (a separated one) is to stay as far away from sin as possible and death is the culmination of sin.

9 And if any man die very suddenly by him, and he hath defiled the head of his consecration; then he shall shave his head in the day of his cleansing, on the seventh day shall he shave it. 10 And on the eighth day he shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons, to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: 11 And the priest shall offer the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering, and make an atonement for him, for that he sinned by the dead, and shall hallow his head that same day. 12 And he shall consecrate unto the LORD the days of his separation, and shall bring a lamb of the first year for a trespass offering: but the days that were before shall be lost, because his separation was defiled. 13 And this is the law of the Nazarite, when the days of his separation are fulfilled: he shall be brought unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: 14 And he shall offer his offering unto the LORD, one he lamb of the first year without blemish for a burnt offering, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish for a sin offering, and one ram without blemish for peace offerings, 15 And a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, and wafers of unleavened bread anointed with oil, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings. 16 And the priest shall bring them before the LORD, and shall offer his sin offering, and his burnt offering: 17 And he shall offer the ram for a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD, with the basket of unleavened bread: the priest shall offer also his meat offering, and his drink offering. 18 And the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall take the hair of the head of his separation, and put it in the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings.

   Since the hair was an outward symbol of the Nazarite separating himself from sin and death is the result of sin, the Nazarite would have to remove/cut his hair that became defiled ceremoniously by coming in contact with death.

   He was to burn like an offering along with the many sacrifices that he was required to make, and this is only if he came in contact with something that was dead unwillingly or by accident.

    There was no sacrifice for a Nazarite that willfully sinned by either intentionally touching a dead body or drinking or eating something from the vine that he was forbidden by his vow.

19 And the priest shall take the sodden shoulder of the ram, and one unleavened cake out of the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and shall put them upon the hands of the Nazarite, after the hair of his separation is shaven: 20 And the priest shall wave them for a wave offering before the LORD: this is holy for the priest, with the wave breast and heave shoulder: and after that the Nazarite may drink wine. 21 This is the law of the Nazarite who hath vowed, and of his offering unto the LORD for his separation, beside that that his hand shall get: according to the vow which he vowed, so he must do after the law of his separation.

   Once a Nazarite had completed his vow which could last a couple of months or even years, he or she could then cut their hair and partake of wine (unfermented grape juice) not Strong drink (fermented grape juice).

22 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 23 Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, 24 The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: 25 The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: 26 The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. 27 And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.

  This blessing is often used by religious Denominations started by men to pretend to bestow a blessing upon a person as if they had the power to do so today. They do not!

    The context of this blessing is connected to the Nazarite vow. We in the body of Christ are not to take a Nazarite vow today, that was given to Israel. We are not Israel! Now back to Judges:

Judges 13:6 Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible: but I asked him not whence he was, neither told he me his name: 7 But he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean thing: for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death.

   As you noticed from Numbers chapter six, the Nazarite vow was only a part time vow for a specific purpose and when that specific service unto God was complete the person who had taken the Nazarite vow was released from it, but not Samson, he would be a Nazarite from the moment of conception until the moment of his death.

8 Then Manoah intreated the LORD, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born. 9 And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband was not with her. 10 And the woman made haste, and ran, and shewed her husband, and said unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me, that came unto me the other day. 11 And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto him, Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he said, I am. 12 And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass. How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him? 13 And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her beware. 14 She may not eat of any thing that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing: all that I commanded her let her observe.

   No new information is given here concerning how to raise Samson just a reiteration of what was previously told. This served to help Manoah in the years to come not to doubt his wife’s words and cause her to break her part of God's commandment unto them concerning their son.

   When the whole family is going in the same direction serving the Lord then it makes the raising of the children so much easier. Imagine what it would have been like if Manoah didn't believe his wife saw the angel.

  Manoah would have been tempting her all the time to buy some grapes or raisins at the market and to make some wine thus violating the commandment of God on her and their Son and rendering him unfit to begin to deliver Israel from the hands of the Philistines.

15 And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid for thee. 16 And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread: and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the LORD. For Manoah knew not that he was an angel of the LORD.

    Just who exactly was the angel of the LORD we will not answer definitively here but suffice it to say the angel (messenger) was ministering on behalf of the God of Israel, the LORD.

    If it was a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ, then the LORD was not about to reveal that information to Manoah because he didn't have the need to know. He just needed to obey the message from God concerning his Son.

17 And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, What is thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honour? 18 And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret?

   His name was a secret. Let's leave it at that and let God tell us when we get to heaven just exactly who it was. Who it was is not the story, what he said was the story and that is where our focus should be. So many people waste years studying side issues and never deal with the main issue.

19 So Manoah took a kid with a meat offering, and offered it upon a rock unto the LORD: and the angel did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on. 20 For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on it, and fell on their faces to the ground.

   Strange things happened on that day that I will not pretend to say I understand completely because I don’t, but the angel of the LORD sure left a lasting impression on Samson's parents and I am sure Samson heard this story over and over as he grew up letting him know that God had a very important task for him to complete when the time was right.

21 But the angel of the LORD did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was an angel of the LORD. 22 And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God. 23 But his wife said unto him, If the LORD were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands, neither would he have shewed us all these things, nor would as at this time have told us such things as these.

   Praise God for a good help meet to keep Manoah on track. Manoah was so overwhelmed by this event that he didn't take time to think before he spoke.

    That's why God gave men wives, so they could complete them because we would just be reacting without thinking and getting ourselves into more trouble.

24 And the woman bare 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 him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.

   The time had come, and the Spirit of LORD began to move Samson in the camp of Dan when he would see the oppression of the Philistines against his people. God was giving him a burden and he would soon get a gift to go along with it: Great Strength!

   No where do we read in the Scriptures that Samson lifted weights all his life prior to his battles with the Philistines and when he couldn't get any stronger humanly speaking then he was ready to fight the Philistines, it would be when God would need him that he would fight through him because of his separating himself all those years making himself a fit vessel for the LORD'S use.

   I have read commentaries where the writer tries to explain away the miraculous and attributes Samson's strength to his devotion to his grape free diet. How absurd!

Chapter Fourteen

It was of the LORD

1 And Samson went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines. 2 And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife. 3 Then his father and his mother said unto him, Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well. 4 But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the LORD, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.

   It was of the LORD that Samson wanted this Philistine to be his wife because the LORD sought an occasion against the Philistines so that Samson would fight against them.

   Obviously, Samson didn't seem to mind the Philistines dominion over him and his fellow countrymen and had grown accustomed to their bondage just as we can grow accustomed to the bondage of sin, we find ourselves in. It has a way of desensitizing us to its harmful effects.

5 Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath: and, behold, a young lion roared against him. 6 And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done.

   There are two problems here, first Samson is in a vineyard where grapes are grown and harvested for consumption. Since he was a Nazarite, he should have been nowhere near a vineyard that could cause him to violate his Nazarite vow in a moment of weakness.

