

JUDGES

- The seventh book of Judges shows the deteriorating nation of Israel as each man rationalizes truth “in his own mind.”
- The Book of Judges covered a time period of 3-4 centuries.
- This is the age after Joshua’s death (representing the church age after the death of Jesus) and before the reign of the King (the millennial kingdom).
- Unlike the other “religious” books of the world, the Bible depicts B.C. history (“His Story”) detailing seven times that the nation of Israel fell then was redeemed.
- The book of Judges (showing the continuing downfall of man) and the book of Ruth (the establishment of the royal line) were (and are still in Judaism) considered one single book.
- The author of the book of Judges is unknown, and some speculate that Judges was written by Samuel

Fourteen Judges					
	Tribe	Judge	Meaning	Enemy	Years of Rule
1.	Judah	Othneil	“Lion of God”	King of Jericho	40 years
2.	Benjamin	Ehud	“Union/United”	King of Moab	80 years
3.	Naphtali	Shamgar	“He is called a stranger”	Amonites	Unknown
4.	Ephraim	Deborah/Barak	“Bee” or “Lightning”	Amalekites	40 years
5.	Manasseh	Gideon	“Cutter down/Feller”	Philistines	40 years
6.	Issachar	Tola	“A scarlet worm”	King of Hazor	23 years
7.	Manasseh	Jair	“Enlightener”	Midianites	22 years
8.	Manasseh	Jephthah	“Whom God sets free”	Amalekites	6 years
9.	Zebulun	Ibzan	“Illustrious”	Philistines	7 years
10.	Zebulun	Elon	“Oak/Strong”	Amonites	10 years
11.	Ephraim	Abdon	“Servile/Servant”	Amonites	8 years
12.	Dan	Samson	“Of the sun”	Philistines	20 years
13.	Levi	Eli	“To Ascend”/“Uplifted”	Philistines	40 years
14.	Levi	Samuel	“Heard of God”	Philistines	~12 years
Possible Additional Judge					
15	Manasseh	Abimelech	“The King is my Father”	Israel	3 years

30 Judges 1, 2

Read Judges 1:1-8...Judah Leads Israel Into Battle After Prayer

1:1 The book of Judges is a continuation of the book of Joshua with the first word in Hebrew translations being “And...” The book of Judges begins with the children of Israel inquiring of the Lord for leadership (1 Sam 8:6).

1:2 The Lord chooses Judah as the tribe to whom the Lord has given the land, and there was no discussion, but simple acceptance of the Lord’s direction.

1:3 The tribes of Judah and Simeon are personalized as individuals. Judah was the preeminent tribe who invited the least tribe to join in the conquest. The mature believer is called to mentor those less established.

- 1:4 The Canaanites (meaning “trafficker”) and the Perizzites (meaning “squatter/villager”) represent the worldly focus that must be overcome by the believer.
- 1:5-6 The people of God (Israelites), maimed Adoni-bezek (“Lord of Lightning”) in the same way that one might stop doing (thumbs of the hand) and stop going (big toes of the feet) to places displeasing to God.
- A man without thumbs cannot hold a sword and a man without a sword cannot run, so the man cannot fight.
- 1:7 By his own admission, Adoni-bezek had performed this same affliction a great many times (70 – complete), but Israel was called to eradicate these enemies and not simply impair them.
- 1:8 The defeat of Jerusalem was not permanent (Joshua 15:63), and although the city was defeated, the Jebusite inhabitants remained in the city (Judges 1:21) until King David drove them out (2 Sam 5:6-9; 1 Chron 11:4-8)

Read Judges 1:9-15...Othniel Gains an Oracle, Testimony, Field & Living Water

- 1:9-15 A re-telling of the story of Caleb’s nephew, Othniel conquering Kiriath-sepher to win the hand of Othniel’s daughter Achsah (Joshua 15:15-19). The reason that this account justifies being re-told is that it is symbolic of taking (i.e. grasping) hold of the truth of God’s Word.
- 1:9 The “Negev” represented the southern-most part of Israel and was also used for the “south” direction.
- 1:10 Arba was a local giant, but “Arba” is the Hebrew word for the “number “4” Jews refer to “Arba” as the “*city of the four*” because they claim four forefathers were buried in Arba (although Adam’s burial site cannot be proven): Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Gn 23:2; 35:27)
- 1:11 Kiriath-sepher (“the city of the book”) became Debir (“oracle; the living word of God”) just as one’s intellectual knowledge becomes experienced truth through faith.
- 1:12 The one who secures Debir (understanding the Bible) will gain Achsah (“an anklet; to jingle”) which speaks to the testimony as one walks in this world.
- 1:13 Othniel (“seasonable speaking of God”) seems likely to be the one gaining Achsah (the testimony). Othniel is the son of Kenaz (“the nest sprinkled”) which infers spiritual birth then flight.
- Othniel was the first Judge to be named (Judges 3:7-11), and “*the Spirit of the Lord came on him.*”
- 1:14 Achsah (the testimony) wanted a field (unbelievers) to harvest (Mt 9:37-38; John 4:34-36). While the donkey represents the old rebellious nature, and ridden donkey reflects the nature that is under control (moral restraint).
- 1:15 Achsah (the testimony) desires a blessing and running (live) water resulting in fruitfulness. The water can represent the Spirit (Jn 7:37-39) and God’s Word (Eph 5:25-26)
- The upper and lower springs (double blessing) can refer to Spirit in & on the believers or in regards to God’s Word, possibly the Old and New Testament.
 - The lower springs are also more easily accessible possibly representing God’s truths that can be comprehended by young Christians contrasted to the upper springs providing deep truths for the more mature.

Read Judges 1:16...The In-laws of Moses Move to Southern Israel (the Negev)

1:16 Zipporah, the wife of Moses, was a Kenite that were the first mentioned as owners of the Promised land to Abram (Gen 15:18-19). God spared the Kenites when He judged the Amalekites during the Exodus (1 Samuel 15:6). The Kenites were nomads with the trade of coppersmiths and metalworkers.

- The “City of Palms” is thought to be Zoara or Tamar south of the Dead Sea.

Read Judges 1:17-20...Judah Fails to Drive out the Enemies in the Valleys

1:17 Simeon was the small tribe that lived within the borders of the much larger Judah allotment. (Joshua 19:1)

1:18 Gaza, Ashkelon and Ekron were three of the five large Philistine cities (Joshua 13:3; 1 Samuel 6:17)

1:19 Although Judah might be able to subjugate the valley dwellers (Judges 1:34-36), they were not able to eradicate them.

- It is easier to glorify the Lord from the mountaintop experiences, but believers must also worship the Lord during the difficult “valleys” of life.
- The concept of “iron” reflects the stalwart onslaught of the world that is wicked by nature (iron instrument of murderer (Num 35:16); iron yoke of Babylon (Deut 28:48); David defeated Goliath’s iron (1 Sam 17:7).
- The Lord had stated that Israel could conquer the chariots of iron (Joshua 17:18), but God’s promise through Joshua was not an unconditional guarantee that the children of Israel would possess all of the land they had been promised.
- It was conditional, based upon the faithfulness of the Israelites and their obedience to God’s commandments. Mountaintop experiences saw God’s victories, but the valleys impeded faithful obedience (Mt 13:58; Mk 6:5).

Of the 9 ½ Tribes on the west side of the Jordan River, only one was victorious in the valley.		
	<u>Tribe</u>	<u>Failure</u>
1.	Judah	Judges 1:19
2.	Simeon	Judges 1:17
3.	Benjamin	Judges 1:21
4.	Manasseh	Judges 1:27
5.	Ephraim	Judges 1:29
6.	Zebulun	Judges 1:30
7.	Asher	Judges 1:31
8.	Naphtali	Judges 1:33
9.	Dan	Judges 1:34
The nation of Israel was as strong as iron in themselves (Deut 4:20)		
Issachar	Victory in the Valley	Judges 4:3 → 5:15

1:20 Hebron (“fellowship”) was the ancient dwelling place of Abraham five centuries earlier. Caleb consistently aspired to be the “giant slayer” (Numbers 13:30; Joshua 14:12).

Read Judges 1:21...The Tribe of Benjamin Fails to Drive out the Jebusites

1:21 The Jebusites remained in Jerusalem (Joshua 15:63), but the first action of David did as King was to clean out Jerusalem (2 Samuel 5:3-6).

Read Judges 1:22-26...The house of Joseph has Success Conquering Bethel

1:22 The “House of Joseph” succeeds twice in midst of failures (Judges 1:35). Ephraim and Manasseh (Joshua 17:17) were relegated to the wicked Northern Kingdom (Joshua 18:5).

1:23 The house of Joseph would live in Bethel in decline (Amos 5:6). The city was renamed from Luz (“separate/depart”) to Bethel (“the house of God”)

1:24-25 Like the “spies” of Jericho that saved Rahab (Joshua 2:1), these “spies” were used for the salvation of this man and his family from Bethel.

1:26 After the city “Luz” (meaning “almond tree”) had been renamed “Bethel” (“House of God”), this unnamed man relocated outside of Israel’s land after his family was saved at Bethel, and he re-established a town named Luz from his old namesake.

Read Judges 1:27-36...Israel Fails to Drive out the Enemies in the Valleys

1:27 Manasseh left pockets of Canaanites because the Canaanites were obstinate and wouldn’t leave the land.

1:28 The Nation of Israel became strong but did not destroy the Canaanites, so instead Israel had the Canaanites serve as forced labor.

1:29 The Tribe of Ephraim did not destroy the Canaanites who lived among them; this disobedience caused millennia of conflict (Judges 2:3).

1:30 The Tribe of Zebulun became strong but did not destroy the Canaanites, but instead had the Canaanites serve as forced labor.

1:31-32 The Tribe of Asher did not destroy the Canaanites who lived among them.

1:33 The Tribe of Naphtali became strong but did not destroy the Canaanites, but instead had the Beth-shemesh and Beth-anath serve as forced labor.

1:34 The Tribe of Dan was forced out of the valleys into the hills by the Amorites.

1:35 The House of Joseph consisting of the Tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim neighbored Dan on the north and east, so these tribes were able to overcome the Amorites and serve as forced labor. This may have occurred after Dan fled their allotment of land (Judges 18)

1:36 The word “Selah” is used in Psalms to tell the reader to pause and consider; the first chapter of Judges ends with the growth and expansion of the Amorites in contrast to the victory of God’s people.

- The original word “Selah” references the rock at Kadesh-Barnea (Numbers 20:8-11), and the “Akrabbim” references the southern part of Canaan (Joshua 15:2-3)

Read Judges 2:1-5...The Angel of the Lord Rebukes Israel for Leaving Canaanites

2:1 The Angel of Lord is a Christophany as God had led Egypt through the exile and had made a covenant with them. Bochim means “the weepers” because Israel wept at the message of the Angel.

2:2 Israelites broke the covenant with God by leaving the wicked Canaanites and their false altars intact.

- 2:3 Since God's people failed to obey Him, God allowed the Canaanites to remain and become thorns in Israel's side (Prov 22:5). Scripturally, "thorns" represent the consequences of sin (Gen 3:18)
- 2:4 There is a difference between sorrow and repentance. Israel was upset because of the judgment, but Israel was not ready to repent.
- 2:5 "Bochim" means "the weepers" because Israel wept at the message of the Angel.

Read Judges 2:6-10...The End of Joshua's Life

- 2:6 The book of Judges is a continuation of the book of Joshua which followed the leadership of Moses in the Torah. Israel had powerful, spiritual leadership under Moses and Joshua, but now there would be a void except for the Judges from time-to-time.
- 2:7 Israel served God under Joshua and elders who outlived him (Joshua 24:21)
- 2:8 Joshua is called the "servant of the Lord" just as Moses had been before him (Deuteronomy 34:5; Joshua 1:1)
- 2:9 Joshua had requested this specific lot of land when he was the last to receive his allotment (Joshua 19:49-51). Timnath-heres ("numbering of the rest") had been called Timnath Serah ("abundant provision") in the book of Joshua.
- 2:10 Although the elders may have remained faithful to the Lord during their lifetime, they failed to teach their children (Ex 12:26-27; Dt 4:9-10, 6:7, 11:19, 32:46)
- The new generation of Israel did not know God (just as the new Pharaoh of Egypt had not known Joseph – Exodus 1:8), which resulted in the slavery of Israel.

Read Judges 2:11-13...The Sin Cycle: God's People Rejected Him

- 2:11 God's people disobeyed God and turned to idols
- 2:12 Israel abandoned the God that their parents worshipped as He brought them out of Egyptian slavery.
- 2:13 The false gods of the Canaanites reflected both genders: Baal was the male and the Ashtoreth symbolized Astarte/Isis (the Canaanite goddess of fertility). An attraction to the local worship of Baal may have been the sexual practices of worship.

Read Judges 2:14...The Sin Cycle: Discipline of God's People

- 2:14 The sin of God's people caused God to become angry and turn them over to be conquered and pillaged.

Read Judges 2:15...The Sin Cycle: God's People Suffer His Judgment & Repent

- 2:15 God's hand was against His own people who suffered greatly (Proverbs 3:12; Hebrews 12:6). Believers must judge their own actions and repent (1 Cor 11:31).

Read Judges 2:16...The Sin Cycle: God Provided Judges to Save His People

- 2:16 The Lord raised up Judges who would overcome the persecutors of God's people.

Read Judges 2:17...The Sin Cycle: God's People Rejected Him Resulting in Defeat

- 2:17 The people were not faithful to the message of the Judges, but instead they embraced the sin around them.

Read Judges 2:18...The Sin Cycle: God Saw the Affliction & Provided a Judge

2:18 The Lord raised up Judges because God pitied the plight of His people.

Read Judges 2:19...The Sin Cycle: God’s People Rejected Him Resulting in Defeat

2:19 The people were not faithful beyond the lifespan of that Judge, but instead they were obstinate in their idolatry and wicked practices.

Read Judges 2:20-23...God Leaves the Canaanites in Israel as Judgment

2:20 The Lord’s “anger burned” because His people broke their covenant with Him.

2:21 Although God expected effort from the Israelites, it was actually God who was driving out the Canaanite nations.

2:22 God uses challenging situations and circumstances to test His people.

2:23 The Lord did not eradicate the Canaanites immediately before Joshua.

The Tribes of Israel Failed to Take Possession and Drive Out Enemies (Judges 1)				
Count	Judges Reference	Tribes	Birth Order	Result
1 & 2	1:17-19	Judah & Simeon	4, 2	Failed
3.	1:21	Benjamin	12	Failed
4.	1:27	½ Manasseh	11	Failed
5.	1:29	Ephraim	11	Failed
6.	1:30	Zebulun	10	Failed
7.	1:31	Asher	8	Failed
8.	1:33	Naphtali	6	Failed
9.	1:34	Dan	5	Failed
10, 11	Joshua 22:9	Reuben, Gad, ½ Manasseh	1, 7, 11	Eastern in Gilead
12.	5:15	Issachar	9	“...were with Deborah – the Judge”

The Tribes are listed first-to-last in Chapter 1 of Judges almost in the sequence that one would have anticipated to win with Judah first and Dan being last.