   Just like us however, we like to stay as close to sin as possible thinking we can handle it and instead we end up ensnared by it.

   The second problem is that Samson killed a lion which meant he had to kill it with his bare hands because the scripture plainly says he didn't have anything in his hand.

   This meant he violated his Nazarite vow unintentionally of course but now sacrifices would have to be made immediately to purify himself which explains why he didn't tell his parents about the incident because he wanted to make sure he got what he was going after, the Philistine woman.

   His parents would have insisted the marriage be put on hold until Samson was purified in God's eyes, but Samson thought that a small thing at this time compared to the burning he had inside for the heathen Philistine woman.

7 And he went down, and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well. 8 And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcase of the lion: and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion. 9 And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcase of the lion.

   Now we have an even bigger dilemma for Samson and his Nazarite vow because the first time he touched a dead animal it was because he was attacked and there was a sacrifice for that in the Law of God but this time he just wanted to satisfy his hunger and he intentionally touched a dead thing and even ate from it and caused others to join him unknowingly in his sin.

10 So his father went down unto the woman: and Samson made there a feast; for so used the young men to do. 11 And it came to pass, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him. 12 And Samson said unto them, I will now put forth a riddle unto you: if ye can certainly declare it me within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty sheets and thirty change of garments: 13 But if ye cannot declare it me, then shall ye give me thirty sheets and thirty change of garments. And they said unto him, Put forth thy riddle, that we may hear it. 14 And he said unto them, Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness. And they could not in three days expound the riddle. 15 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they said unto Samson's wife, Entice thy husband, that he may declare unto us the riddle, lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire: have ye called us to take that we have? is it not so? 16 And Samson's wife wept before him, and said, Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not: thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people, and hast not told it me. And he said unto her, Behold, I have not told it my father nor my mother, and shall I tell it thee? 17 And she wept before him the seven days, while their feast lasted: and it came to pass on the seventh day, that he told her, because she lay sore upon him: and she told the riddle to the children of her people.

  Samson didn't tell it to his own parents for the reasons already stated and now his wife's life was on the line and that of her family and she was distraught and Samson wanted his wife to be joyful at their wedding not in mourning as if it were a funeral but that’s what it was going to be if she did not tell them the riddle.

18 And the men of the city said unto him on the seventh day before the sun went down, What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion? And he said unto them, If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle.

   Samson was very wroth with the thirty men, but he still felt obligated to keep his end of the bargain. God now had Samson not thinking so highly of the Philistines now that he saw what they would do to get their way.

19 And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle. And his anger was kindled, and he went up to his father's house. 20 But Samson's wife was given to his companion, whom he had used as his friend.

   This makes the second time that Samson had the Spirit of the LORD come upon him (notice it came and went as needed which is synonymous with the Baptism with the Spirit that occurred on Pentecost and many other times in the Jewish Kingdom Church. We today are baptized by the Holy Spirit, not with the Holy Spirit and He remains in us until the day of Redemption).

   Samson wasn't a body builder and able to do all these great acts of strength because he didn't cut his hair and he had a great diet free from grapes.

   If that were so Arnold Swartzeneggar wasted his time pumping iron all those years, he should have just got on the Samson diet. Samson did what he did in spite of himself. It was not by his might but by the Spirit of the LORD that Samson did what he did on those days.

   Samson, who is a type of Christ in that he delivered Israel from her enemies, was betrayed for thirty garments just as Christ was betrayed for thirty pieces of silver. He would later be betrayed by another woman close to him for silver pieces as well.

   Now there was a new problem for Samson to deal with but at this point he was unaware that the family of his new wife had given her to a Philistine which was also of the LORD to provoke Samson to have a greater cause against the Philistines.

Chapter Fifteen

Three Hundred Foxes

1 But it came to pass within a while after, in the time of wheat harvest, that Samson visited his wife with a kid; and he said, I will go in to my wife into the chamber. But her father would not suffer him to go in. 2 And her father said, I verily thought that thou hadst utterly hated her; therefore I gave her to thy companion: is not her younger sister fairer than she? take her, I pray thee, instead of her.

   Samson's wedding was disrupted by the thirty young men and their trickery, it was never consummated, and the father was not probably privy to all that had gone on or he would have never given his daughter to one of them to wife.

   There was a lot of confusion on Samson's part and his wife’s parents, and I am sure with Samson's parents as well. I believe they probably were instrumental in getting Samson to return home after his leaving to get the thirty pieces of raiment for the Philistines. Now Samson would seek his revenge. Now God had a cause for Samson to fight against the Philistines.

3 And Samson said concerning them, Now shall I be more blameless than the Philistines, though I do them a displeasure. 4 And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took firebrands, and turned tail to tail, and put a firebrand in the midst between two tails. 5 And when he had set the brands on fire, he let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards and olives.

   Three hundred foxes could get the job done for sure. Remember God was with Samson in this endeavor and that is the only way he was going to catch 300 foxes and tie them to brands to accomplish this. Don't ask me to explain it, ask God someday. Just believe it.

6 Then the Philistines said, Who hath done this? And they answered, Samson, the son in law of the Timnite, because he had taken his wife, and given her to his companion. And the Philistines came up, and burnt her and her father with fire.

   Since there fields were all burnt because of the actions of this man they decided to burn him and his daughter. They also knew that they would anger Samson but at this time all of his exploits were unknown to them, and again Samson would have to have his vengeance.

   All of this was only furthering God's cause to help the nation of Israel to be delivered from the hands of the Philistines. Don't think for a second that Samson is fighting against the Philistines because he wants to do God's will here because he isn't. Samson is acting out of anger and now hatred. Soon he will see how blind he has become.

7 And Samson said unto them, Though ye have done this, yet will I be avenged of you, and after that I will cease. 8 And he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter: and he went down and dwelt in the top of the rock Etam. 9 Then the Philistines went up, and pitched in Judah, and spread themselves in Lehi. 10 And the men of Judah said, Why are ye come up against us? And they answered, To bind Samson are we come up, to do to him as he hath done to us. 11 Then three thousand men of Judah went to the top of the rock Etam, and said to Samson, Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? what is this that thou hast done unto us? And he said unto them, As they did unto me, so have I done unto them. 12 And they said unto him, We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines. And Samson said unto them, Swear unto me, that ye will not fall upon me yourselves. 13 And they spake unto him, saying, No; but we will bind thee fast, and deliver thee into their hand: but surely we will not kill thee. And they bound him with two new cords, and brought him up from the rock.

   He was trying to deliver his people, although for his own selfish reasons and they didn't not receive him just as Jesus came unto his own and his own received him not.

14 And when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him: and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands. 15 And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith. 16 And Samson said, With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men. 17 And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking, that he cast away the jawbone out of his hand, and called that place Ramathlehi.

   One thousand people this time, hundreds probably the last time and thirty the first time, all great feats but none accomplished because of his own strength for it was the Spirit of the LORD that had come upon him mightily. A miracle is simply God doing what would be impossible for a man to do.

18 And he was sore athirst, and called on the LORD, and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised? 19 But God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived: wherefore he called the name thereof Enhakkore, which is in Lehi unto this day. 20 And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years.

   What an unusual way for God to give water unto a Nazarite from the jawbone of a dead ass. First of all, Nazarites weren't supposed to touch dead things, but Samson does repeatedly. Just like us. God can still use us even though we haven't totally separated ourselves from the world.

Chapter Fifteen

The Gate of the City

1 Then went Samson to Gaza, and saw there an harlot, and went in unto her. 2 And it was told the Gazites, saying, Samson is come hither. And they compassed him in, and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city, and were quiet all the night, saying, In the morning, when it is day, we shall kill him. 3 And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, and took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all, and put them upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of an hill that is before Hebron.

   They had one plan, but God had another. I'll bet they were surprised when they awoke and noticed that the gates of the city were gone.

   No man could do what Samson did, and they should have figured that out by then, but the devil keeps attacking and blinding the very same people he uses to attack God's people.

   They thought they could prevail against Samson, and they felt safe with the gates separating them from Samson, but it was God who prevailed against his enemies on this day. Does that remind you of something Jesus said to Peter about some gates? It should.

4 And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. 5 And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her, Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth, and by what means we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him: and we will give thee every one of us eleven hundred pieces of silver.

   Every man is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Samson's main lust was for Philistine women. Samson should have used his discipline to refrain from the fruit of the vine to help him stay clear of the fruit of the flesh. The lust of the flesh is by far the hardest vice to conquer once you get to close to it and let your guard down.

6 And Delilah said to Samson, Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth, and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee. 7 And Samson said unto her, If they bind me with seven green withs that were never dried, then shall I be weak, and be as another man. 8 Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven green withs which had not been dried, and she bound him with them. 9 Now there were men lying in wait, abiding with her in the chamber. And she said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he brake the withs, as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire. So his strength was not known.

   After Samson had gone to sleep Delilah bound Samson as she was told but Samson had learned from his Philistine wife that they could not be trusted. I am sure her questioning of Samson probably clued him into her intentions.

10 And Delilah said unto Samson, Behold, thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou mightest be bound. 11 And he said unto her, If they bind me fast with new ropes that never were occupied, then shall I be weak, and be as another man. 12 Delilah therefore took new ropes, and bound him therewith, and said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And there were liers in wait abiding in the chamber. And he brake them from off his arms like a thread.

   It boggles my mind why Samson kept playing this game with Delilah instead of just telling her to leave. She obviously didn't have his best interest at heart. You would think Samson would have to be drunk contrary to his Nazarite vow in order for this to keep happening, but it does.

13 And Delilah said unto Samson, Hitherto thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound. And he said unto her, If thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web. 14 And she fastened it with the pin, and said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awaked out of his sleep, and went away with the pin of the beam, and with the web. 15 And she said unto him, How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart is not with me? thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength lieth. 16 And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, so that his soul was vexed unto death; 17 That he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man.

   Why did Samson think the results would be any different this time just because he told Delilah the truth? The man woke up three times bond by Delilah and now he for some reason trusted her.

18 And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he hath shewed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought money in their hand. 19 And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him.

   While Samson had long hair throughout the story, he was not able to perform any great feats of strength unless the Spirit of the LORD would come upon him. Once he agreed to tell Delilah the source of his strength, he basically gave her the green light to cut off his power.

   To take from him the only part of his vow that he hadn't violated until now. He should have never told her the details of his vow, so she could use it against him, but he did.

20 And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him. 21 But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house.

   Sin will find you and if you let it, it will bind you, then it will blind you just before it grinds you as Samson spend his last days grinding in the prison house.

22 Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven. 23 Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand. 24 And when the people saw him, they praised their god: for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us.

   Because Samson was weak, he compromised what he knew to be right. God who is all knowing knew this before he was ever born and used Samson in spite of himself to begin to bring deliverance to his people.

25 And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made them sport: and they set him between the pillars.

   Samson was being mocked because he was weak in following his LORD. Satan thought he had won the battle against the LORD's deliverer, but God had one more secret up his sleeve.

26 And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them. 27 Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines were there; and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport. 28 And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.

   Still Samson was wanting vengeance for how he had been wronged by the Philistines. Samson was not pleading for strength to destroy the enemy of God and his people, but he wanted to kill them because he could not see anymore.

   God still used this self-centered man to accomplish his will just as he has used a many Pagan King to do his will, whatever it may be. His heart after all is in the hand of the LORD and he turns it however he pleases.

29 And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left. 30 And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life.

   This is the third time Samson talks with the LORD in his little over twenty-year ministry. Perhaps things would have gone better for him had he talked to God more often and especially if he had listened to him.

   Am I saying Samson would have lived a long prosperous life? No! Of course not, but instead of God using Samson in spite of his weaknesses he could have been a good example of what a Nazarite was instead what he became which was a whoremonger who didn't take his vows of separation to seriously.

   It would have been better for Samson to have had an honourable life and died as a soldier fighting for Israel's deliverance to be remembered by, not a life of compromise and vengeance for how he had been done wrong by the Philistines.

31 Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought him up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the buryingplace of Manoah his father. And he judged Israel twenty years.

   Israel was able to bury Samson because the leaders and many of the lords of the Philistines were now dead. Israel would have a brief time of relief from the persecution from her enemies.

   Let that be a lesson unto us all, when we win a battle don't think the war is over because Satan hasn't surrendered, he has only retreated, regrouped, and is concocting a new plan of attack for the future.

   I leave you with the last words spoken about by Samson and they are words found in the great hall of faith as many call it.

   Chapter Eleven of the book of Hebrews, Samson's name makes it in there because he could have said "I don't think the LORD will give me victory" and he could have stayed at home and never been the deliverer that God chose him to be in spite of all his blemishes, but he didn’t.

Hebrews 11:32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: 33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: 36 And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; 38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. 39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

Chapter Seventeen

Micah and his Hireling

1 And there was a man of mount Ephraim, whose name was Micah. 2 And he said unto his mother, The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from thee, about which thou cursedst, and spakest of also in mine ears, behold, the silver is with me; I took it. And his mother said, Blessed be thou of the LORD, my son. 3 And when he had restored the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, his mother said, I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the LORD from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image: now therefore I will restore it unto thee. 4 Yet he restored the money unto his mother; and his mother took two hundred shekels of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image: and they were in the house of Micah. 5 And the man Micah had an house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest.

   Micah being led by his mother had a house of gods, (a house of graven images) he also had an ephod, and a teraphim (religious vestments worn by a priest) and he chose one of his sons to be his priest and consecrated him.