31 Judges 3, 4, 5

Read Judges 3:1-6...God Leaves the Canaanites to Test Israel

3:1 God’s purpose for remaining enemies was as a test: “*The nations that God left in the land to test Israel...*”

3:2 Spiritual war allows believers to become overcomers (Eph 6:12; Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 21:7). God could have plagued the Canaanites to eradicate them, but instead, God wanted to develop and strengthen His people.

3:3 The enemies of Israel were primarily on the coast of the Mediterranean with the Philistines south to Sidon and the north to Lebanon.

3:4 The Lord tested Israel to see if they would faithfully keep His commands to Moses.

3:5 Instead of eradicating the enemies of the Lord, God’s people settled among them.

3:6 Israel intermarried with the pagan nations in the land (Ex 34:16; Dt 7:3; 2 Cor 6:14)

Read Judges 3:7-11...Othniel as the First Judge

- 3:7 Israel forgot God in spite of the emphasis of Moses that Israel should not forget the Lord (Dt 4:23, 6:12, 8:11, 14). God warned Israel that if they forgot and pursued false gods, they would perish (Dt 8:19). Baal was the male and Asherah was the female false god that encouraged licentious worship.
- 3:8 God sold Israel to be servants to Mesopotamia between the Tigris and Euphrates for 8 years. "To sell" is the opposite of "to redeem."
- 3:9 The first judge of Israel was Othniel (meaning "power of God")
- 3:10 Caleb's nephew, Othniel, had the Spirit of the Lord on him and defeated Cushan-rishathaim (meaning "doubly wicked blackness") who was the King of Aram (Syria).
- 3:11 The "land" rested for 40 years (the number of testing)

Read Judges 3:12-30...Ehud as the Second Judge

- 3:12 God strengthened Moab against Israel.
- 3:13 Eglon "a heifer" - his size represents indulgence in the flesh - King of Moab (from eldest daughter of Lot) allied (Judges 36:13) with Ammon (from Lot's youngest tribe) and Amalek (grandson of Esau Gn 36:12) to win at the City of Palms - The palm tree is a symbol of the obedient, and therefore spiritually prosperous believer, "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree" (Ps 92:12).
- Eglon's capture of the city of palm trees is the symbolic declaration of the truth that the result of disobedience is the loss of righteousness & spiritual prosperity.
- 3:14 The Israelites served Moab for 18 years.
- 3:15 The second deliverer was Ehud (meaning "he that praises"). It is ironic that from the tribe of Benjamin (meaning "son of my right hand") came these left-handed warriors.
- 3:16 The blade of Ehud's sword was hidden under his cloak on his right thigh. As 18 inches long, it was an inch for every year of slavery by God's people.
- 3:17 King Eglon was a fat glutton.
- 3:18 Ehud offered a tribute to King Eglon, and upon receipt, the King dismissed those who had carried the tribute.
- 3:19 It appears that Ehud began towards home, but was convicted at the Gilgal quarries possibly where false idols were made.
- 3:20 Ehud claimed to have a "word of God" for Eglah before using sword:
- That dagger is a type of the written Word (Eph 6:17; Heb 4:12; Rev 19:15). "... of a cubit length..."
 - A cubit was a human measurement, from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger, but the arm or hand speaks of service.
 - Clothing represents righteousness, so that its being under his clothing reminds us that obedience to the written Word was the foundation of Christ's righteousness.
 - That the knife was bound to Ehud's right thigh speaks of the walk or manner of life under the government of the Word.
- 3:21 Using his left hand, Ehud was able to remove the blade easily from his right thigh and plunge the blade into the source of Eglon's defining characteristic – his stomach.
- 3:22 Ehud pushed the knife so deeply that Eglon's stomach covered the blade.

- 3:23 Ehud locked the upstairs doors and escaped by climbing out over the porch.
- 3:24 Time passed as Eglon's servants mistook the locked doors as Eglon using the bathroom.
- 3:25 The servants waited a good amount of time before they found Eglon dead on the floor.
- 3:26 The inaction of the King's servants enabled the offender to escape. Seirah means "hairy, "goat" or "demon" and was located in the tribal allotment of Ephraim.
- 3:27 The trumpets were meant to pull God's people together (Numbers 10:1-9)
- 3:28 The reason that Ehud said to follow him was the Lord's intervention of handing the Moabites over to Israel.
- 3:29 Although the Moabites were strong and able-bodied, Israel killed them all (10,000 men).
- 3:30 When Moab was subject to Israel, the land had peace.

Read Judges 3:31...Shamgar as the Third Judge

- 3:31 The third judge was Shamgar (meaning "he is here, a stranger"), son of Anoth (meaning "testifying"). Shamgar killed 600 Philistines ("migrants" that came from another country – like Egyptians, reckoned as descendants of Ham, and as cousins of the old inhabitants of Babylonia). This was the first conflict with Philistines as troublesome neighbors since the days of Abraham (Gen 26:1-18).
- Ox Goad - a pole 8 to 10 feet long, having a pointed metal spike at one end, and a flat blade at the other, the former to prod the oxen, and the latter to scrape accumulated earth from the plowshare. During the days of Saul, Philistine control of Israel was such that they were forbidden to possess any weapons, and even agricultural tools had to be taken to the Philistines for sharpening (1 Sa 13:21)
- Dual Purpose of Goad: To prod the reluctant physical members to activity, and to scrape away the earthly things that would impede the work of God. (Eccl 12:11 – Acts 9:5)

Read Judges 4:1-24...Deborah as the Fourth Judge

- 4:1 As usual, once Ehud died, Israel fell away. Shamgar may have been another Judge in a separate part of Israel (Southwest) during the same time as Ehud (Transjordan).
- 4:2 God sold Israel to Canaan; Hazor was razed by Joshua (Joshua 11:11), but rebuilt to possibly become Iscariot (Joshua 15:25).
- 4:3 Jabin means "one who is intelligent/discerning", and scholars believe that this struggle represents the battle against intellectualism.
- 4:4 Deborah ("a bee") was a prophetess and the fourth judge. Deborah is called a prophetess (Hebrew "Nebiyah") while the term prophet is "Nabiy". Deborah was married to Lappidoth ("lamp"). Deborah has four distinguishing roles: woman, prophet, wife, and judge.
- 4:5 Deborah sat between Ramoth ("height") and Bethel ("house of God") while Israelites deferred to her judgment on matters.
- 4:6 Barak may have been meant to be the Judge and deliverer, but Barak was hesitant although he realized God's calling.

- 4:7 Defeat at Kishon “sore”: David references in Ps 83:9 & Elijah kills 400 false prophets at the Brook of Kishon (1 Ki 18:40)
- Judges 5:4,21 makes it clear that the victory was secured by God’s sending heavy rain which first rendered the chariots useless in the mud, and then swept them away as the swollen Kishon overflowed its banks.
 - Jerusalem receives approximately the same amount of rainfall as London, England each year; however, it only rains 5 months in Israel, so the rainfall is torrential.
 - The rain and the overflowing river both speak of the Word of God being used, not sparingly but liberally.
 - Baal was the God of thunder and rain, so it is ironic that God uses rain to defeat the iron chariots of Sisera.
- 4:8 Barak depended on the presence of Deborah instead of the presence of the Lord; however, Barak (not Deborah) would be remembered in the “Hall of Faith” (Hebrews 11:32).
- 4:9 Deborah (a woman) takes leadership position when Barak “lightning” (a man) wouldn’t. At that time a woman’s honor was one of submission, not rule, (1 Pe 3:5-6). Note also what is written in Isa 3:12 concerning Israel again under the chastisement of God, “... children are their oppressors, and women rule over them.” Men’s names in the Bible outnumber female names about 17 to 1, but when a man cannot be found to lead in God’s will, the women are utilized as leaders.
- 4:10 Barak was from the Tribe of Naphtali (Judges 4:6). Mt. Tabor is southeast of the Sea of Galilee in the Tribal Land of Issachar while Zebulun and Naphtali are west and northwest of the Sea of Galilee.
- 4:11 Heber (“associate/anger/one that passes”) moves away which has remarkable consequences as he has now positioned his wife, Jael, to conclude the battle (Judges 4:17). Often, the believer must separate (sanctify) themselves (from the world) before God uses them.
- 4:12 Sisera (meaning “sees a swallow” or “sees a horse”) was Commander of the Canaanite army under King Jabin of Hazor.
- 4:13 Sisera brought 900 iron chariots to fight Barak on the plains bordering the River Kishon.
- 4:14 God goes out before His people into the spiritual battles. Deborah encourages Barak to go down into battle.
- 4:15 The Lord once again sends His enemies into confusion (Gn 11:7; Ex 23:27; Dt 28:20, 28; 1 Sam 7:10; James 3:16) unlike the peace that He gives His people (1 Cor 14:33). Sisera abandons his source of strength (the chariot) for his self-support (feet).
- 4:16 The chariots were incapacitated for war or flight by the flooding of the river (Judges 5:4, 21). The weapon that Sisera mistook for being an advantage became a disadvantage.
- 4:17 As his iron chariot was stuck in the mud due to the weight of iron, Sisera was forced to flee on foot.
- 4:18 Because Heber had separated his family and moved away from the other Kenites descended from Moses’ father-in-law (Judges 4:11), Jael was in the perfect place to receive Sisera in flight.

- 4:19 Jael gave milk instead of water (1 Cor 3:2, Hebrews 5:12-13, 1 Pet 2:2), covered him up (in the sense of putting it away), and he said to “guard” by denying the truth
- 4:20 Sisera directed Jael to answer only men looking for him instead of including women as well. Sisera may have wrongfully feared men more than women.
- 4:21 Jael “wild goat” (wife of Heber the Kenite – Midianite descendants of Jethro) drove peg through Sisera’s temple (symbolizing the brain/intellect)
- Two items were used to slay Sisera: a tent peg and a hammer.
 - The tent is generally recognized as the symbol of the pilgrim life, and since the nail or peg is that which helps to support the tent, Jael’s using a tent peg is the symbolic assurance that the most effective weapon against the world’s wisdom is the determination to pass through this world as a pilgrim and stranger governed only by the written Word (Job 4:21).
 - But see also Ec 12:11 “The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd.”
 - Jer 23:29 interprets the symbol of the hammer as the Word of God.
- 4:22 Jael greeted Barak and revealed that Sisera had been killed.
- 4:23 No man or woman won that battle; instead, the Lord Himself subdued the enemy King as a testimony to Israel.
- 4:24 Israel became increasingly strong until they eventually destroyed King Jabin.

Read Judges 5:1-31...The Victorious Song of Deborah

- 5:1 With Deborah mentioned first, the two sang as witnesses to God’s faithfulness. This is similar to Miriam’s song (Ex 15:21), Hannah’s song (1 Sam 2:1-10), and Mary’s song (Lk 1:46-55). It is said that “where there is little praise, there is little victory.”
- 5:2 It is said that “God will not do for us, what He has enabled us to do for ourselves” (Judges 3:2). When obedience occurs, God is glorified. God wants leaders to lead and God’s people to voluntarily submit to their guidance (Judges 5:9).
- 5:4 Seir (meaning “hairy and goat-like”) was the Edomite (Esau) mountain range. The earth (worldly) trembled while spiritual blessing fell down (heavenly rain).
- Baal was the Canaanites false god of rain, so it is ironic that the torrential rains defeat Sisera’s iron chariots.
 - God’s leaders are represented as clouds of life-giving water (Jude 1:12).
- 5:5 Mountains often symbolize worldly authority and even the mountain of Sinai (the authority of the law) fell away before the Lord.
- 5:6 The main roads were deserted because the Israelites were so afraid that they took the back roads. Of course, the back roads were the crooked ways away from the “straight and narrow”.
- 5:7 Deborah was a Judge, a wife and a mother.
- 5:8 Israel worshipped false gods (Judges 2:11) which caused even their positions of strength (the gates) to be in turmoil. 40,000 (where the number four symbolizes “testing”) did not have weapons (1 Sam 13:19-22).
- 5:9 The leaders of God’s people were volunteers with a personal passion to serve God’s people. God receives the glory – not the leaders.

- 5:10 The donkeys represent the old stubborn nature. If donkeys are white and ridden, it symbolizes a pure and submissive nature. The leaders and judges (riding on the saddle blankets) should be praising the Lord.
- 5:11 The word “tell” is used again in relation to Jephthah’s daughter (Judges 11:40). The singers worshipping the Lord were positioned at the watering places (where the word of God flowed).
- 5:12 Instead of those spiritually asleep, the criticality of action is emphasized. Deborah is called to song while Barak is called to captivating others (Eph 4:8).
- 5:13 When summoned, those who had endured and survived the burdensome oppression joined together with Israel’s nobles. God’s people joined Deborah as warriors.
- 5:14 Ephraim was Deborah’s tribe. Machir was the son of Manasseh. Even the scribes from Zebulun with their writing pens joined the army.
- 5:15 Unlike all of the other western tribes, Issachar was on foot (heels) in the valley against the iron chariots, and Issachar was victorious.
- 5:16: Reuben reflected and thought, but they never joined the battle. Just like many of God’s “sheep” who remain safely in the sheepfold, many believers never get involved in ministries of outreach.
- 5:17 Altogether (including Reuben), four tribes stayed at home. Gilead was cowardly beyond the Jordan. Dan stayed next to the escape route of the ships. Asher was the nearest of all tribes, but Asher remained by their assets.
- 5:18 Barak was from the Tribe of Naphtali (Judges 4:6) Zebulun and Naphtali were the key tribes to fight (Judges 4:10) and are located west and northwest of the Sea of Galilee. The Zebulun and Naphtali Tribes would also come to Gideon’s assistance (Judges 6:35)
- 5:19 Just as it will be at the end of times, the enemies of God’s people gathered at Megiddo, but they will not get any silver (representing redemption).
- 5:20 Nature (e.g. the weather elements) fought for the Lord. The stars represent the Lord’s people (Job 38:7; Daniel 12:3; Jude 1:13).
- 5:21 Rain caused rushing currents (1 Kings 18:40) down the Kishon (meaning “winding”).
- 5:22 Meroz could be a number of things: Sisera’s star or a mighty man or northern Palestine. Meroz is only mentioned once in scripture, and is thought to be a close village that allowed Sisera to escape. This is similar to Chorazin which is also only mentioned once in Scripture and cursed by Jesus (Mt 11:21).
- 5:23 Although the Lord is sovereign, people are blessed for assisting in His plan.
- 5:24 Jael was a simple home-maker (tent dwelling woman), but she bears the same blessing as Mary (the mother of Christ) as Jael is called the most blessed of women.
- 5:27-28 While one woman was in victory (Jael), another woman was in dread (Sisera’s mother).
- 5:29 Even the wisest of women were mistaken about Sisera’s war efforts.
- 5:30 The princesses treat women like commodities as they expect Sisera to be taking two women at a time, but Sisera could not handle the two women of Deborah and Jael. The optimism of Sisera’s mother was in the thought of Sisera performing wicked acts.

Judges 6-8...Gideon as the Fifth Judge

Read Judges 6:1-10.... Israel Oppressed by Midian

6:1 God judged Israel's wickedness by allowing them to be oppressed by Midian for seven years.

6:2 Israel made refuge asylums for themselves in the earth (i.e. caves, mountains)

6:3 Midian ("strife/contention"), Amalek ("lapping up" - indulgence of the lusts of the flesh - Esau's grandson), and peoples of the east (general departure from God) result in nullifying the effects of Bible teaching (sowing/planting) that is meant to preserve them from these very evils.