6 In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes. 7 And there was a young man out of Bethlehemjudah of the family of Judah, who was a Levite, and he sojourned there. 8 And the man departed out of the city from Bethlehemjudah to sojourn where he could find a place: and he came to mount Ephraim to the house of Micah, as he journeyed. 9 And Micah said unto him, Whence comest thou? And he said unto him, I am a Levite of Bethlehemjudah, and I go to sojourn where I may find a place. 10 And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten shekels of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals. So the Levite went in. 11 And the Levite was content to dwell with the man; and the young man was unto him as one of his sons. 12 And Micah consecrated the Levite; and the young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah. 13 Then said Micah, Now know I that the LORD will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest.

   Micah thought it better for him to be blessed if he had a Levite to be a priest and he said be unto me a Father and a Priest, doesn’t this sound like a very large denomination that dates way back who has priest called Fathers and has houses full of graven images? Yes, it does!

    Although the man was a Levite, he was a hireling. He did not serve the LORD because he turned his back on truth all for the sake of ten shekels of silver and a suit of apparel.

Chapter Eighteen

Hold thy Peace Priest

1 In those days there was no king in Israel: and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in; for unto that day all their inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel. 2 And the children of Dan sent of their family five men from their coasts, men of valour, from Zorah, and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land, and to search it; and they said unto them, Go, search the land: who when they came to mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, they lodged there. 3 When they were by the house of Micah, they knew the voice of the young man the Levite: and they turned in thither, and said unto him, Who brought thee hither? and what makest thou in this place? and what hast thou here? 4 And he said unto them, Thus and thus dealeth Micah with me, and hath hired me, and I am his priest. 5 And they said unto him, Ask counsel, we pray thee, of God, that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous. 6 And the priest said unto them, Go in peace: before the LORD is your way wherein ye go. 7 Then the five men departed, and came to Laish, and saw the people that were therein, how they dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; and there was no magistrate in the land, that might put them to shame in any thing; and they were far from the Zidonians, and had no business with any man. 8 And they came unto their brethren to Zorah and Eshtaol: and their brethren said unto them, What say ye? 9 And they said, Arise, that we may go up against them: for we have seen the land, and, behold, it is very good: and are ye still? be not slothful to go, and to enter to possess the land. 10 When ye go, ye shall come unto a people secure, and to a large land: for God hath given it into your hands; a place where there is no want of any thing that is in the earth. 11 And there went from thence of the family of the Danites, out of Zorah and out of Eshtaol, six hundred men appointed with weapons of war. 12 And they went up, and pitched in Kirjathjearim, in Judah: wherefore they called that place Mahanehdan unto this day: behold, it is behind Kirjathjearim. 13 And they passed thence unto mount Ephraim, and came unto the house of Micah. 14 Then answered the five men that went to spy out the country of Laish, and said unto their brethren, Do ye know that there is in these houses an ephod, and teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten image? now therefore consider what ye have to do. 15 And they turned thitherward, and came to the house of the young man the Levite, even unto the house of Micah, and saluted him. 16 And the six hundred men appointed with their weapons of war, which were of the children of Dan, stood by the entering of the gate. 17 And the five men that went to spy out the land went up, and came in thither, and took the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image: and the priest stood in the entering of the gate with the six hundred men that were appointed with weapons of war. 18 And these went into Micah's house, and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image. Then said the priest unto them, What do ye? 19 And they said unto him, Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest: is it better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel? 20 And the priest's heart was glad, and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people.

    If the Priest would just hold his peace and be a priest and a Father to a tribe that is sinning then he would get a very large pay raise and have prestige as the priest of a tribe, kind of like a Cardinal or a Bishop in the Catholic Church.

   Now he was moving away from his humble beginnings in his little Parish in Laish to his new job over the archdiocese of the Tribe of Dan, the Tribe that would one-day lead Israel into Idol worship and be punished by the LORD for that very thing. Notice also that he had a graven image which many in Judaism and Catholicism say they are not idols, they are just aides to worship.

   Sure, they are, If they look like an idol, and can’t talk like all the other idols which can’t talk either then it’s an idol, and the last time I read Exodus twenty it still said, Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.

21 So they turned and departed, and put the little ones and the cattle and the carriage before them. 22 And when they were a good way from the house of Micah, the men that were in the houses near to Micah's house were gathered together, and overtook the children of Dan. 23 And they cried unto the children of Dan. And they turned their faces, and said unto Micah, What aileth thee, that thou comest with such a company? 24 And he said, Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away: and what have I more? and what is this that ye say unto me, What aileth thee? 25 And the children of Dan said unto him, Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows run upon thee, and thou lose thy life, with the lives of thy household. 26 And the children of Dan went their way: and when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back unto his house. 27 And they took the things which Micah had made, and the priest which he had, and came unto Laish, unto a people that were at quiet and secure: and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire. 28 And there was no deliverer, because it was far from Zidon, and they had no business with any man; and it was in the valley that lieth by Bethrehob. And they built a city, and dwelt therein. 29 And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born unto Israel: howbeit the name of the city was Laish at the first. 30 And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land. 31 And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

    All the while the true house of God was in Shiloh Dan worshipped in what sounded like the real deal, but it was a counterfeit, just like the Catholic Church does today with her images and priests called Fathers.

   Don’t get mad at me for pointing out the similarities, I didn’t make their graven images, the Catholic Church did. Be mad at them and come out from among them and be ye separate.

Chapter Nineteen

The Sons of Belial

1 And it came to pass in those days, when there was no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite sojourning on the side of mount Ephraim, who took to him a concubine out of Bethlehemjudah. 2 And his concubine played the whore against him, and went away from him unto her father's house to Bethlehemjudah, and was there four whole months. 3 And her husband arose, and went after her, to speak friendly unto her, and to bring her again, having his servant with him, and a couple of asses: and she brought him into her father's house: and when the father of the damsel saw him, he rejoiced to meet him. 4 And his father in law, the damsel's father, retained him; and he abode with him three days: so they did eat and drink, and lodged there. 5 And it came to pass on the fourth day, when they arose early in the morning, that he rose up to depart: and the damsel's father said unto his son in law, Comfort thine heart with a morsel of bread, and afterward go your way. 6 And they sat down, and did eat and drink both of them together: for the damsel's father had said unto the man, Be content, I pray thee, and tarry all night, and let thine heart be merry. 7 And when the man rose up to depart, his father in law urged him: therefore he lodged there again. 8 And he arose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart: and the damsel's father said, Comfort thine heart, I pray thee. And they tarried until afternoon, and they did eat both of them. 9 And when the man rose up to depart, he, and his concubine, and his servant, his father in law, the damsel's father, said unto him, Behold, now the day draweth toward evening, I pray you tarry all night: behold, the day groweth to an end, lodge here, that thine heart may be merry; and to morrow get you early on your way, that thou mayest go home. 10 But the man would not tarry that night, but he rose up and departed, and came over against Jebus, which is Jerusalem; and there were with him two asses saddled, his concubine also was with him.