- The Qedemites will be adversaries from the east in these three chapters (Judges 6:3, 7:12, 8:10)
- These were nomadic tribes living through predatory means.

6:4 Gaza was located in the southwest, and these assaulters were from the east, so they had overwhelmed all of Israel. They pillaged Israel's crops and the herds.

6:5 Locusts are ravenous creatures that devour everything in their path.

6:6 When Israel experienced extreme oppression, they called out to the Lord for salvation instead of calling out in repentance.

6:7-8 God's response to the cry of oppressed Israel was to send a prophet that reminded Israel that God had led them out of Egypt's slavery.

6:9-10 God eradicated Israel's enemies during Joshua's conquests, but Israel was not faithful to the Lord as they revered the false gods of the Amorites.

Read Judges 6:11-18.... The Angel Addresses Gideon

6:11 Ophrah means dustiness (disobedience brings death, as our disobedience brought Christ "into the dust of death" - Ps 22:15); Joash, Jehovah has become man; Abiezer, father of help; and Gideon, the cutter down

6:12 The Angel of the Lord (Christophany) saw Gideon as he could and should instead of who he was - a weak, frightened man.

- "*The Lord is with you*" may reference the Angel's immediate presence (Immanuel) or the broader truth that Gideon is a mighty, valiant warrior only because the Lord is with him.

6:13 Gideon had heard of the testimonies around the Exodus from Egypt, and he didn't understand why the Lord was judging them.

6:14 The Lord calls His people to go and conquer with what they have because He is with them.

6:15 Gideon was from the tribe of Manasseh which had the largest land mass in Israel; however, Gideon was the youngest in what he assessed as a weak family.

6:16 God tells Gideon the source of his strength - God. Midian would be struck down as if by one man because it would be God who destroyed them.

6:17 Even Gideon's faith is weak as he requests a sign from the Angel. The Angel was clearly speaking with Gideon, but Gideon desired a sign that the Angel was indeed interacting with him. Gideon may have thought that this was a dream/vision.

6:18 Gideon desired to give an offering to the Angel of the Lord, so the Angel assured Gideon that he would wait.

- **According to Judges 6:11, in what city was Gideon?**

- Ophrah means dustiness (disobedience brings death, as our disobedience brought Christ “into the dust of death” - Ps 22:15)
- What does a wine press/vat refer to in Scripture?
 - The winepress in Scripture speaks of judgment;
 - Gideon’s threshing wheat sets before us in symbol a prerequisite of service:
 - He who would do God’s work must be devoted to the study of God’s Word (even in unsuitable places - winepress).
- According to Judges 6:12, what makes Gideon a mighty warrior?
 - The Lord is with him
- According to Judges 6:13, what questions did Gideon have about God’s presence?
 - Why have bad things happened to us?
 - Where are all God’s wonders?
 - Isn’t it true that God brought Israel out of Egypt?
- According to Judges 6:14, how does God answer Gideon?
 - With a question, am I not sending you?
 - I will use you to deliver Israel
- According to Judges 6:16, Gideon considers himself the weakest, why should he have courage?
 - God is with him
- Believers will find God working in their works when God is calling them to engage.

Read Judges 6:19-24.... Gideon Offers a Sacrifice

6:19 The goat is utilized for sin offerings while the oak represents strength.

6:20 Worship before service; “*Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock*” → what God can do with a sacrificed and pure (no leaven) life when they are placed upon “the rock” of Jesus

6:21 The staff is generally recognized as a type of the Word of God (end of the staff = fulfillment); fire is one of the Scriptural symbols of the Holy Spirit

6:22 Gideon is fearful because no one can see the Lord and live (Ex 33:20); however, to see the Lord face-to-face means the Lord talking directly and plainly (Ex 33:11; Num 12:8). Samson’s father would later show the same fear (Judges 13:22).

6:23 The Lord urged Gideon to have peace and not fear.

6:24 Gideon constructed an altar and named it “The Lord is my peace.”

- What does the goat represent?
 - A sin sacrifice
- What does unleavened bread represent?
 - A pure believer
- What does the meat represent?
 - The body
- What does broth represent?
 - The water of the Spirit mixed w/ the Blood
- In verse 20, why is the sacrifice directed to be laid on the rock?
 - The Rock is Jesus

- God can do wonderful things with a sacrificed and pure (no leaven) life when they are placed upon “the rock” of Jesus
- Who is the Angel of the Lord?
 - Jesus
- According to Judges 6:23, who addresses Gideon?
 - The Lord because His personage/angel had disappeared

Read Judges 6:25-27.... Gideon Destroys the Baal Altar

6:25 It is during the world’s spiritual night, while men “sleep,” that God speaks to His own.

- The bull/ox often represents the servant/worker of the Lord, so an older and younger servant might imply teaching the younger generation to challenge the false idols of Baal and Asherah.
- Canaanites considered seven, the Biblical number of perfection or completeness, to be an unlucky number, while the Israelites held it to be virtually sacred, so offering the second bull of seven years old to Yahweh was a deliberate denial of the power of Baal.

6:26 The worship of Baal was to be replaced with the worship of Jehovah

6:27 Ten is the number that speaks of God as the Governor, Gideon’s taking these ten men to throw down the altar of Baal, speaks of the obedience to God’s government

- **The worship of Baal was to be replaced with the worship of Jehovah**
- **According to Judges 6:25, what two items did Gideon tear down?**
 - **A Baal (false male god) was thought to be the brother of Asherah (false female god) under the supreme god (El).**
 - **Canaanites believed that the sexual act between these two false gods produced rains and harvests, so Baal temple prostitutes would have sex with “worshippers” to please the false gods.**
 - **An Asherah pole is a sacred tree or pole that stood near Canaanite religious locations to honor the mother-goddess Asherah (Asherim were "groves").**
 - **This was the name of a sensual Canaanitish goddess Astarte, the feminine of the Assyrian Ishtar.**
 - **Its symbol was the trunk of a tree without branches, and shaped into an image of male penis, and planted in the ground. Deuteronomy 16:21**
- **According to Judges 6:27, when did Gideon tear down the Baal?**
 - **At night because of fear -he was afraid of the men in the city**
- **What does nighttime generally represent in Scripture?**
 - **Difficult time without vision/understanding**
 - **It is during the world’s spiritual night, while men “sleep,” that God speaks to His own.**
- **Canaanites considered the number 7 to be an unlucky number**
 - **The Israelites held the number 7 to be virtually sacred (the Biblical number of perfection or completeness)**

Read Judges 6:28-32.... Israelite Men Attempt to Kill Gideon

6:28 Morning often brings light and vision to those in Scripture. The false gods of Baal and Asherah had powers over nature's fertility; Canaanites believed that when these false gods had sexual intercourse, rains and harvest would occur.

6:29 After investigation, the men uncovered that Gideon was the offender.

6:30 The men told Joash, Gideon's father, that he had to hand over his son to die.

6:31 Joash (meaning "God's fire") asked the reason that their false god needed to be protected and threatened that anyone who defended Baal should die that day.

6:32 Gideon's father, Joash, changed Gideon's name to "Jerubbaal" meaning "Baal will be contended against"

- **Is it frequent that the types of Christ in the OT face death threats?**
 - **Yes... Almost invariably in connection with those who are OT types of Christ, we find that they were slain, or risked death, or underwent death symbolically for doing good & obeying God**
 - **Typically, as a result of their own people turning on them e.g., Moses in the Nile; Isaac bound on the altar; Joseph in the pit; Daniel in the lions' den, etc. - the Jews with Christ.**
- **How did Gideon's father Joash respond to the men of the city?**
 - **Let Baal defend himself**
 - **Anyone who defends Baal will be put to death**
 - **In the same vein, believers do not need to defend our Living God**
- **According to Judges 6:32, to what did Gideon's father change his name?**
 - **Gideon's father, Joash, changed Gideon's name to "Jerubbaal" meaning "Baal will be contended against"**

Read Judges 6:33-40.... Gideon Tests God's Call w/ a Fleece of Wool

6:33 The name "Jezreel" means "God will scatter." The "valley of Jezreel" is associated to "the valley of Megiddo" which will be the site of Armageddon.

6:34 Gideon was no longer under his own power as the Spirit of God fell on him.

Gideon's response to the Spirit was to call God's people together. The Abiezrites were Gideon's family (Judges 6:11). The name "Abiezrite" means "encouragement and prayer in a time of panic."

6:35 The location of the valley of Jezreel is in the Tribal land of Manasseh. Zebulun and Naphtali were the key tribes to fight with Deborah/Barak (Judges 4:10, 5:18) and are located west and northwest of the Sea of Galilee. Barak was from the Tribe of Naphtali (Judges 4:6). Asher was a neighboring tribe to the northwest by the Mediterranean.

6:36 Gideon had already requested a sign (Judges 6:17), so his faith was extremely weak.

6:37 Gideon uses the threshing floor overnight (instead of the wine vat – Judges 6:11) to test if God would wet the fleece with dew while keeping the surrounding ground dry.

6:38 The fleece was not partially wet, but instead, the fleece was drenched with water.

6:39 Gideon understands that his lack of faith might anger God.

6:40 God mercifully answered Gideon's test with a dry fleece the next morning and dew surrounding the ground.

- **According to Judges 6:33, where did Israel's relocate?**
 - **The enemies moved to the Valley of Jezreel;**
 - **A valley often symbolizes a difficult time in Scripture?**

- Jezreel means – to Scatter/Sow; Hosea/Gomer’s first son (Hosea 1:4)
- According to Judges 6:34, how did Gideon respond when the Spirit of God fell on him?
 - The Spirit of God fell on Him, and Gideon blew the Ram’s horn
 - Gideon sent out a call to His Tribe (Manasseh) and others (Asher, Zebulun, Naphtali)
- According to Judges 6:36, after Gideon summoned his brothers, he tested God for what guidance?
 - If God would deliver Israel by Gideon’s hand
- What might be the symbolism of Gideon’s Fleece test?
 - The sheep are represented by the fleece as the Jewish Nation.
 - The first test resulted in a fleece covered with dew while all around was dry. This may represent the Jewish nation favored by God with the Law and the Prophets (God’s chosen people).
 - The second test of a dry fleece may reflect the Jewish nation cast off for rejecting Christ.
 - The surrounding water all around be speak of the gospel of Christ preached to the Gentiles.
- This metaphor can actually be drawn out through other mentions a fleece in Judges and other parts of the Old Testament (Isaiah and Jeremiah).

Read Judges 7:1-8.... God Selects Gideon’s Army

- 7:1 As on the day of Joshua’s battle with Jericho (Joshua 6:12-15), Gideon and everyone with him, awoke early. “Harod” means “army ruler/leader”, and the spring of Harod would be used to determine who was to remain in the army (Judges 7:5-6).
- 7:2 The Lord is more concerned about the outcome of the character of His people than the outcome of the battle; the Lord did not want His people to have pride.
- 7:3 The first test to determine readiness of a man to fight God’s battle was whether he has fear or faith. This was also a test in the days of Moses (Dt 20:1-4) because fear is contagious among brothers (Dt 20:8)
- 7:4 God told Gideon to take the troops to the living (running) water to test if they should remain. The water can represent the Spirit (Jn 7:37-39) and God’s Word (Eph 5:25-26)
- 7:5 God told Gideon to separate the army into two camps – those who knelt with their mouth in the water would be released while those who scooped the water with their hands (and lapped it like a dog) would remain. Gentiles were periodically referred to as “dogs” in Scripture (Mt 15:23-28; Ex 11:7; Ps 22:16); although some Israelites were also referenced as “dogs” (Is 56:10).
- 7:6 Three percent of the 10,000 warriors remained. The number “3” in Scripture often represents revelation.
- 7:7 The Lord emphasized that He would deliver Gideon and not the size of the army.
- 7:8 The trumpet is the symbol of testimony; contention and strife which Midian represents, still camps in the valley
- According to Judges 7:2, why did God not defeat the Midianites with Gideon’s original army?

- The victory may lead to pride
- Does God do things in your life that keep you from being prideful?
- According to Judges 7:3, what was the required attribute for God's warriors?
 - Faith & Courage – The first test exposed any lack of faith in accord with the command given by God in the days of Moses (Dt 20:8)
 - Cowards don't make effective believers (Rev 21:8)
 - Fear is contagious and can be hurtful to other believers
- According to Judges 7:4-6, what might the water of the 2nd test represent?
 - The water can represent the Spirit (Jn 7:37-39) and God's Word (Eph 5:25-26)
 - Being mindful of how someone approaches the Word of God
- According to Judges 7:5, what were the two divisions of men at the water?
 1. Those who lap the water like a dog – rapacious; using their tongue
 2. Those who knelt (as in praying) who used their hands (as in doing)
- Throughout Scripture, the number "3" often represents revelation

Read Judges 7:9-14.... God encourages Gideon

7:9 Before the actual defeat, God had given the victory to Gideon (Joshua 6:2)

7:10 God provided Gideon with a friend, Purah meaning "Fruitful Branch", when he was afraid.

7:11 God told Gideon to listen and what he would hear would give him courage.

7:12 Scripture periodically uses "the sands of the seashore" to represent a large number from a worldly perspective. Swarms of locusts are rapacious eaters who destroy everything.

7:13 Gideon overheard a dream which revealed the remarkable strength of a barley loaf. Barley was Israel's first crop which was harvested at the time of Passover, in April.

7:14 The Midianites friend likened Gideon's army to the loaf of Barley bread. The Midianite enemy realized that God would control the battle.

- According to Judges 7:10-11, was Gideon fearful on the night of the attack?
 - Yes – God said to go with his friend, Purah, if he was afraid
 - Purah means "a Fruitful Branch"
- According to Judges 7:12, to what were the enemies of Gideon likened?
 - A swarm of locusts; locusts are a judgment of God that ravage the land leaving barrenness
 - Sands on the Seashore; multitude beside the chaos of the sea
- According to Judges 7:13, what was symbolic of Gideon's army?
 - The Passover and Feast of First Fruits are celebrated at the Barley harvest
- According to Judges 7:14, who interpreted the enemy soldier's dream?
 - Either the friend of the enemy soldier or Gideon's friend, Purah
 - Believers should be encouraging and candid friends

Read Judges 7:15-23.... Gideon defeats the Midianites

7:15 Gideon bowed in worship before even leaving the enemy camp and upon returning to his army, he awoke everyone convinced of the victory.

7:16 Scripture often refers to a man's life as a clay jar. (Is 64:8; Job 10:9; Rom 9:21) or a national character (Jer 18:6; Daniel 2:43). The flame within may represent the workings of the Spirit (Acts 2:3). As a believer's life is broken, the Spirit can shine through.

7:17 Gideon tells those fighting with him to follow his example

7:18 Trumpets often signify testimony, and Gideon's confidence can be seen growing as he calls on those fighting to yell, "*For Yahweh and for Gideon!*"

7:19 The surprise would come in the middle of the night (Matthew 25:6). Instead of nighttime hours, Jews divided the night into military watches representing the period that guards and watchmen remained on duty.

- In the Old Testament, the Jewish division of the night was three watches of four hours each – from sunset until 10pm – from 10pm until 2am – from 2am until sunrise (Ex 14:24; 1 Sam 11:11; Ps 63:6; 90:4; 119:148; 130:6; Lam 2:19).
- In the New Testament under the Romans, Jews adopted the Roman division of four watches of three hours each – from 6pm to 9pm – from 9pm to midnight – from midnight to 3am – from 3am to 6am (Mt 14:25; Mk 13:35).

7:20 Gideon's army added the words "*A Sword...*" to the yell prescribed earlier (Judges 7:18) resulting in "*A Sword...For Yahweh and for Gideon!*" Scripture often likens itself to a sword (Eph 6:17; Heb 4:12; Rev 19:15).

7:21 Each of Gideon's warriors played his role and took his position around the Midianites.

7:22 God incited Gideon's enemies to use their swords against each other (Ps 64:3)

7:23 The men of Zebulun were not called to assist, but the others (Manasseh, Zebulun, Naphtali) who had joined when Gideon first blew the trumpet (Judges 6:35) assisted to rout the enemy.

- **According to Judges 7:16, what three items were warriors given for battle?**
 - **A Trumpet, an empty pitcher and a torch**
 - **A man's life is often likened to a clay jar in Scripture (Is 64:8; Job 10:9; Rom 9:21)**
 - **God is the potter, man is the clay**
 - **The woman at the well, left her jar to go testify about Jesus**
 - **The trumpets often represent a testimony/proclamation of the Lord**
 - **Lamps/torches (light for weak) in their left hands, and the trumpets (testimony for strong) in their right hands**
- **According to Judges 7:16, what was put inside the empty pitcher?**
 - **A torch to be lit with a flame**
 - **The treasure inside is the Spirit (Jn 4:28, Is 4:9, 2 Cor 4:7)**
- **According to Judges 7:19, what time did Gideon's army attack the Midianites?**
 - **At 10pm (at the end of the first watch), Gideon's army attacked**
 - **In the Old Testament, the Jewish division of the night was three watches of four hours each – from sunset until 10pm – from 10pm until 2am – from 2am until sunrise (Ex 14:24; 1 Sam 11:11; Ps 63:6; 90:4; 119:148; 130:6; Lam 2:19).**

- **According to Judges 7:20, did Gideon’s army yell what they had planned?**
 - **Gideon’s army added the words “A Sword...” to the yell prescribed earlier (Judges 7:18) resulting in “A Sword...For Yahweh and for Gideon!”**
 - **Scripture often likens itself to a sword (Eph 6:17; Heb 4:12; Rev 19:15).**
- **According to Judges 7:22, who incited the enemy troops to fights with each other?**
 - **God incited Gideon’s enemies to use their swords against each other (Ps 64:3)**
- **According to Judges 7:23, what happened to the other men who had been sent home?**
 - **They attacked the enemies as they fled Gideon**
 - **Three of the Tribes (Manasseh, Zebulun, Naphtali) who had joined when Gideon first blew the trumpet (Judges 6:35) assisted; however, the men of Zebulun were not called to assist.**

Read Judges 7:24-25.... The Tribe of Ephraim Joins the Battle

7:24 “Bethbara” meaning a “Place of Passage” is thought to be where Joshua initially led Israel into the Promised Land. John the Baptist preached and baptized at this location (Jn 1:28).

7:25 Oreb (meaning “raven”) and Zeeb (meaning “wolf”) may have been their descriptive names because of their cruelty and viciousness. Zeeb may have been hiding from Gideon at the winepress just as Gideon hid from him in the wine vat (Judges 6:11).

2 Judges 8, 9

Read Judges 8:1-3.... Ephraim complains about Gideon

8:1 Ephraim was Deborah’s tribe, and this is the first of two times (Judges 12:1-6) that Ephraim reveals their self-centered pride as they are jealous of their “brother’s” spiritual victory (Philippians 2:3).

8:2 Ephraim was actually hindering the work of God’s people as they complained during the pursuit (Judges 8:4-5). Abiezar was Gideon’s tribe (Judges 6:11)

8:3 God had given the victory as He handed over Oreb and Zeeb to Ephraim (Ps 83:11). Gideon used a humble and kind answer to diffuse the situation (Prov 15:1), so that his men could focus on the on-going battle.

- **According to Judges 8:1, why did Ephraim complain?**
 - **Although God selected the size of the army, Ephraim blamed David for being left out.**
 - **The Lord had whittled down the number of Israelites (Judges 7:2), so that when the Midianites fled, other tribes like Ephraim would be well positioned to attack the retreating Midianites (Judges 7:24).**
 - **Ephraim is jealous of their “brother’s” spiritual victory (Philippians 2:3).**
 - **Ephraim was Deborah’s tribe, and this is the first of two times (Judges 12:1-6) that Ephraim reveals their self-centered pride**

- **Was Ephraim helping or hindering Gideon’s pursuit of the enemies?**
 - **Hindering - Ephraim was actually hindering the work of God’s people as they complained during the pursuit (Judges 8:4-5).**
- **According to Judges 8:1, what appeased Ephraim?**
 - **Gideon played to their pride stating that they had greater victories than his family, the Abiezrites (Judges 6:11).**

Read Judges 8:4-9.... Succoth Denies Gideon Food

8:4 Every one of Gideon’s men was still with him in pursuit (Judges 7:6-8).

8:5 Succoth (meaning “tents”) was the location where Jacob had been side-tracked on his return from Laban (Gn 33:17).

8:6 Neither Zeba (“victim sacrifice”) nor Zalmunna (“forbidden idol”) had yet been captured and the men of Succoth had no faith that Gideon’s men would be victorious (Mt 25:31-46). The men of Succoth give a worldly response instead of having faith that the Lord was leading Gideon.

8:7 In Scripture, thorns represent a consequence of sin (Gn 3:18) and wilderness shows a place without living water and spiritual sustenance. Believers should not judge the effectiveness of a ministry effort by physical blessings; at times, believers are called to support missionaries who are without basic provision. God was giving Gideon and his army a miraculous victory, but there was still opportunity to bless those whom God was using.

8:8 Penuel is the location that Jacob wrestled with God (Gn 32:24-32). The neighboring men of Penuel (“face of God”) echoed the response of those in Succoth. Now there were two witnesses (Succoth, Penuel) against the people.

8:9 Gideon did not let these naysayers and doubters hamper his pursuit, but he did warn that he would return to tear down Penuel’s tower – Penuel would lose their stronghold.

- **According to Judges 8:5, as the leader, what was Gideon’s focus with the men of Succoth?**
 - **Gideon requests bread for his army as his primary concern is those who are following him.**
 - **Succoth (meaning “tents”) was the location where Jacob had been side-tracked on his return from Laban (Gn 33:17).**
- **According to Judges 8:7, why does Gideon warn Succoth of the judgment w/ thorns from the wilderness?**
 - **In Scripture, thorns represent a consequence of sin (Gn 3:18) and wilderness shows a place without living water and spiritual sustenance.**
 - **Believers should not judge the effectiveness of a ministry effort by evident physical strengths**
 - **At times, believers are called to support missionaries who are without basic provision.**
 - **God was giving Gideon and his army a miraculous victory, but there was still opportunity to bless those whom God was using.**
- **According to Judges 8:8-9, after Succoth, how did Penuel treat Gideon’s army?**

- The neighboring men of Penuel (“face of God”) echoed the rejection of those in Succoth.
- Now there were two witnesses (Succoth, Penuel) against the people.
- Penuel is the location that Jacob wrestled with God (Gn 32:24-32).
- According to Judges 8:7-9, did the naysayers hamper Gideon’s pursuit of the enemy?
 - Gideon did not let these naysayers and doubters hamper his pursuit
 - Gideon continued in his mission to defeat the enemy in spite of the cynics
- According to Judges 8:9, with what action did Gideon threaten Penuel?
 - Gideon vowed to tear down the tower in Penuel?
 - Penuel’s tower was their stronghold and refuge instead of God

Read Judges 8:10-21.... Gideon Captures/Kills the Kings of Midian (Zebah & Zalmunna)

8:10 The Midianite armies had lost 120,000 men in the battle against Gideon (Judges 6:5), but they still had 15,000 men (fifty times the number of Gideon’s men – 300).

8:11 The Midianites were east of the Jordan as Nobah is in Manasseh and Jogbehah is in Gad. Once again, the world is not ready and is going about life in an unsuspecting way.

8:12 Not only were the Midianites defeated, but the two Kings were taken into custody.

8:13 Succoth should have had the insight to hospitably provide for Gideon’s army, but the 77 elders of the town had responded foolishly in a worldly way.

8:14 The population of Succoth must have been considerable to have 77 elders. The number “seven” often represents fullness/completeness; however, these elders had not shared their blessings with God’s warriors.

8:15 “Zebah” means “victim/sacrifice”, and “Zalmunna” means “Image/Idol Forbidden.”

8:16 Before judging the wicked Midianite Kings, Gideon disciplined the elders of Succoth with thorns (representing the consequences of sin).

8:17 Not only was Gideon true to his word in toppling the Penuel tower (Penuel’s stronghold), but he also gave a harsher punishment of killing the men of the city.

8:18 Tabor (“purity/height”) was the location that Balak battled against Sisera (Judges 4:6-14).

8:19 Gideon now takes on the role of the “avenger of blood” (in Hebrew called the “goel”) as he reconciles the murder of his biological brothers (Ex. 21:13; Num. 35:13; Deut. 19:1,9, 11-13; 2 Sam. 14:7, 11).

8:20 Jether (meaning “surplus/abundance”) as the firstborn represented the flesh (1 Cor 15:45-47) who was cowardly (Rev 21:8) because of his youthful age (1 Tim 4:12).

8:21 The crescent ornaments (now the symbol of Islam) represent the moon goddess Isis/Ashtarte (Is 3:18).

- Crescent ornaments (now the symbol of Islam) represented the moon goddess Isis/Ashtarte (Is 3:18).

The Crescent Shape

Judges 8:26



Crescent shaped jewelry was collected from the Israelites immorally for Gideon to manufacture an idolatrous ephod (Judges 8:26). The crescent shape is also mentioned another time in Scripture - Isaiah 3:18 *"In that day the Lord will take away the beauty of their anklets, the headbands, the crescent necklaces."*

Both times that "crescent" is used in Scripture, it has a negative connotation. In Ephesus stands the remains of Artemis/Diana's Temple (Acts 19:24-41). The crescent is a symbol of Artemis/Diana since she is the pagan goddess of hunting (the shape of the bow) and childbirth (the shape of female anatomy)

Another historical city, Byzantium (Constantinople/Istanbul) adopted the crescent moon as their symbol to honor Artemis/Diana. Islam was not affiliated with the crescent moon until the time of the Ottoman Empire when the Turks conquered Constantinople (Istanbul) in 1453; it was then that the Muslims adopted the city's existing flag as their symbol.

So the crescent moon predates Islam by thousands of years and was usually associated with nature and possibly the worship of nature (aka astrology). This is the reason that many Muslims reject the crescent as any kind of symbol today because it was traditionally simply an ancient icon linked to a female pagan goddess.

Read Judges 8:22-27.... Israel Requests Gideon to be King

8:22 The Israelites requested that Gideon and his lineage rule over them.

8:23 Although the Israelites wanted a tangible (worldly) leader, Gideon wisely declined

8:24 Although Gideon declined the position of King, he greedily asked for wealth.

8:25 Each Israelite contributed a golden earring.

8:26 Gideon collected 43 pounds of gold tribute as well as purple garments and crescent moons from the camels.

8:27 Gideon wrongly made a replica ephod from the golden jewelry and purple cloth of the defeated Midianites to put on display in his hometown of Ophrah ("fawn").

However, Gideon would be remembered in the "Hall of Faith" (Hebrews 11:32).

- **According to Judges 8:23, when Gideon is elevated in the eyes of Israel – what does he do right?**
 - **Although the Israelites wanted a tangible (worldly) leader, Gideon wisely declined the position of King as he rightfully responded that God was their King (1 Sam 8:7, 12:12).**
 - **Gideon's son Abimelech would wickedly become the first king of Israel (Judges 9:6).**
- **According to Judges 8:24, what did Gideon do wrong?**
 - **Instead of a political leader, Gideon wanted to be the Spiritual leader.**

- Gideon erroneously made a replica ephod from the golden jewelry of the defeated Midianites, and put it on display in his hometown of Ophrah (“fawn”).
- According to Judges 8:27, what was the outcome of Gideon’s replica ephod?
 - Israel worshipped a false icon and sought guidance in their own way
 - The true ephod was to be worn by the priest (discerning God’s will – Ex 39:2-26) when he consulted with divine wisdom, but false replicas were sought instead (1 Sam 23:6, 9-12, 30:7-8), so Israel was deprived of true guidance (Hosea 3:4).
 - Frequently, the trophies of past spiritual victories become idolatrous replacements for God’s on-going present work.

Read Judges 8:28-35.... Gideon’s Family and Death

8:28 Israel remained at peace for 40 years. The number “forty” is often associated with testing; Israel will prove in these 40 years that they would once again fall away.

8:29 After receiving fame and glory, Gideon returned to the house where he began.

8:30 Gideon was blessed with a full family of seventy children. All but one would perish because of Gideon’s sin in Shechem (“shoulder”).

8:31 The concubine was Gideon’s personal downfall. The concubine represents the false bride of Christ – the false church.

8:32 Gideon himself would not experience the consequences of the concubine indiscretion, and he would live to a “ripe, old age”.

8:33 The spiritual walk of Gideon influenced the Israelites towards a godly walk; however, the Israelites needed to follow the Lord instead of a man.

8:34 God’s people fall into sin when they don’t recall what the Lord has done for them. Reflection and personal testimony remind believers to be grateful which leads to obedience.

8:35 Although Gideon was named Jerubaal (“Baal will be contended with”), the Israelites returned to worshipping the false god of Baal upon Gideon’s death.

- According to Judges 8:30, how large was Gideon’s family?
 - Gideon was blessed with a full family of seventy children as well as a child from his concubine in Shechem.
 - All but one would perish because of Gideon’s sin in Shechem (“shoulder”).
 - The concubine was Gideon’s personal downfall. The concubine represents the false bride of Christ – the false church.
- According to Judges 8:33, what caused Israel to walk with the Lord?
 - The spiritual walk of Gideon influenced the Israelites towards a godly walk; however, the Israelites needed to follow the Lord instead of a man.
 - Many people live spiritual lives based on someone else’s convictions (e.g. spouse, parent, friend, pastor, etc.), but when that other person is no longer the spiritual inspiration (for whatever reason), believers must follow the Lord.
- According to Judges 8:34, what caused Israel to fall away from the Lord?

- **God’s people fall into sin when they don’t recall what the Lord has done for them.**
- **Reflection and personal testimony remind believers to be grateful which leads to obedience.**
- **What had been the first act of obedience for Gideon?**
 - **Gideon was called Jerubaal (“Baal will be contended with”) b/c he destroyed the idol of Baal**
- **According to Judges 8:33, what did Israel do when Gideon died?**
 - **They returned to worshipping Baal**
 - **Gideon’s first act of obedience had been to destroy the idol of Baal (Judges 5:25-32) which was the reason his father called him “Jerubaal” (“Baal will be contended with”)**

Read Judges 9:1-6.... Gideon’s Family and Death

9:1 Abimelech (means “my father is king”) represents the anti-Christ wrongfully taking the kingly position. Abimelech’s mother was the concubine of Gideon who lived in Shechem (the location of the first altar of Abraham – Gn 12:6 and also the location the Jacob’s daughter Dinah was raped – Gen 34). Ultimately, Shechem will be the location where Israel will be divided into two kingdoms (1 Kings 12).