   Jebus was the name of the city of the Jebusites. They were idol worshipping pagans who were not destroyed when Joshua entered into the land with the children of Israel, and they later became porters at the house of the LORD when David and Solomon reigned.

   It is hard to picture a land of Israel without Jerusalem as their Capital but that is the way it was until David’s day.

11 And when they were by Jebus, the day was far spent; and the servant said unto his master, Come, I pray thee, and let us turn in into this city of the Jebusites, and lodge in it. 12 And his master said unto him, We will not turn aside hither into the city of a stranger, that is not of the children of Israel; we will pass over to Gibeah.

   The Levite did not want to spend the night in a Pagan city, and what started out to be a good principle for him to follow by wanting to lodge in a city that followed the same God as he did, turned out to be a terrible night in Israel’s (especially Benjamin’s) history.

13 And he said unto his servant, Come, and let us draw near to one of these places to lodge all night, in Gibeah, or in Ramah. 14 And they passed on and went their way; and the sun went down upon them when they were by Gibeah, which belongeth to Benjamin. 15 And they turned aside thither, to go in and to lodge in Gibeah: and when he went in, he sat him down in a street of the city: for there was no man that took them into his house to lodging. 16 And, behold, there came an old man from his work out of the field at even, which was also of mount Ephraim; and he sojourned in Gibeah: but the men of the place were Benjamites. 17 And when he had lifted up his eyes, he saw a wayfaring man in the street of the city: and the old man said, Whither goest thou? and whence comest thou? 18 And he said unto him, We are passing from Bethlehemjudah toward the side of mount Ephraim; from thence am I: and I went to Bethlehemjudah, but I am now going to the house of the LORD; and there is no man that receiveth me to house. 19 Yet there is both straw and provender for our asses; and there is bread and wine also for me, and for thy handmaid, and for the young man which is with thy servants: there is no want of any thing. 20 And the old man said, Peace be with thee; howsoever let all thy wants lie upon me; only lodge not in the street. 21 So he brought him into his house, and gave provender unto the asses: and they washed their feet, and did eat and drink. 22 Now as they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, certain sons of Belial, beset the house round about, and beat at the door, and spake to the master of the house, the old man, saying, Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him. 23 And the man, the master of the house, went out unto them, and said unto them, Nay, my brethren, nay, I pray you, do not so wickedly; seeing that this man is come into mine house, do not this folly. 24 Behold, here is my daughter a maiden, and his concubine; them I will bring out now, and humble ye them, and do with them what seemeth good unto you: but unto this man do not so vile a thing. 25 But the men would not hearken to him: so the man took his concubine, and brought her forth unto them; and they knew her, and abused her all the night until the morning: and when the day began to spring, they let her go. 26 Then came the woman in the dawning of the day, and fell down at the door of the man's house where her lord was, till it was light. 27 And her lord rose up in the morning, and opened the doors of the house, and went out to go his way: and, behold, the woman his concubine was fallen down at the door of the house, and her hands were upon the threshold. 28 And he said unto her, Up, and let us be going. But none answered. Then the man took her up upon an ass, and the man rose up, and gat him unto his place. 29 And when he was come into his house, he took a knife, and laid hold on his concubine, and divided her, together with her bones, into twelve pieces, and sent her into all the coasts of Israel. 30 And it was so, that all that saw it said, There was no such deed done nor seen from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt unto this day: consider of it, take advice, and speak your minds.

   The first sin of Benjamin towards the Levite was that they were not hospitable to one of their own countrymen. A countryman who had need of nothing for himself or animals to eat, just a place to lay his head to sleep for him, his concubine, and his servant.

   The second sin of course is that this was no ordinary man, but he was a Levite who Israel was sworn to support but this just goes to show you how far people can turn from the LORD in just a generation.

   How many times must Israel go into sin and be delivered by a Judge sent by the LORD before they would learn their lesson?

   This was just another time in Israel’s history that serves as an example to all that you can’t rest on old achievements, but you must continue to serve the LORD all of your days and encourage your children to do the same. According to the last verse this was Israel’s lowest point up to date in the land.

Chapter Twenty

The Children of Belial

1 Then all the children of Israel went out, and the congregation was gathered together as one man, from Dan even to Beersheba, with the land of Gilead, unto the LORD in Mizpeh. 2 And the chief of all the people, even of all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand footmen that drew sword. 3 (Now the children of Benjamin heard that the children of Israel were gone up to Mizpeh.) Then said the children of Israel, Tell us, how was this wickedness? 4 And the Levite, the husband of the woman that was slain, answered and said, I came into Gibeah that belongeth to Benjamin, I and my concubine, to lodge. 5 And the men of Gibeah rose against me, and beset the house round about upon me by night, and thought to have slain me: and my concubine have they forced, that she is dead. 6 And I took my concubine, and cut her in pieces, and sent her throughout all the country of the inheritance of Israel: for they have committed lewdness and folly in Israel. 7 Behold, ye are all children of Israel; give here your advice and counsel. 8 And all the people arose as one man, saying, We will not any of us go to his tent, neither will we any of us turn into his house. 9 But now this shall be the thing which we will do to Gibeah; we will go up by lot against it; 10 And we will take ten men of an hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, and an hundred of a thousand, and a thousand out of ten thousand, to fetch victual for the people, that they may do, when they come to Gibeah of Benjamin, according to all the folly that they have wrought in Israel. 11 So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, knit together as one man. 12 And the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying, What wickedness is this that is done among you? 13 Now therefore deliver us the men, the children of Belial, which are in Gibeah, that we may put them to death, and put away evil from Israel. But the children of Benjamin would not hearken to the voice of their brethren the children of Israel: 14 But the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together out of the cities unto Gibeah, to go out to battle against the children of Israel. 15 And the children of Benjamin were numbered at that time out of the cities twenty and six thousand men that drew sword, beside the inhabitants of Gibeah, which were numbered seven hundred chosen men. 16 Among all this people there were seven hundred chosen men lefthanded; every one could sling stones at an hair breadth, and not miss. 17 And the men of Israel, beside Benjamin, were numbered four hundred thousand men that drew sword: all these were men of war. 18 And the children of Israel arose, and went up to the house of God, and asked counsel of God, and said, Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin? And the LORD said, Judah shall go up first.

   A united effort in Israel against wickedness! What a rare sight in Israel at any time. They even went and asked of God who it was that should lead them.

   Judah was God’s choice, and this choice would remain at the forefront of their minds as the youngest son of Jesse would one day be anointed as King from Judah as God had promised that the sceptre would not depart from Judah until Shiloh (the Saviour) should come.

   God was conditioning the minds of the people to Israel to eventually accept a King from another tribe to rule over them.

   It is interesting that the tribe of Benjamin is a key player in this story as it is again at the onset of the reign of the Kings of Israel when the people want a King like everyone else, and God allows them to have the one.