9:2 Abimelech’s self-seeking ambition leads him to his uncle’s for support as he identifies with them as family.

9:3 The relatives of Abimelech’s mother (Gideon’s concubine) accept his ideas and amplify the merits of his misguiding to their peers – the elders of Shechem. Although Abimelech was also the “brother” of Gideon’s 70 sons, Abimelech identified himself more closely with the world.

9:4 Murderers were paid one piece of silver for each son of Gideon that they were to kill (Mt 26:14-15). The funding for Abimelech’s wicked scheme came from Baal’s temple offerings.

9:5 Abimelech made a “sacrificial slaughter” of his brothers (1 Sam 14:33, 35), but the Lord protected a remnant (Jotham) for himself.

9:6 Beth-millo (meaning “house of millo”/ Millo means “who resembles God”) was a leading family in the area. The Oak in Shechem was the location where:

- Abraham constructed his first altar upon entering Canaan (Gen 12:6-7)
- Jacob buried Rachel’s household idols
- Joshua established a memorial stone witness against those who had accepted the law (Joshua 24:25-26).

- **According to Judges 9:1-2, whose idea was it to make Abimelech king?**
 - **It was Abimelech’s idea; Abimelech (means “my father is king”) represents the anti-Christ wrongfully taking the kingly position.**
 - **Abimelech’s mother was the concubine of Gideon who lived in Shechem (the location between the two mountains of Mt Ebal and Mt Gerizim where the Tribes of Israel shouted blessings and curses at each other).**
- **According to Judges 9:2, did Abimelech identify more closely with his father Gideon’s family or his prostitute mother’s family?**

- Although Abimelech was the “brother” of Gideon’s 70 sons, Abimelech identified himself more closely with the world.
- The relatives of Abimelech’s mother (Gideon’s concubine) accept his ideas and amplify the merits of his misguiding to their peers – the elders of Shechem.
- Abimelech’s self-seeking ambition leads him to his uncle’s for support as he identifies with them as family.
- According to Judges 9:4, where did the lords of Shechem get the money to kill Gideon’s legitimate sons?
 - The funding for Abimelech’s wicked scheme came from Baal’s temple offerings.
 - The worthless murderers would be paid out of Temple funds for the death of Abimelech’s brother
 - Judas was paid out of the Temple funds for the death of Jesus
 - The murderers were paid one piece of silver for each son of Gideon that they were to kill (Mt 26:14-15).
- According to Judges 9:5, when judgment occurs is there ever anyone who survives?
 - Yes, the remnant; Jotham – the youngest son of Jerubbaal/Gideon.
 - Abimelech made a “sacrificial slaughter” of his brothers (1 Sam 14:33, 35), but the Lord protected a remnant (Jotham) for himself.
- According to Judges 9:6, what did the people do at the Oak in Shechem?
 - The people proclaimed Abimelech as king at the Oak in Shechem;
 - The Oak in Shechem was the location of the first altar built by Abram upon entering the Promised Land (Gen 12:6-7)
 - The Oak in Shechem was the location where Jacob buried Rachel’s household idols, and it is also the place where Joshua established a memorial stone witness against those who had accepted the law (Joshua 24:25-26).
 - Beth-millo (meaning “house of millo”/ Millo means “who resembles God”) was a leading family in the area.
 - Shechem was located between the mountains of Gerizim and Ebal where blessings and curses were yelled by the 12 tribes (Dt 11:29)

Read Judges 9:7-15.... Jotham Yells a Parable at the Crowning of his half-brother

9:7 Jotham (“Jehovah is perfect”) climbs to the top of Mt Gerizim where six tribes of Israel had shouted blessings (Dt 11:29). Jotham shouts that God will hear the response of the elders of Shechem.

9:8 The olive tree represents Israel’s millennial glory (Ps 52:8).

9:9 The oil represents the anointing of the Spirit of God. Believers should not trade the testimony of the Spirit for worldly achievement and position.

9:10 The fig tree represents the nation of Israel (Joel 1:7; Amos 4:9) in the New Testament period (e.g. the church age).

9:11 Believers should care more about bearing fruit for the Lord than worldly achievement and position.

9:12 The grapevine represents Israel during the patriarch and Old Testament times.

9:13 Wine represents the joy of salvation through the redeeming blood of Jesus (Ps 104:15-16). Believers should not trade in the joy of salvation for worldly achievement and position.

9:14 The bramble bush is a wilderness plant of thorns (consequences of sin).

9:15 The bramble bush offers no shade and was only used for fire kindling.

- **According to Judges 9:7, where does Jotham yell the parable from?**
 - **Jotham (“Jehovah is perfect”) climbs to the top of Mt Gerizim where six tribes of Israel had shouted blessings (Dt 11:29).**
 - **Jotham shouts that God will hear the response of the elders of Shechem.**
- **In the story, who is the olive tree? Israel BC?**
 - **The olive tree represents Israel’s millennial glory (Ps 52:8).**
 - **The oil represents the anointing of the Spirit of God. Believers should not trade the testimony of the Spirit for worldly achievement and position.**
- **In the story, who is the fig tree? Israel AD?**
 - **The fig tree represents the nation of Israel (Joel 1:7; Amos 4:9) in the New Testament period (e.g. the church age).**
 - **Believers should care more about bearing fruit for the Lord than worldly achievement and position.**
- **In the story, who is the grapevine? The Church?**
 - **The grapevine represents Israel during the patriarch and Old Testament times.**
 - **Wine represents the joy of salvation through the redeeming blood of Jesus (Ps 104:15-16). Believers should not trade in the joy of salvation for worldly achievement and position.**
- **What does the bramble bush represent?**
 - **The bramble bush is a wilderness plant of thorns (consequences of sin).**
 - **The bramble bush offers no shade and was only used for fire kindling.**

Read Judges 9:16-21.... Jotham Curses Abimelech

9:16 Jotham tells Abimelech that if his actions were right, then all is fine.

9:17 Jotham reminds Abimelech that his father (Jotham’s father) saved Abimelech from the Midianites.

9:18 Jotham uses their words against them as they have admitted brotherhood with the murderer.

9:19 Jotham does not judge their actions, and he tells them that they will be blessed according to the right that they have done.

- **According to Judges 9:18, what association does Jotham give to the men of Shechem?**
 - **They are the brothers of the murderer**
 - **Jotham uses their words against them as they have admitted brotherhood with the murderer.**
- **According to Judges 9:20, who does Jotham warn will murder the men of Shechem?**

- **Their “brother” Abimelech**
- **Fire represents judgment, and Jotham foretells that “they will get as good as they gave.”**
- **Jotham turns the wicked over to the judgment of God.**

Read Judges 9:22-25.... God Brings About Jotham’s Curse

9:20 Jotham turns the wicked over to the judgment of God. Fire represents judgment, and Jotham foretells that “they will get as good as they gave.” Their sin will find them out.

9:21 Jotham fled to Beer (meaning “well” – Joshua 19:8)

9:22 The first 3 ½ years of the tribulation will be peace. For a time, it might seem that one can live successfully in sin, but in the end, sin will result in downfall and death (Num 32:23)

9:23 The sovereign God commands even evil spirits as He is the one source of all things (1 Kings 22:22; Isaiah 45:7; Amos 3:6; Eccl 7:14; Ex 4:11).

9:24 God acted to avenge the death of Gideon’s sons; this was an act of the avenger of blood.

9:25 Evil companions turn on each other. Even leaders who take control by violent coup wish for peace after they are exalted.

- **According to Judges 9:22, how long did Abimelech rule over Shechem?**
 - **It was a 3-year time period with wicked leader Abimelech**
 - **The first 3 ½ years of the tribulation will be peace.**
 - **For a time, it might seem that one can live successfully in sin, but in the end, sin will result in downfall and death (Num 32:23)**
- **According to Judges 9:23, what did God send to judge Abimelech and the lords of Shechem?**
 - **An evil spirit**
 - **The sovereign God commands even evil spirits (1 Kings 22:22).**
- **According to Judges 9:25, who rebelled against Abimelech?**
 - **The lords of Shechem – Abimelech’s evil companions**
 - **Eventually, evil companions turn on each other.**
 - **Even leaders who take control by violent coup wish for peace after they are exalted.**

Read Judges 9:26-41.... Abimelech Overcomes Gaal’s Revolt

9:26 Gaal (“rejection/loathing”) son of Ebed (“slave”) began speaking against Abimelech.

9:27 As Gaal celebrated, he trampled and destroyed the vineyard. Often the vineyard represents Israel. Gaal and his companions worship their false god.

9:28 Gaal uses the fact that Jerubbaal is Abimelech’s father against him, and he calls for a return to the old idolatrous traditions of Hamor, the original inhabitants of Shechem (Gen 33:19) who Simeon and Levi had slaughtered (Gen 34:2-4).

9:29 Gaal brags and boasts and calls Abimelech to bring his army. After partying in the vineyard, Gaal might have been intoxicated.

9:30 Zebul (“habitation”) was angered by the gossip.

- 9:31 Zebul insured a secret message got to Abimelech in regards to Gaal usurping Abimelech's authority and urging Shechem to revolt.
- 9:32 Abimelech ironically planned on ambushing those who ambushed others (Judges 9:25).
- 9:33 With the morning light comes judgment as Abimelech is encouraged to wake up early to attack Shechem (just as Joshua had done with Jericho (Joshua 6:12-15) and as Gideon woke early the day of his battle (Judges 7:1).
- 9:34 Instead of getting up early, Abimelech woke up in the night to arrive early.
- 9:35 Gaal may have been struggling with a hangover after the prior night's party in the vineyard, but he went to the entrance of the city.
- 9:36 Clearly, Zebul was also awake early and standing at the gate with Gaal. Zebul delayed Gaal's response to Abimelech's assault by telling him that Abimelech's men were only shadows from the mountain.
- 9:37 Gaal attempts to prove to Zebul that people were coming to attack Shechem.
- 9:38 Zebul informed Gaal who the attackers were and the reason that they had come.
- 9:39 Gaal partnered with the lords of Shechem who had made Abimelech king to fight Abimelech.
- 9:40 Gaal ended up fleeing as many died.
- 9:41 Zebul drove Gaal out of Shechem.

Read Judges 9:43-57.... Abimelech Kills the Men of Shechem and Dies

- 9:43 Once again, Abimelech lay in wait to ambush the people of Shechem.
- 9:45 Just like Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:24-26), Abimelech judged Shechem and covered the city with salt to kill everything making the ground unfit to farm.
- 9:46 Shechem had sent Abimelech to recruit murderers from Baal-berith (Judges 9:4), but now they entered the inner room of El-berith ("God of the covenant"). There is no safety in the refuge of false gods.
- 9:47 All the elders who had taken refuge in the tower were together
- 9:48 "Zalmon" means "shady" inferring that Mt Zalmon may have been a wooded area. Abimelech urged his companions to follow his example.
- 9:49 Within the tower on the ground floor, Abimelech lit a fire with all of the wood collected by each of his people which killed 1,000 men and women.
- 9:50 Some of the Israelites had fled Shechem to the neighboring town of Thebez (meaning "fine linen/silk"). Thebez is thought to be approximately 10 miles northeast of Shechem.
- 9:51 The tower of most towns at that time was a refuge in time of attack.
- 9:52 Abimelech himself was to start a fire at the base of the tower (as he had done at Shechem – 9:49) bringing Abimelech near the base of the tower.
- 9:53 Just as the beast at the end of times (Rev 13:3), Abimelech suffered a fatal blow on the head.
- 9:54 Abimelech continued to worry about his reputation even to his death. Instead of being concerned about the afterlife while living, Abimelech focused on this fleeting, temporal world while dying.
- 9:55 Abimelech was the instigator of the violence, and when he died the violence subsided.
- 9:56 God punished Abimelech according to his sin (Num 32:23).

- **According to Judges 9:49, was Shechem's Tower an adequate refuge against Abimelech?**
 - **No, the Tower became a death-trap that captured and held Shechem's men**
- **According to Judges 9:53, what saved the Tower of Thebez from being burned down?**
 - **A woman threw a millstone that mortally wounded Abimelech's head.**
 - **Just as the beast at the end of times (Rev 13:3), Abimelech suffered a fatal blow on the head.**
- **According to Judges 9:54, as Abimelech was dying, what concerned him?**
 - **Abimelech continued to worry about his reputation even to his death.**
 - **Instead of being concerned about the afterlife while living, Abimelech focused on this fleeting, temporal world while dying.**
 - **Some people are so focused on their reputation in this world that it blinds them to the truths of eternity.**

Read Judges 10:1-2.... Tola as the (unique) Sixth Judge

10:1 Tola was unique from the other judges in that he defended the people of God whereas the other judges mainly liberated God's people.

10:2 Tola was buried in Shamir (which means a "sharp thorn"). Thorns represented the consequences of sin as Jesus had to bear the thorny crown at His crucifixion (John 19:5).

- **Tola was unique from the other judges in that he defended the people of God whereas the other judges mainly liberated God's people.**
- **In Old Testament times, the tola worm would climb up a tree to bear kids and die.**
 - **When the tola "baby" worms were born, they would eat their dead "parent" worm before climbing off of the tree.**
 - **They would leave a red stain where the "parent" worm died that would turn to white shavings over 2-3 days of sunlight.**
- **Tola means "a scarlet worm", and a Tola is a worm that produces a scarlet die.**
 - **Jesus is portrayed as a worm sent to die for scarlet sin on the cross (Ps 22:1-6).**
- **Tola ("the scarlet worm") was the son of Puah ("separate") who was the son of Dodo ("beloved").**
 - **The "beloved" (Dodo) "Jesus" (Tola) left "heaven" (Puah) to become as a "worm" to die for the scarlet sin of man (Is 1:18).**
- **Tola ("the scarlet worm") was buried in Shamir (which means a "sharp thorn").**
 - **Thorns represented the consequences of sin as Jesus had to bear the thorny crown at His crucifixion (John 19:5).**
- **Tola was from the tribe of Issachar ("he will bring reward") who was the only western tribe victorious in the valley against the iron chariots of the Canaanites (Judges 5:15).**

Read Judges 10:3-5.... Jair as the Seventh Judge

10:3 Jair means “enlightenment” who came from Gilead (meaning a “rocky region”).

The Hebrew spelling of the name “Jair” is very similar to the Hebrew spelling of “donkey”.

10:4 Three is the number of revelation/resurrection (Judges 12:9) and this was true ten-fold of Jairs sons. Donkeys represent once stubborn beasts that were now submissive. The towns reflect governing.

10:5 Kaman means “raised”. Upon the resurrection (Kaman) of Christ, all of His believers (spiritual offspring) would overcome their rebellious natures (tame the stubborn donkey) and provide (spiritual) leadership in the cities of God (similar to the cities of Jair – Havoth Jair).

- **Jair means “enlightenment” who came from Gilead (meaning a “rocky region”).**
 - **The Hebrew spelling of the name “Jair” is very similar to the Hebrew spelling of “donkey”.**
 - **Donkeys represent once stubborn beasts that were now submissive.**
 - **The towns symbolize “governing.”**
- **Kaman means “raised”.**
- **Upon the resurrection (Kaman) of Christ, all of His believers (spiritual offspring) would overcome their rebellious natures (tame the stubborn donkey) and provide (spiritual) leadership in the cities of God**

Read Judges 10:6-16.... Idolatry leads to Slavery

10:6 The seven false gods listed represent the fullness of the people’s rebellion. The people could worship all of the false gods together (universality), but they would not worship the one true God along with the others.

10:7 Israel represented the apostate church which the Lord sold Israel into the hands of the Philistines and Ammonites. His people were indeed His to sell (Judges 2:14, 3:8, 4:2, 10:7) “To sell” is the opposite of “to redeem.” Jephthah will have conflict with Ammon while Samson has conflict with the Philistines.

10:8 The Israelites should have shattered and crushed their idols, but instead God’s judgment was shattering and crushing them.

10:9 These three tribes (Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim) were renowned for their fighting prowess, so the Ammonites were defeating Israel’s best.

10:10 God’s people understood that although they bring trouble to each other (the second commandment), every sin is against the Lord (the first commandment).

10:11-12 Lord had saved them from 7 enemies representing fullness of salvation.

10:14-16 Israel cried out without total repentance

- **According to Judges 10:6, how many false gods were Israel worshipping?**
 - **At least seven - the “seven” represents the fullness of the people’s rebellion.**
 - **The people could worship all of the false gods together (universality), but they would not worship the one true God along with the others.**
- **According to Judges 10:8, what did the enemies do to Israel?**

- **The Israelites should have shattered and crushed their idols, but instead God’s judgment was shattering and crushing them.**
- **According to Judges 10:10, why did God reject Israel’s cry?**
 - **Israel did not destroy the false idols**
- **According to Judges 10:16, why did Israel’s misery become weary for the Lord?**
 - **Israel got rid of their false gods**

Read Judges 11:1-8.... The Warrior Jephthah as the Eighth Judge

11:1 Although a prostitute’s son, Jephthah (“Yahweh the opener”) was one of those listed in the “Hall of Faith” from Hebrews chapter 11.

11:2 In Scripture, Israel is represented as the wife of the Lord, and the Jewish offspring also rejected the Lord Jesus.

11:3 Just as Jesus Christ was rejected by the Israel and turned to the Gentiles (without the law), Jephthah was denied by Gilead (Manasseh) and turned to lawless men.

11:4 Ammon (meaning “tribal”) represent those who gather with intellectual consent of the gospel without truly believing and submitting to the truth.

11:5-6 In the last days, the social church (Ammon) will turn against Jesus (represented by Jephthah) while Israel (Gilead) accepts the Lord Jesus as their commander/ruler.

11:7-8 Before Jesus (represented by Jephthah) agrees to return to His people, they must recognize, admit and repent of past sin. This repentance leads to Jesus as their personal Savior.

11:9-10 Before Jesus (represented by Jephthah) agrees to return to His people, they must submit to His Lordship. This submission leads to Jesus as their personal Lord.

11:11 Jephthah restated his conditions for leadership at Mizpah (meaning “watch tower”) because Gilead was now under his protection.

- **Jephthah (“Yahweh the opener”) was one of those listed in the “Hall of Faith” from Hebrews chapter 11.**
- **What other Judge was called a “great warrior”?**
 - **Jephthah is referenced as the same “great warrior” as Gideon (Judges 6:12).**
- **In the New Testament, who would be rejected by His brothers?**
 - **In Scripture, Israel is represented as the wife of the Lord, and the Jewish offspring also rejected the Lord Jesus.**
 - **Just as Jesus was born into the idolatrous nation of Israel, Jephthah was born to a prostitute.**
- **When Jesus was rejected by His Brothers (Jews), what lawless men would accept Him?**
 - **Gentiles - Just as Jesus Christ was rejected by the Israel and turned to the Gentiles (without the law), Jephthah was denied by Gilead (Manasseh) and turned to lawless men.**
- **According to Judges 10:7-8, what do the men of Gilead need to do before Jephthah becomes their leader?**
 - **Before Jesus (represented by Jephthah) agrees to return to His people, they must recognize, admit and repent of past sin.**

- **This repentance leads to Jesus as their personal Savior.**

Read Judges 11:12-22.... The King of the Ammonites Mis-states History

11:12-13 Jephthah mercifully reaches out to reason with the King of Ammon, but Ammon mistakenly lays claim to rights over the land God had given to Israel.

11:14-15 Although this world claims to be “intellectually honest” and factually based, often modify so-called facts and history to suit their purposes. Jephthah patiently explains the truth to the Ammonite King.

11:16-18 When Israel left Egypt, they did not begin wars with Edom or Moab, but stayed safely outside of their jurisdictions.

11:19-20 The Israelites also stayed outside of the boundary of Sihon (King of the Amorites), but he decided to attack Israel regardless of their peaceful intentions; this is much like the Six Day War in 1967 when Egypt/Syria/Jordan attacked Israel and lost decisively. Within six days, Israel tripled its territory, gaining the Sinai Peninsula, the Golan Heights, the West Bank, and (most prized of all) the Old City and the Temple Mount.

11:21-22 Because Israel was attacked, they then had a right to defend against the Amorites and upon victory of the war, take ownership of the land.

- **According to Judges 10:12, does Jephthah immediately attack the King of the Ammonites?**
 - **No - Jephthah mercifully reaches out to reason with the King of Ammon**
- **According to Judges 10:13-28, did the King of the Ammonites have a grasp of the truth when he claimed this social injustice?**
 - **No, but Jephthah did and Jephthah patiently explains the truth to the Ammonite King.**
 - **Ammon mistakenly lays claim to rights over the land God had given to Israel.**
 - **Although this world claims to be “intellectually honest” and factually based, often modify so-called facts and history to suit their purposes.**
 - **When Israel left Egypt, they did not begin wars with Edom or Moab, but stayed safely outside of their jurisdictions.**
 - **The Israelites also stayed outside of the boundary of Sihon (King of the Amorites), but he decided to attack Israel regardless of their peaceful intentions;**
 - **This is much like the Six Day War in 1967 when Egypt/Syria/Jordan attacked Israel and lost decisively. Within six days, Israel tripled its territory, gaining the Sinai Peninsula, the Golan Heights, the West Bank, and (most prized of all) the Old City and the Temple Mount.**
 - **Because Israel was attacked, they then had a right to defend against the Amorites and upon victory of the war, take ownership of the land.**

Discuss Judges 11:23-29.... Testimony of God Giving Land to Israel In Past

11:23 This land had been possessed by the Moabites who then lost the land to Sihon, the King of the Amorites (Judges 10:8). **When the Amorites lost the land to Israel,**

control of the land had been allowed by God to pass to Israel; the Ammonites had never possessed this land.

11:24 Just as the Ammonites justified their conquests through their false god Chemosh, Israel would also justify their inheritance of the land through Jehovah.

11:25 Balak, the King of Moab, watched Israel take over the Amorite land (the land once possessed by Moab), but he was unwilling to attack Israel (Numbers 22:2). The Ammonite King had less rights to the land than Balak.

11:26 By this time, Israel had lived in possession of the land for three centuries, and the Ammonites had never claimed rights to this land until this time of Jephthah.

11:27 Although the world hurls false claims at God's people, it is the world who is in the wrong. God is the Judge, and He will decide.

11:28 The world denies the truth and refuses to listen to any reality that contradicts their selfish desires.

11:29 The result of the Spirit of the Lord falling upon Jephthah was God's judgment in war upon the oppressive and truth-denying Ammonites.

Read Judges 11:30-40.... Jephthah Makes a Poor Vow to God

11:30 The Spirit was moving in Jephthah, and the Lord would judge righteously in the battle, but Jephthah unwisely proclaimed an unnecessary vow for victory. (Ps 66:13-15).

11:31 As individuals were offered to the service of the Temple, a burnt offering would have been an appropriate sacrifice to symbolize complete devotion (1 Sam 1:25)

11:32-33 Although the Ammonites had instigated the conflict (Judges 11:4-5), Israel went on the offensive and were victorious. Twenty cities ("2" symbolizes witness) were defeated.

11:34 Jephthah's daughter celebrated the worldly victory without realizing the spiritual ramifications of the success.

11:35 Believers should be very careful about commitments that are made.

11:36 The child submitted to the commitment of the father and correctly credited the victory to the Lord.

11:37-38 Two (witness) months of mourning her childless state were allowed her. The number "two" is repeated three times in these verses (emphasizing witness). She would wander in the mountains, which often relate to an elevated spiritual state.

11:39 God made clear that human sacrifice was an abomination (Deut 12:31, 18:9-13), so the offering was a dedication to God's work in His Temple.

- This commitment resulted in her life-long virginity and no offspring (Lev 27:5; 1 Sam 1:24; Lk 2:37).
- The other theory is that Israel had grown so far away from God, and had embraced the Canaanite worship of false gods to such a degree, that Jephthah made a sacrifice to Jehovah in the same manner as a Canaanite would to a false god – through human sacrifice.

11:40 The Hebrew word "commemorate" is the same word as in Judges 5:11.

- **According to Judges 11:30-31, what was the vow that Jephthah made?**

- As individuals were offered to the service of the Temple, a burnt offering would have been an appropriate sacrifice to symbolize complete devotion (1 Sam 1:25)
- God made clear that human sacrifice was an abomination (Deut 12:31, 18:9-13), so the offering was a dedication to God's work in His Temple.
- This commitment resulted in her life-long virginity and no offspring (Lev 27:5; 1 Sam 1:24; Lk 2:37).

"Whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the people of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD's,

Judges 11:31

and 

In the Hebrew language, the letter **VAV** can mean either **"AND"** or **"OR"**

I will offer it up as a burnt offering."

- According to Judges 11:34, what was the reaction of Jephthah's daughter to the worldly victory?
 - Jephthah's daughter celebrated the worldly victory without realizing the spiritual ramifications of the success.
 - The child submitted to the commitment of the father and correctly credited the victory to the Lord.
- Are vows to God necessary?
 - No – men have little control over their lives. (James 4:13-15)
 - Believers should be very careful about commitments that are made. (Mt 5:37)

4 Judges 12, 13, 14

Read Judges 12:1-6.... Ephraim complains (again) against Jephthah

- 12:1 Once again Ephraim picks a fight with their brothers (Judges 8:1-3) through jealousy and self-focus. Ephraim was the Tribe of Joshua (Numbers 13:8). Ephraim heads east to Zaphon which was north of Gad.
- 12:2 Just as Jephthah corrected the King of the Ammonites on his history (Judges 11:13-28), Jephthah now corrects Ephraim as he had called for their help.
- 12:3 The Lord is recognized as the one who delivered the Ammonites into the hands of Jephthah.
- 12:4 The Ephraimites began to slander the men of Gilead, and so they were defeated.
- 12:5 Gilead controlled the crossroads at the river to assess the evacuees.
- 12:6 The Ephraimites were judged by their words (Mt 12:36-37).
- 12:7 Jephthah judged only six years (6 being the number of man – dissatisfaction), and then he was buried in an unspecific place (no town is mentioned).

- Once again Ephraim picks a fight with their brothers (Judges 8:1-3) through jealousy and self-focus.
- According to Judges 12:1, what was Ephraim's complaint?
 - That they weren't called to assist in battle.
 - Ephraim was Deborah's tribe, and this is the second of two times that Ephraim reveals their self-centered pride (the first time was with Gideon (Judges 8:1-3)
 - Ephraim is jealous of their "brother's" spiritual victory (Philippians 2:3).
- According to Judges 12:2-3, how does Jephthah correct them with what really happened?
 - Ephraim was called but they were slow to respond
 - God's invitations are not "open" to be accepted at our leisure
- According to Judges 12:4-6, how were the Ephraimites judged?
 - The Ephraimites were judged by their words (Mt 12:36-37).
 - The test word Shibboleth ("river") symbolizes that their very life depended on their treatment of "water" (i.e. the living water).
 - 42,000 (7x6) Ephraimites died because of their pride, their contention with their brothers and their poor speech.

Discuss Judges 12:8-10.... Ibzan as the Ninth Judge

12:8 **Ibzan ("whiteness") was from Bethlehem ("House of Bread") and was buried in Bethlehem (Judges 12:10).**

- There were multiple "Bethlehem's"; Bethlehem Ephrathah was in Judah while another Bethlehem was in Zebulun (Joshua 19:15).

12:9 In scripture, a son often represents leadership/will/action while the daughter represents submission/waiting.

- Three is the number of revelation/resurrection while seven represents perfection.
- During this time, there was perfect order with obedience in action as well as obedience in submission.

- **The Jewish Talmud identifies Ibzan as Boaz (Ruth 2).**

- **Just as Boaz married Ruth, the Moabite, Ibzan allowed his children to marry outside of the family (possibly unequally yoked).**

- Ibzan seemed to develop alliances with those outside of his tribe just as Jesus extended the gospel to the Gentiles.

12:10 That Ibzan was born and buried in Bethlehem seems to represent a steadfastness and faithfulness.

Discuss Judges 12:11-12.... Elon as the Tenth Judge

12:11-12 **The meaning of the names emphasizes the power and might of Elon.**

- Elon ("strong/oak") was from Zebulun ("dwelling") and was buried in Zebulun in the town of Aijalon ("strength/large stag").
- The number ten often represents organization.
- **That Elon was born and buried in Zebulun seems to represent a steadfastness and faithfulness.**

Discuss Judges 12:13-15.... Abdon as the Eleventh Judge

12:13-15 Abdon (“servant”) was the son of Hillel (“to be praised”) was from Pirathon (“summit/ruler”) and was buried in Pirathon.

- Eight years tells of a new beginning as the servant (Abdon) is elevated (Pirathon). Seventy (meaning complete) male descendants rode donkeys (Judges 5:10) which represent the old nature submitting to productive use.
- **The fruits/offspring of Abdon’s life led to a time of testing (40 sons) which led to revelation (30 grandsons) about complete submission of the old rebellious nature (70 donkeys).**

Read Judges 13:1-7.... Samson as the Twelfth (Final Judge in the Book)

13:1 The sixth time that Israel did evil in the Lord’s sight leads to the last judge mentioned in Judges – Samson.

13:2 Barren women of the Old Testament (e.g. Sarah, Hannah, etc.) point to the miraculous birth of the Lord Jesus by Mary.

13:3 The Angel of the Lord (Christophany) confirmed that Manoah’s wife was barren, but foretells her bearing a son.

13:6 Barren wife recognizes Angel of God immediately, but Manoah only recognized much later after the altar (13:16, 21).

13:7 Samson was to be a Nazirite from birth to death, and in many ways, was born to die (Judges 16:30).

- **According to Judges 12:2, which Tribe was Samson from?**
 - His father - Manoah (“rest”) – was of the tribe of Dan (“judging”) and lived in Zorah (“she was smitten with leprosy”)
- **What were the three requirements of the Nazarite vow? (Numbers 6:1-8)**
 - **Samson would break each three of these requirements**

Samson was to adhere to the three requirements of the Nazarite Vow. Samson violated each of them. (Judges 13:4-5 / Numbers 6:1-8)		
<u>Interpretation</u>	<u>Guideline</u>	<u>Broken Law</u>
1. Worldly Pleasures	No Wine	Judges 14:10
2. Unclean Things	Touch Nothing Unclean	Judges 14:6-9
3. Submission	No Hair Cuts	Judges 16:19

Read Judges 13:8-14.... The Angel of the Lord visits Manoah’s Wife (again)

13:9 It is a great value that God listens to the prayer of Manoah, and God responds with a second visit.