   The tribe of Benjamin does not do so well for quite some time in God’s eyes.

19 And the children of Israel rose up in the morning, and encamped against Gibeah. 20 And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin; and the men of Israel put themselves in array to fight against them at Gibeah. 21 And the children of Benjamin came forth out of Gibeah, and destroyed down to the ground of the Israelites that day twenty and two thousand men. 22 And the people the men of Israel encouraged themselves, and set their battle again in array in the place where they put themselves in array the first day. 23 (And the children of Israel went up and wept before the LORD until even, and asked counsel of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up again to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother? And the LORD said, Go up against him.) 24 And the children of Israel came near against the children of Benjamin the second day. 25 And Benjamin went forth against them out of Gibeah the second day, and destroyed down to the ground of the children of Israel again eighteen thousand men; all these drew the sword. 26 Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up, and came unto the house of God, and wept, and sat there before the LORD, and fasted that day until even, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. 27 And the children of Israel enquired of the LORD, (for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days, 28 And Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days,) saying, Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease? And the LORD said, Go up; for to morrow I will deliver them into thine hand. 29 And Israel set liers in wait round about Gibeah. 30 And the children of Israel went up against the children of Benjamin on the third day, and put themselves in array against Gibeah, as at other times. 31 And the children of Benjamin went out against the people, and were drawn away from the city; and they began to smite of the people, and kill, as at other times, in the highways, of which one goeth up to the house of God, and the other to Gibeah in the field, about thirty men of Israel. 32 And the children of Benjamin said, They are smitten down before us, as at the first. But the children of Israel said, Let us flee, and draw them from the city unto the highways. 33 And all the men of Israel rose up out of their place, and put themselves in array at Baaltamar: and the liers in wait of Israel came forth out of their places, even out of the meadows of Gibeah. 34 And there came against Gibeah ten thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and the battle was sore: but they knew not that evil was near them. 35 And the LORD smote Benjamin before Israel: and the children of Israel destroyed of the Benjamites that day twenty and five thousand and an hundred men: all these drew the sword. 36 So the children of Benjamin saw that they were smitten: for the men of Israel gave place to the Benjamites, because they trusted unto the liers in wait which they had set beside Gibeah. 37 And the liers in wait hasted, and rushed upon Gibeah; and the liers in wait drew themselves along, and smote all the city with the edge of the sword. 38 Now there was an appointed sign between the men of Israel and the liers in wait, that they should make a great flame with smoke rise up out of the city. 39 And when the men of Israel retired in the battle, Benjamin began to smite and kill of the men of Israel about thirty persons: for they said, Surely they are smitten down before us, as in the first battle. 40 But when the flame began to arise up out of the city with a pillar of smoke, the Benjamites looked behind them, and, behold, the flame of the city ascended up to heaven. 41 And when the men of Israel turned again, the men of Benjamin were amazed: for they saw that evil was come upon them. 42 Therefore they turned their backs before the men of Israel unto the way of the wilderness; but the battle overtook them; and them which came out of the cities they destroyed in the midst of them. 43 Thus they inclosed the Benjamites round about, and chased them, and trode them down with ease over against Gibeah toward the sunrising. 44 And there fell of Benjamin eighteen thousand men; all these were men of valour. 45 And they turned and fled toward the wilderness unto the rock of Rimmon: and they gleaned of them in the highways five thousand men; and pursued hard after them unto Gidom, and slew two thousand men of them. 46 So that all which fell that day of Benjamin were twenty and five thousand men that drew the sword; all these were men of valour. 47 But six hundred men turned and fled to the wilderness unto the rock Rimmon, and abode in the rock Rimmon four months. 48 And the men of Israel turned again upon the children of Benjamin, and smote them with the edge of the sword, as well the men of every city, as the beast, and all that came to hand: also they set on fire all the cities that they came to.

   Why didn’t the men of Israel ask the LORD how should we go up against the armies of Benjamin to defeat them instead of asking who will be our glorious tribe to lead us against Benjamin? Israel was humbled on the first day of battle and they ran back to the place where the Ark was and asked the LORD the wrong question again, shall we go up again to fight against Benjamin?

    Of course, the answer was going to be yes, the LORD was not going to let Benjamin off with no punishment having routed the armies of Israel two times in two days.

   So, the people after their second defeat came back to Phinehas the Son of Eleazer and he asked the LORD if Israel should continue to go against Benjamin, or should they cease, and the LORD finally told them that on the third day he would give Israel victory over Benjamin.

   It would be after three days that the LORD Jesus would one day win a great victory over sin, the grave, and his enemy, the Devil, when he would rise from the dead as Israel’s Deliverer and Saviour.

Chapter Twenty-one

No Daughters for Benjamin

1 Now the men of Israel had sworn in Mizpeh, saying, There shall not any of us give his daughter unto Benjamin to wife. 2 And the people came to the house of God, and abode there till even before God, and lifted up their voices, and wept sore; 3 And said, O LORD God of Israel, why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be to day one tribe lacking in Israel? 4 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the people rose early, and built there an altar, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. 5 And the children of Israel said, Who is there among all the tribes of Israel that came not up with the congregation unto the LORD? For they had made a great oath concerning him that came not up to the LORD to Mizpeh, saying, He shall surely be put to death.

   There was an everyman draft, and the punishment was not imprisonment, but death. This would end up costing those of Jabeshgilead their lives and that of their wives and sons, but the men of Israel would take of their daughters enough to maintain Benjamin as a tribe, so they would not have their name blotted out in Israel.

The Women of Jabeshgilead

6 And the children of Israel repented them for Benjamin their brother, and said, There is one tribe cut off from Israel this day. 7 How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing we have sworn by the LORD that we will not give them of our daughters to wives? 8 And they said, What one is there of the tribes of Israel that came not up to Mizpeh to the LORD? And, behold, there came none to the camp from Jabeshgilead to the assembly. 9 For the people were numbered, and, behold, there were none of the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead there. 10 And the congregation sent thither twelve thousand men of the valiantest, and commanded them, saying, Go and smite the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead with the edge of the sword, with the women and the children. 11 And this is the thing that ye shall do, Ye shall utterly destroy every male, and every woman that hath lain by man. 12 And they found among the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead four hundred young virgins, that had known no man by lying with any male: and they brought them unto the camp to Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan. 13 And the whole congregation sent some to speak to the children of Benjamin that were in the rock Rimmon, and to call peaceably unto them. 14 And Benjamin came again at that time; and they gave them wives which they had saved alive of the women of Jabeshgilead: and yet so they sufficed them not.

   The men of Jabeshgilead decided to sit this battle out against Benjamin their brothers in Israel but what they failed to realize was the message that sent to their own people and to the rest in Israel.

   The message was that they condoned what Benjamin did in going to war against Israel after they (the Tribe of Benjamin) turned a blind eye to what the men of Gibeah did unto the Levites concubine and intended to do unto him.

  They wanted to sodomize the Levite just like the men of Sodom wanted to Sodomize (to know) the angels that came to warn Lot of the coming destruction.

   Four hundred men of Benjamin remained at the rock of Rimmon, and they had lost their family in the battle against Israel all because they wanted to defend these Sodomites who were defiling the land.

   Remember the LORD thrust the Canaanites out of the land for this very same thing and he destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.

   Once Israel had come against the city of Jabeshgilead for their refusal to fight against the wickedness in Israel they saved four hundred young women alive who were virgins and gave them unto the men of Benjamin.

   They were hold up at the rock of Rimmon so that Benjamin would not be blotted out as a tribe because they could not give of their own daughters unto the men of Benjamin because of their oath which they swore because of their anger over Benjamin condoning the great wickedness of the men in Gibeah.

The Daughters of Shilol

15 And the people repented them for Benjamin, because that the LORD had made a breach in the tribes of Israel. 16 Then the elders of the congregation said, How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing the women are destroyed out of Benjamin? 17 And they said, There must be an inheritance for them that be escaped of Benjamin, that a tribe be not destroyed out of Israel. 18 Howbeit we may not give them wives of our daughters: for the children of Israel have sworn, saying, Cursed be he that giveth a wife to Benjamin. 19 Then they said, Behold, there is a feast of the LORD in Shiloh yearly in a place which is on the north side of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah. 20 Therefore they commanded the children of Benjamin, saying, Go and lie in wait in the vineyards; 21 And see, and, behold, if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in dances, then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin. 22 And it shall be, when their fathers or their brethren come unto us to complain, that we will say unto them, Be favourable unto them for our sakes: because we reserved not to each man his wife in the war: for ye did not give unto them at this time, that ye should be guilty. 23 And the children of Benjamin did so, and took them wives, according to their number, of them that danced, whom they caught: and they went and returned unto their inheritance, and repaired the cities, and dwelt in them. 24 And the children of Israel departed thence at that time, every man to his tribe and to his family, and they went out from thence every man to his inheritance. 25 In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

   What an interesting way to end the book of Judges with such a gut-wrenching story of the depravity of man. First Israel had forgotten the LORD and the men of Belial that were in Gibeah had free reign in that city of Benjamin and the people of Benjamin just accepted it as normal.

   How far had they come? God had cast their enemies out of the land for these very same practices and warned Israel if they did the same thing that he would do the same to them.

   What was the main teaching we should get out of this story? Personally, we should not condone sin in our own lives or in those closest to us or in our nation, but corporately the lesson we need to see in the scope of God’s overall plan for the nation of Israel.

   And that plan is that God made a nation out of Abram, and through his nation a child would be born who would be the Saviour of the world.

    Through that nation of imperfect people such as the tribe of Benjamin, God was going to fulfill his promise to make them a nation of Kings and Priests to the Gentiles.

   That future Kingdom will be ruled by the King of kings and LORD of Lords and no sinful act of a single man, group of men or tribe was going to stop what the LORD has instore for this world in the future in the soon coming Kingdom.

The End

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 To submit this test simply copy and paste the questions with the answers typed in bold font and send them to:

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Judges Tests 5.25 Credit hours

Chapter One Test

1. Why was Judah probably selected to go up first and lead in battle?

2. Why did Judah and Simeon go up and fight together?

3. How many cities were the priests given from Judah, Benjamin, and Simeon's land?

4. What did Israel do to Adonibezek when they caught him?

5.  What was the name of Hebron before?

6.Who were Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai?

7.  Why did God at times demand that Israel utterly destroy both man, woman, and child in many places?

8. What did Caleb say he would give to the person that smiteth Kirjathsepher, and taketh it?

9. Who took Kirhathsepher?

10.Who got the city of Hebron as their inheritance?

11. What group of people were not destroyed in Jerusalem and remained there for a very long time?

12. Name three things that Bethel was known for?

Chapter Two Test

1. Who is the angel of the LORD that came up from Gilgal to Bochim?

2. What happened to the generation which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel?

3. What did the LORD do to Israel because of this?

4. What would happen after a judge would die?

5. What did the LORD say he would do because they worshipped other gods?

Chapter Three Test

1.  Who are the nations which the LORD left in the land, to prove Israel? V:5

2.What was the name of the king of Mesopotamia?

3. Who did the LORD raise up to deliver the children of Israel?

4. How long did the land have rest for under this judge?

5. What was the name of the king of Moab that God raised up against Israel?

6. Who delivered Israel from the king of Moab?

7.  How was the king of Moab killed?

8.  How many years did they have rest after that?

9.  Who was the last person in this chapter to deliver Israel?

Chapter Four Test

1.  Who was captain of the host of Canaan?

2.  Who did the LORD raise up to judge Israel?

3.  Who helped this judge?

4.  What famous thing did the judge say to Israel’s general?

5.  What did Heber the Kenite do against Israel and how is he related to Israel?

6.  Who killed Sisera and how?

Chapter Five Test

1.  How is chapter five different from all the other chapters in the book?

2.  What does Deborah say about the weapons Israel didn’t have at one time?

3.  What two tribes fought against Sisera?

4.  Who does Deborah say fought with Israel against Sisera in verse 20?

Chapter Six Test

1. Why did the LORD deliver the children of Israel into the hand of the Midianites?

2. Briefly tell me what the LORD through a prophet told Israel when they cried unto him?

3.Why did the angel of the LORD call Gideon a farmer?

4. What did Gideon ask the LORD to (show) prove to him that the LORD talked with him?

5. What did the LORD command Gideon to do in regard to his father?

6. Why did Gideon do what he did in question #5 at night instead of during the day?

7. What did Gideon’s father say to the men who wanted to kill his son for destroying the altar of Baal?

8. What did Gideon’s father start to call him on that day?

9. What four tribes rallied behind Gideon at that point?

10.What famous thing did Gideon do next that people wrongly still do today to find God’s will?

Chapter Seven Test

1.  What did God tell Gideon about the size of his army?

2. Why did God want there to be less soldiers for Gideon to use?

3. What was Gideon’s new nickname?

4. Who did Gideon and God tell to go home?

5. How many people did Gideon end up with to fight with the Midianites?

6. What does God tell Gideon to do if he fears to go down?

7. What did Gideon hear a man telling unto his fellow?

8. How was it interpreted by the fellow?

9. What did Gideon’s men use to confuse the Midianites?

10. What were his men supposed to yell when they blew the trumpets?

11. Did the men with Gideon attack immediately?

12. What was the response of the Midianites?

13. What did the LORD do with the Midianite's swords?

14. What two princes did the Ephraimites kill and where were they killed?

Chapter Eight Test

1. What was the men of Ephraim’s complaint to Gideon?

2. What did Gideon say to calm the men of Ephraim?

3. Who did Gideon ask that bread be given to their men?

4. What did Gideon tell them when they refused?

5. Did the men of Penuel respond any differently?

6. How many men did Gideon’s small group put to flight?

7. Did Gideon keep his promise to the men of Succoth and Penuel?

8. Who did Zebah and Zalmunna slay at Tabor?

9. What did the men of Israel say unto Gideon after his victory?

10. What did Gideon say unto them?

11. What did Gideon make that caused Israel to go a whoring after it?

12.How long was the country in quietness in the days of Gideon?