13:10 Samson’s mother depended on Manoah to hear the message.

13:11 This Angel of the Lord is thought to be Jesus – the great “I Am.” (Ex 3:14)

13:12 Manoah’s questioning of God’s will was ignored while the Angel of the Lord emphasized obedience.

13:13 Samson would be a Nazirite during his time in the womb, so Samson’s mother must keep the Nazirite vows during her pregnancy.

- **What did Manoah pray for?**

- That they would know how to parent the child that God was going to give them
- Why did the Angel of the Lord visit Manoah's wife both times He visited?
 - The wife needed to take action during her pregnancy
- How did the Angel of the Lord answer Manoah's questions in verse 12?
 - Manoah's questioning of Samson's ministry was ignored while the Angel of the Lord emphasized obedience.

Read Judges 13:16-21...Manoah & a Burnt Offering for The Angel of the Lord

13:16 The Angel of the Lord would not eat with Manoah, but would stay for a burnt offering (representing a total dedication to the Lord).

13:17-18 Manoah promises to honor the name of the Angel of the Lord, but the Name is Wonderful in its own right (Isaiah 9:6).

13:19 The One whose name is Wonderful did something wonderful with the offering.

13:20 When the Angel of the Lord went upward in the flame of the burnt offering, Manoah and his wife fell to the ground.

13:21 Manoah recognized the identity of the Angel of the Lord after the altar experience. The Angel of the Lord did not appear again which substantiated His identity.

- According to Judges 13:17, why did Manoah want to know the Angel of the Lord's name?
 - Manoah promises to honor the name of the Angel of the Lord, but the Name is Wonderful in its own right (Isaiah 9:6).
- What does a burnt sacrifice symbolize?
 - A life of dedication
 - The One whose name is Wonderful did something wonderful with the offering.

Read Judges 13:22-25...Manoah Reassured by his Wife

13:22 Manoah is fearful because no one can see the Lord and live (Ex 33:20); however, to see the Lord face-to-face means the Lord talking directly and plainly (Ex 33:11; Num 12:8). Gideon had earlier shown the same fear (Judges 6:22).

13:23 God's approval of us is based upon His acceptance of our offering.

13:24 Samson ("his sun/his service") was blessed by the Lord.

13:25 The Spirit of the Lord brings His power.

- According to Judges 13:22, what was Manoah's response when he recognized that he had seen the Angel of the Lord?
 - Just like Gideon (Judges 6:22-23), Manoah thought that he was going to die
- According to Judges 13:23, why did the wife of Manoah reason that the Angel of the Lord would not kill them?
 - The Lord had accepted their sacrifice
 - The Lord had revealed His plan/ministry for them
- According to Judges 13:25, where was Samson raised?
 - This location between Zorah (meaning "hornet") and Eshtaol (meaning "to ask/entreat") was the location that Samson was buried (Judges 16:31).

- **The Lord bless Samson (Judges 13:24), and the Spirit of the Lord began to direct Samson.**

Read Judges 14:1-4...Samson Falls for a Philistine Woman

14:1 Timnath (meaning “to restrain/hold in check/divide”) was land in southeast Israel near the land of the Philistines that originally belonged to the tribe of Judah (Joshua 15:57), but later was given up to the tribe of Dan (Joshua 19:43).

14:2 The first words captured in Scripture from Samson are “*I have seen a young Philistine woman...*” Samson will struggle with his eyes as well as women.

14:3 Samson’s parents corrected Samson and told him that he should find a wife among the Israelites.

14:4 Although Samson was following his own sinful desires instead of walking in submission to the Lord, God used Samson’s failing for His ultimate purpose against the Philistines.

- **According to Judges 14:3, were Samson’s parents correct in directing him to marry an Israelite woman?**
 - **Yes, that is the guidance that God had given them**
- **According to Judges 14:4, what was from the Lord?**
 - **That Samson would be attracted to a Philistine woman**
- **According to Judges 14:4, why did the Lord want Samson to be attracted to the Philistine woman?**
 - **God was seeking an occasion against the Philistines**
 - **The Philistines were ruling over Israel**

Read Judges 14:5-9...Samson Kills a Lion & Scooped Honey from Its Carcass

14:5 It appears that Samson parents conceded to Samson wrong desire. They may have remained on the road while Samson took a shortcut off the road (Judges 14:8)

14:6 The Spirit of the Lord enabled Samson to tear the lion apart.

14:7 The woman was “right” in Samson’s eyes just as “everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” (Judges 17:6, 21:25). God’s people are not to live by sight (Numbers 15:39; 2 Corinthians 5:7)

14:8 In ancient times, during the engagement period, the groom would leave his fiancé for a time to prepare their dwelling place.

14:9 Samson’s parents thought that he was giving them a nice gift, but he was offering them honey from a carcass.

Read Judges 14:10-15...Samson Tells the Men at the Wedding a Riddle

14:10 Samson’s wedding feast was to last 7 days (Revelation 19:7-9)

14:11 “Three” is often the number of revelations in Scripture. The Philistines felt it necessary for Samson to have 30 men surveilling him.

14:12 Samson instigates the challenge as His parable would seem difficult to explain. The mystery of the gospel will also be explained through His bride (the church).

14:13 Samson may not have appreciated having the 39 men entourage at his wedding, so he believed these Philistines would need to pay with 30 garments, and they complied.

14:14 The number three often represents “revelation/resurrection”, and these Philistines had no revelation of the parable.

14:15 This threat of the bride and father being burned to death was a foretelling of actual events, so the bride's fear of these worldly Philistines drove her to their judgment (Judges 15:6)

Read Judges 14:16-20...The Philistine Woman Tricks Samson to Answer the Riddle

14:16 The bride puts more faith in the wicked Philistines than she does her groom because she is of the Philistines. Believers should trust the Lord for refuge in spite of the threats of the world.

14:17 The bride of Samson was made miserable by her attempts at betrayal. Just as with Delilah, Samson allowed his treacherous bride to nag him into telling a secret that would cost him.

14:18 The Philistines gained head knowledge (without conviction) before sunset (foreshadowing spiritual darkness).

14:19 Ashkelon was the oldest Canaanite seaport, one of the five cities of the Philistines (Joshua 13:3; 1 Samuel 6:17), and possibly the birthplace of Herod the Great.

14:20 While Samson, the groom, was fulfilling his pledge, the Philistine bride was given to one of the Philistines that had overseen Samson.

- **According to Judges 14:17, how is Samson's Fiancé like Delilah?**
 - **They both deceived Samson at the behest of evil men**
- **According to Judges 14:18, how does the riddle typify Jesus?**

Samson as a Type of Jesus		
<u>Situation</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>	<u>Reference</u>
Lion Killed by Samson	Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Jesus) crucified, so that pleasing life sustenance is given from His broken body	Judges 14:6
Those who understand "mystery" will receive Samson's coverings	Those who understand God's truth will be covered with the righteousness of Jesus	Judges 14:12
Those who don't understand the mystery will lose their own garments	Those who do not understand the gospel will lose even their self-righteousness	Judges 14:13
Those who gained insight from others will receive the garments of others	Those whose head knowledge came from others will bear the coverings of others.	Judges 14:19

5 Judges 15, 16, 17

Read Judges 15:1-5...Samson Takes Revenge on Losing His Philistine Bride

15:1 As the Barley harvest represents the Passover, the wheat harvest represents the Pentecost while the Olive/Grape harvest represents the Feast of Tabernacles. The goat offering typically represents the sin offering. Although Samson had done nothing wrong, his Philistine bride had, so the groom was providing the sin sacrifice for his bride.

15:2 The bride's father had given the Philistine woman to another Philistine.

15:3 Although Samson may have indeed been responsible for his violence towards the Philistines, this time Samson was appropriately judging them.

15:4 Samson may have taken cord tied to a torch and released the foxes 150 times; Scripture does not say whether this was during a day or over a period of time.

15:5 As with the day of Atonement, Samson burned the vineyards and olive groves.

- **According to Judges 15:1, what was Samson’s gift to his bride?**
 - A Goat represents a sin offering
 - This speaks to Samson’s second coming to his bride w/ the goat (sin offering)
- **According to Judges 15:4, what animal did Samson use for judgment?**
 - In Scripture, foxes represent political leaders (Lk 13:32)
- **According to Judges 15:5, how did Samson send out the 300 foxes?**
 - Two who go together are often witnesses
- **According to Judges 15:4-5, where did Samson tie the fire?**
 - Fiery tails Scripturally represent false prophets (Is 9:15)
 - 300 (2 witnesses apiece) foxes (Lk 13:32 - political leaders) w/ fiery tails (Isaiah 9:15 – false prophets); Political leaders going out two by two (Pres/VP) with false prophets.
- **Spiritually, when will the mass killing of Jesus’ intended bride occur?**
 - The Tribulation will destroy those who rejected Jesus
 - At His second coming, Jesus will judge those who rejected Him.

Read Judges 15:6-10...The Judgment of the Philistines

15:6 The Philistines cruelly burned the Philistine woman and her father just as they had threatened to do. (Judges 14:15)

15:7 Just the Philistines did what was right in their eyes, Samson would not take revenge as was right in his eyes. Both the Philistines and Samson felt wronged.

15:8 The hip (like the shoulder) represents power and might; Samson had defeated the Philistine’s strength. Etam (meaning “bird/covering/hawk ground”) was later mentioned in the vicinity of Bethlehem and Tekoah of the Tribe of Judah (2 Chron 11:6).

15:9 The Philistines were located on the Mediterranean coastal lowlands, so they would always “go up” into Israel. Lehi means “jawbone.”

15:10 The Israelites of Lehi did not understand the unprovoked attack by the Philistines.

- **According to Judges 15:6, what did the Philistines do to the Philistine bride and her father?**
- **The Philistines did just what they had threatened at her wedding; they burned her, her father and their home to the ground (Judges 14:15)**
 - Only her intended groom (Samson/Jesus) could have saved her from the wicked men

Read Judges 15:11-13...Samson’s Israeli Brothers Turn Him Over To The Gentiles

15:11 A group of 3,000 Judeans went to confront Samson about those who ruled over them. Later, the Jews had the same understanding that the Romans ruled over them, and many today believe that the world rules over them.

15:12 The Israelites from Judah did not argue as to whether Samson was right, they just planned to arrest him to assuage the Philistines who they feared.

15:13 Samson’s Israelite brothers tied him up to turn him over to the Gentile Philistines.

- **According to Judges 15:11, how many Jews came to arrest Samson?**
 - 3,000 Jews which equates to the number of Philistines that Samson will kill at his death (Judges 16:27)

- **What other time did Israelite brothers turn their Savior over to the Gentiles to die?**
 - **Judah turning over Samson to Philistines (Judges 15:11) just as the Jews turned Jesus over to the Romans)**
- **What might the two new ropes represent?**
 - **Bound with two new ropes 15:13: possibly represent the two charges brought against Christ**
 1. **That He was a blasphemer claiming to be God, and the other**
 2. **That He was setting Himself up as a king in opposition to Caesar.**
 - **The one “justified” His condemnation by the Jews; the other, His condemnation by Rome.**

Read Judges 15:14-20...Samson Kills 1,000 Philistines with a Jawbone of a Donkey

15:14 The Spirit of the Lord gave Samson his unworldly strength.

15:15 Samson killed 1,000 Philistines with the donkey jawbone (Dt 32:30). The same number of men died in the tower of Shechem (Judges 9:49) who had depended on something other than God for refuge.

15:16 Just as others had a victory song, so did Samson (Moses-Ex15, Miriam-Ex 15, Deborah-Judges 5).

15:17 Ramath-lehi means “Jawbone Hill.” Samson named the location of his victory in Lehi where the battle took place (Judges 15:14)

15:18 Samson gives credit for the victory to the Lord, but also complains of his thirst just as Jesus is thirsty on the cross (Jn 19:28)

15:19 En-hakkore means “Fountain of him that called/prayed.” Water came out of the ground for Samson just as God had provided water in the wilderness from stone for His people at Massah/Meribah (Ex 17:5-7) and Kadesh (Num 20:10-12).

15:20 Moses judged against the Philistines for 20 years.

- **According to Judges 15:15, what did Samson use to kill 1,000 Philistines?**
 - **The jawbone of a donkey (Num 22:27-31)**
- **According to Judges 15:18, what was Samson’s first documented prayer?**
 - **Questions on his thirst killing him and being taken by uncircumcised men.**
 - **Samson’s thirst matches the thirst of Jesus on the cross (John 19:28)**
- **According to Judges 15:19, how did God provide water for Samson?**
 - **God split the ground and water sprung up (Num 21:17)**

Read Judges 16:1-3...Samson Tears the Gates off Gaza

16:1 Samson should not have gone to the Philistine town of Gaza, he shouldn’t have looked at the prostitute with lust, and he should not have had sex with her. Samson should have filtered where he went, what he saw, and what he did.

16:2 The men of Gaza planned to ambush Samson in the morning as he left the prostitute’s place.

16:3 Samson tore the gates from the entrance of the city leaving it unprotected. Some believe that this was the reason that Samson was there – to spy out Gaza and tear away their defenses. The town of Hebron was located 20 miles from Gaza.

- **Did Scripture record other spies visit to a brothel of an enemy city?**

- The two spies from Joshua stayed at the brothel in Jericho (Joshua 2:1)
- It's possible that Samson did not have sexual relations, but just slept in the brothel to ready Gaza for destruction (16:21, 30);
 - The Hebrew reads that Samson “came to her” – possibly as a spy as in Joshua 2:1-2
- According to Judges 15:3, what was the reason for Samson to tear the gates off the city?
 - Since the gate is synonymous with a city's security, the removal of the gate of Gaza represented the removal of protection.
 - This may have been a symbolic act, emphasizing the fact that apostate Israel's rejection of Christ (16:2), coupled with her spiritual harlotry (16:1), has resulted in the removal of God's protecting care.
- Samson's love for three (3) women in the Timnathite bride (14:2), the nameless harlot (16:1), and treacherous Delilah (16:4) may represent Christ's love for Israel in spite of treachery and apostasy.

Read Judges 16:4-20... Samson's Love for Delilah Entraps Him

16:4 Delilah means “Amorous/Delight/Temptress”. Sorek (meaning “vine” or “hissing”) was located near the brook Eshcol where the twelve Israelite spies initially viewed the Promised Land with the abundant grape vines (Num 13:23).

- Sorek would have unquestionably had vineyards and wines which would be very tempting for one under the Nazirite Vow who should not drink wine.

16:5 The Philistine leaders promised wealth to Delilah if she betrayed Samson. The sizeable amount showed the importance that the Philistines placed on this public enemy.

- The offer also reveals that the Philistine lords understood that Samson did not have this force in himself, but that there was another origin.
- Samson should have credited the Lord with his strength instead of his hair.

16:6 Delilah asks Samson the question directly, and he should have known at that point that she was dangerous.