13. Who was Gideon’s son from his concubine and what does his name mean?

Chapter Nine Test

1. Who did Abimelech get to side with him to kill 69 of his half-brothers?

2. Who was the only son to survive the slaughter?

3. Who was the Bramble in Jotham’s parable?

4. Who was the olive tree?

5. Who was the vine?

6. What did Jotham prophesy about Abimelech and the men of Shechem?

7. What did God do or say to get the men of Shechem to deal treacherously with Abimelech?

8. What did a certain woman do to Abimelech?

Chapter Ten Test

1. Why was the health of the daughter of my people not recovered?

2.What did God do to Israel to chastise them?

3.What did God tell Israel when they cried unto him to deliver them from Ammon?

4.What did Israel do to cause God to give them a deliverer?

Chapter Eleven Test

1. What unique individual did God allow to eventually deliver Israel?

2. What happened to Jephthah at the hands of his half-brothers?

3. What did the men of Gilead say to Jephthah if he would lead them to victory?

4. What did Jephthah give the king of Ammon?

5. Why did Israel dispossess the land of Gilead from the Amorites?

6. Who did Jephthah tell the king of Ammon to get to deliver them?

7. What foolish vow did Jephthah make unto the LORD?

8. What came out to meet him?

9. What does the scripture say about Jephthah and whether he kept it or not?

10.Do you think he sacrificed his daughter or not?

Chapter Twelve Test

1. Who complained to Jephthah about not being allowed to fight with Ammon?

2.What word could the men of Ephraim not pronounce that gave away who they were?

3.How many sons of Jacob died in this fight?

Chapter Thirteen Test

1. Why did God deliver the children of Israel into the hand of the Philistines?

2. How long were they delivered into the hands of the Philistines?

3. What tribe was Samson from?

4. What was Samson's fathers name?

5. What medical problem did Menoah's wife have?

6. What did the angel of the LORD tell Manoah's wife to do?

7. What did the angel of the LORD tell Manoah and his wife would happen?

8. How were they to raise him?

9. What was the child to be from when?

10. What did the angel tell his parents he would do?

11. What new thing was told that Manoah's wife may not do that wasn't mentioned the first time the angel appeared?

12. Why did Manoah want to "detain" the angel of the LORD?

13. Why did Manoah want to do that?

14. What did Manoah ask the angel of the LORD?

15. What was the response of the angel?

16. What did the angel of the LORD do when Manoah offered an offering upon a rock?

17. What was the name of Manoah's son?

Chapter Fourteen Test

1. What didn't Samson's parents know about what God was going to do with Samson concerning his marriage to a Philistine?

2. How did Samson have the strength to defeat the lion?

3. Why didn't Samson tell his parents that he had killed a lion with his bare hands?

4. Why didn't Samson tell his parents where he got the honey from?

5. How did the young men find out the answer to Samson's riddle?

6. Why didn't Samson tell his parents the answer to his riddle?

7. How was Samson able to slay 30 men in Ashkelon?

8. Where did Samson go after he slew the 30 men?

9. What happened to Samson's wife during his absence?

Chapter Fifteen Test

1. Why did Samson's father-in-law give his daughter to his friend to wife?

2. What did Samson do out of vengeance for his wife?

3. Why did Samson smite the Philistines with a great slaughter?

4. Who delivered Samson into the hands of the Philistines?

5. How is that similar to what happened to Jesus?

6. How was Samson able to slay 1,000 men with just the jawbone of a donkey?

7. Why did Samson call on the LORD after his victory?

8. How long did Samson judge Israel for?

Chapter Six Test

1. What two things did Samson do when he went to Gaza?

2. What deal did the Philistines make with Delilah?

3. How many times did Samson mislead Delilah before telling her the truth?

4. Why might Samson have had a reason not to trust the Philistine Delilah?

5. Where did Samson's real strength come from?

6. What was the real reason Samson's strength left him?

7. Name 3 things that happened to Samson because of his sin that all have the letters "ind" in them:

8. How did God's enemies use Samson's compromise as an occasion against God?

9. Was Samson's prayer for Israel and God to be avenged?

10. How many people did Samson slay at his death?

Chapter Seventeen Test

1. What did Micah’s mother dedicate eleven hundred shekels of silver for?

2. What did the man Micah have a house of?

3. Who did Micah make a priest at the first?

4. Who did Micah get to be a priest and a father unto him after that?

5. What large denomination has priests that are called fathers and use graven images in worship?

Chapter Eighteen Test

1. What did the Danites ask the Levite to ask of God?

2.What did the men of Dan then ask the Levite to do?

3.What did the Danites tell Micah?

4.What was the name of the city of Laish changed to?

5.What did the Danites set up in Dan all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh?

Chapter Nineteen Test

1. What did a concubine do to cause a very big problem in Israel?

2.What was the former name of the city Jerusalem?

3.Why did the Levite not want to stay in the city that would one day be called Jerusalem?

4.Where did he choose to go instead?

5.Who finally took the Levite and his concubine and servant in for the night?

6.What did the men of Gibeah want to do to the Levite and his servant?

7.What were the certain wicked men of Gibeah called?

8.What did the old man offer the sons of Belial instead of his visitors?

9. What happened to the concubine after they abused her all night?

10. What did all that saw this say?

11. What was the sin of the Benjamites in Gibeah?

12.What was another reason the people of Gibeah should have taken them in?

Chapter Twenty Test

1. Why were the children of Israel gathered together as one man?

2.What was the tribe of Benjamin’s response to Israel’s demand to give them the sons of Belial?

3.Who did the LORD say should go up first to fight against Benjamin?

4. What is significant about God’s choice to lead Israel in the battle?

5. What tribe would Israel eventually get their first king from in the not-so-distant future?

6. How did the battle go the first two days?

7. What did Israel do twice concerning going up to battle against Benjamin?

8. What did Israel set round about Gibeah to defeat them?

9. How many of Benjamin were slain?

10. How many men of Benjamin fled to the rock Rimmon?

Chapter Twenty-one Test

1. Why did Israel all agree not to give any of their daughters to the tribe of Benjamin?

2.What did Israel tell their people would happen to them if they did not come up to battle?

3. How did Israel solve their problem with the tribe of Benjamin not having any wives for their men?

4. How many virgins did Israel spare from Jabeshgilead?

5. Why did the Canaanites get expelled from the land?

6. Why couldn't a tribe be destroyed out of Israel?

7. Who were the Daughters of Shilol?