16:7 Instead of contending with the question, Samson plays along in a dangerous game by lying about his weakness.

16:8 The Philistine leaders provided Delilah with the elements matching Samson's description – she had told them everything.

16:9 Delilah tested Samson to see if his strength had been weakened. As Samson would break free from each of the bindings as Delilah tested him, Samson should have broken free of Delilah and sin.

16:10 Delilah played the victim when in fact, she was desiring to make Samson the true victim.

16:11 Samson continues to say “*weak, like any other man*” as if to say that all men are weak. In fact, Samson was morally and mentally weak as men have a tendency to become with seductresses.

16:12 The second ambush was staged the same as the first with the men waiting in Delilah's room.

16:13 Delilah noticed a theme to Samson's answers, so she asked how he could be tied to lose his strength. Samson gets ever closer to the truth as he now has included his hair in the answer to Delilah.

16:14 Samson must have been a deep sleeper because nothing Delilah did awoke him until she would yell about the Philistines. It appears that the lords of the Philippines had stopped coming because this is the first test that they are not mentioned as hiding in her room.

- Delilah fastening it with the pin or beater refers to the weaving process which involves the pressing of the horizontal threads tightly together with a comb-like instrument so as to form a close weave.
- Spiritually this speaks of taking selfishly and without gratitude all that the Lord's love lavishes upon us. His carrying away the pin and the web is the symbolic announcement that he who takes all that the Lord's love provides, but without trusting Him as Savior, will also suffer loss: he will lose his soul.

16:15 Delilah pretends to question Samson's love which is a strategy frequently used from one to another even in modern times to force the unwilling to do something. Delilah is counting the number of lies (three) that Samson has given.

16:16 While 1,00 men could not wear Samson out (Judges 15:15-16), the thousand naggings of a woman successfully wore him out.

- Delilah's determination equaled that of the Jews to find a pretext upon which to put Christ to death (Mt 26:37-38).
- "A river cuts through a rock, not because of its power, but because of its persistence."

16:17 Samson indeed revealed his heart to Delilah in that his heart had fallen away from the Lord; his trust was in the seductress.

16:18 Delilah waited to act on the truth until the Philistine men arrived. She believed so fervently that Samson had finally told the truth that she told the Philistines to come only one more time.

16:19 Samson literally rested on Delilah instead of God. Delilah called a man to shave Samson's hair, and then Delilah began to test that Samson's strength was gone.

16:20 Delilah yelled out the exact words that she had used multiple times, and Samson thought to respond in similar manner "by shaking himself free." However, there was nothing for Samson to break free from and the Lord had "broken free" of Samson leaving him without strength.

- This is symbolic of believers who practice repeated sin with false repentance; God will ultimately leave them alone to face the repercussions of their sin.
- **According to Judges 15:5, what is the difference with the way the men approached Delilah and the way the men approached Samson's Philistine Fiancé (Judges 14:15)?**
 - **They didn't threaten Delilah; they lured her with money**
 - **1100 pieces of silver (16:5 & 17:2) The basic number is (11) eleven – 10 marks "divine order", so 1 more than 10 is addition to/subversive of/un-doing of that order.**
 - **12 marks "divine government", so 1 less falls short of that: *disorder, disorganization, imperfection, disintegration.***
- **According to Judges 15:7 & 14, what instruments were used to test Samson?**

- **The bow and harp**
- **Samson may be alluding to the truth in his answers:**
 - **The bow is the symbol of power**
 - **The harp directs attention to the emotions, for it is as a creature of emotion that man is influenced by music.**
 - **The statement then becomes, “If I can be bound or influenced by any power other than my own, or if I can be induced to act by any emotional appeal other than that of my own heart, then I will be reduced to the level of an ordinary man.”**

Read Judges 16:21-31...Samson Repents & Dies with the Philistines

16:21 The Philistines blinded and bound Samson because that is the affect of all sin – sin binds and bounds those who engage with it. Samson had long struggled with his eyes as he lusted from one woman to another; as now he was blind, he could once again look for the Lord.

16:22 Samson’s hair began to grow in concert with his character.

16:23 The Philistines mistakenly claimed their false god Dagon was greater than Samson’s God because Samson had personally failed. Dagon was another false god of fertility. Dagon was considered the fish god with the tail of a fish and the head of a human. Some considered him to be the father of the false god, Baal. Dagon had multiple temples throughout the Philistine land – at Beth-dagon in Asher (Joshua 19:27, Gaza (Judges 16:23) and in Ashdod (1 Samuel 5:2-7).

16:24 The affect of fallen Samson was that the Philistines praised their false god when they saw him.

16:25 This desire to worship their false god while humiliating Samson caused them to bring him out of prison for public humiliation. Samson was the third prison inmate in Scripture after Joseph (Gen 39:20) and Simeon (Gen 42:19-24).

16:26 The nameless boy obeyed Samson’s request by leaning him against the pillars that supported the coliseum.

16:27 The coliseum was filled with 3,000 men and women including the lords of the Philistines who had collaborated with Delilah (Judges 16:5, 8, 18). Symbolically, the “house” was filled with mockers (this physical world) and roof (possibly the demons of the spiritual realm).

16:28 Samson’s second prayer was to remember him and strengthen him once more to avenge the loss of his two eyes. In spite of all the torture, mocking and labor that the Philistines had put on Samson, Samson’s revenge was associated with the loss of his eyes.

16:29 The two pillars would become a witness to the one true God. The number two is often associated with witness.

16:30 Samson was killing the Philistines who were praising their false god, Dagon (Judges 16:23-25).

16:31 Those who loved Samson reclaimed his body. This location between Zorah (meaning “hornet”) and Eshtaol (meaning “to ask/entreat”) was the location that the Holy Spirit had come upon Samson (Judges 13:25).

- **What might the Nameless Servant in Judges 16:26 represent?**
 - **His leading Samson could represent Holy Spirit**

- Like the nameless servant who sought the bride for Isaac (Gn 24:2),
 - Like the nameless man who guided the disciples to the upper room (Mk 14:15, Lk 22:12)
- Who took a similar stance to Samson with his outstretched arms at his death?
 - With Samson between the two columns is similar stance of Jesus' outstretched hands on the cross
- According to Judges 16:28, what final request does Samson make?
 - That the Lord remember him and strengthen him
 - In his death, Samson remembered who had given his strength to him

Discuss Chapters 17-21

- It is generally agreed that the incidents recorded in chapters 17 through 21 are really an appendix to the book, and are not in chronological order, but are the record of events that occurred early in the days of the Judges.
 - Chapters 17-18 focus on the roving Levite into and out of the Ephraim mountains from Bethlehem.
 - Chapters 19-21 focus on a Levite in the mountains of Ephraim with a concubine from Bethlehem.

Read Judges 17:1-6...Micah Recruits his Personal Priest

17:1 Micah (meaning "who is like Jehovah") will recruit an unfaithful, roving Levite in lieu of having a relationship with the true God. The Levite is not "like" the faithful Lord.

17:2 Micah had stolen the silver and returned it upon his understanding of the cursing. Israel had been the same with their redemption (silver); they did not understand the curse accompanying their immoral ways. The mother (Jewish leaders) pronounced a pseudo-blessing upon Micah (corrupt people) instead of condemning his sin. Her inconsistency is the same with the professing church - piously denouncing the sins of the world while tolerating the same sins on the part of her donating members.

17:3-4 Thinking that she was pleasing the Lord, she made a false image/icon to worship. Tangible idols are more easily trusted than spiritual (Jn 4:23-24). This symbolized the state of affair for all of Israel as they were misguided in believing that they were pleasing to the Lord.

17:5 "Micah had a house of God," that is, he had made himself a personal shrine or place of worship in spite of the fact that the only place acceptable to God was "where He had placed His name;" the place at that time was probably Shiloh. Micah's motive may have been to save him the trouble of going to Shiloh which addresses the fact that man often makes God's Word subservient to man's personal opinion and convenience. Micah made a pseudo-priest out of his own image (his son) as many professing believers offer their worship according to their own preferences. (Gen 4:3-5).

17:6 Israel did not obey the Lord as their King, but instead followed their own rationale and reasoning (Judges 21:25). God's people are not to live by sight (Numbers 15:39; 2 Corinthians 5:7)

- **Why is it ironic and appropriate that Micah’s name means “who is like Jehovah”?**
 - **Because Micah is attempting to create his own religion his own way**
 - **Micah will recruit an unfaithful, roving Levite in lieu of having a relationship with the true God.**
 - **The Levite is not “like” the faithful Lord.**
- **According to Judges 17:2, what was the reason for the mother’s blessing?**
 - **Micah had stolen the silver and returned it upon his understanding of the cursing.**
 - **Israel had been the same with their redemption (silver); they did not understand the curse accompanying their immoral ways.**
 - **The mother (Jewish leaders) pronounced a pseudo-blessing upon Micah (corrupt people) instead of condemning his sin.**
 - **Her inconsistency is the same with the professing church - piously denouncing the sins of the world while tolerating the same sins on the part of her donating members.**
- **According to Judges 17:4, what did the mother do with a portion of the stolen pieces that had been returned?**
 - **Thinking that she was pleasing the Lord, she made a false image/icon to worship.**
 - **Tangible idols are more easily trusted than spiritual (Jn 4:23-24).**
 - **This symbolized the state of affair for all of Israel as they were misguided in believing that they were pleasing to the Lord.**
- **Was it good for Micah to construct his own “house of god” in Judges 17:5?**
 - **“Micah had a house of God,” that is, he had made himself a personal shrine or place of worship in spite of the fact that the only place acceptable to God was “where He had placed His name;” the place at that time was probably Shiloh.**
 - **Micah’s motive may have been to save him the trouble of going to Shiloh which addresses the fact that man often makes God’s Word subservient to man’s personal opinion and convenience.**
 - **Micah made a pseudo-priest out of his own image (his son) as many professing believers offer their worship according to their own preferences. (Gen 4:3-5).**
- **According to Judges 17:6, what is emphasized as not being in the land?**
 - **There was no king in the land.**
 - **It corresponds to the theme of the entire book of Judges that man did what was “right” in his own eyes**

Read Judges 17:7-13...A Levite Finds a Job as a Self-made Man

17:7-8 Forty-eight Levitical cities had been designated homes for the Levites (Joshua 21; Lev 25:32; 35:2-3 Num 35:4-6)

17:9 The Levi was not following God’s will, but instead looking into what he could find. The central thought for Judges as evidenced with a Levitical priest wandering to the best location (Joshua 21:1-3)

- 1000 years later, another man from Bethlehem would also not have a “place to lay his head”
- 17:10 Instead of the Levite following a spiritual calling into a ministry, a business arrangement was made including salary, clothing and provisions.
- 17:11 Micah was able to make this Levite into his own image as the Levite became like his sons.
- 17:12 Although Micah consecrated this priest for this service, the Lord had not.
- 17:13 Could the church today have the same Spiritual ignorance as expecting blessing because of disobedience?
- **According to Judges 17:9, was this Levite doing anything wrong?**
 - **Yes, the central thought for Judges as evidenced with a Levitical priest wandering to the best location (Joshua 21:1-3) instead of living in one of the 48 designated cities**
 - **This Levite does not seem satisfied that Jesus was his inheritance/portion**
 - **According to Judges 17:10, what determined whether the Levite would accept the position?**
 - **Instead of the Levite following a spiritual calling into a ministry, a business arrangement was made including salary, clothing and provisions.**
 - **According to Judges 17:4, was Micah have been deceived?**
 - **Yes, because he wasn’t following the guidelines of Scripture as to what would please the Lord**
 - **Micah was establishing his worship in his own way**
 - **Micah was able to make this Levite into his own image as the Levite became like his sons.**
 - **Could the church today have the same Spiritual ignorance as expecting blessing because of disobedience?**
 - **How can a believer be clear?**
 - **What determines what pleases God?**

6 Judges 18, 19

Read Judges 18:1-6...The Tribe of Dan Rejects God’s Land for Them

18:1 (like 17:8) Dan dissatisfied with allotment - When the Lordship of Christ is refused the result must always be anarchy, for only He is capable of reigning - Dan’s inheritance had been allotted (Jos 19:40-48); they had failed to take possession (see Jg 1:34-35; 5:17). Their lot was “too little” (Jos 19:47) simply because they had refused to expel the enemy, and had allowed that enemy to drive them out of the valley and into the mountain (Jg 1:34).

18:2 The two places mentioned in connection with their disobedient mission, Zorah and Eshtaol, are also the very first two places mentioned as boundary points of their proper inheritance (Jos 19:41), for Zorah means she was smitten with leprosy; and Eshtaol, I will be entreated – where Samson was born (Judg 13:2 & 25) and buried (Judg 16:31)

18:3 Danites ask the priest, “Who brought you here?” – Priest’s answer has nothing of God’s leading

18:4 In answering why the priest was at Micah’s place, the priest said nothing of God, but instead, it was Micah’s doing to install him as his own personal priest.

18:5 The Tribe of Dan sought to use this itinerant priest about whether their trip would be prosperous. The Tribe of Dan was driven by greed which seems to be a larger embodiment of the Levite himself.

18:6 No inquiry is made of God, just a “charlatan (fake) priest’s response” - blind priests blessing every activity - 2 Tim 4:3

- **Why does Judges 18:1 begin by re-enforcing that there was no king?**
 - **Because the Tribe of Dan was solving their own problems their own way**
 - **Dan was dissatisfied with their land allotment**
 - **When the Lordship of Christ is refused the result must always be anarchy, for only He is capable of reigning**
 - **Dan’s inheritance had been allotted (Jos 19:40-48); they had failed to take possession (see Jg 1:34-35; 5:17).**
 - **Their lot was “too little” (Jos 19:47) simply because they had refused to expel the enemy, and had allowed that enemy to drive them out of the valley and into the mountain (Jg 1:34).**
- **In verses 3-4, when Dan asked the Levite how he got there, how much of his answer was spiritual?**
 - **None – the Priest’s answer has nothing of God’s leading**
- **According to Judges 18:5, when asked to inquire of God, how did the Priest respond?**
 - **No inquiry is made of God, just a “charlatan (fake) priest’s response” - blind priests blessing every activity - 2 Tim 4:3**
 - **Indeed, God would be watching, but not in a pleased, protective way**

Read Judges 18:7-13...The Tribe of Dan Scouts Laish to Raid

18:7 Laish was an isolated community living peacefully in security.

18:8 This location between Zorah (meaning “hornet”) and Eshtaol (meaning “to ask/entreat”) is mentioned three times in this passage (Judg 18:2, 8, 11).

- It was the location that the Holy Spirit had come upon Samson (Judges 13:25) and he was buried (Judg 16:31).

18:9 The five spies of Dan encouraged rejection of their promised allotment to conquer the Laish territory in the north.

18:10 The spies of Dan are rejecting the land that God had given them because they couldn’t conquer the neighboring Philistines. Dan assumed that God was leading them to conquer Laish because it would be easier.

18:11 Six often denotes “unsatisfactory” or “less than fulfilled.”

18:12 Kiriath-jearim means “city of woods”. Initially named “Kiriath-baal” (Joshua 15:60, 18:14), Kiriath-jearim had originally belonged to the Gibeonites when they made peace with Joshua (Joshua 9:17).

- Eventually, Kiriath-jearim would host the Ark of the Covenant in the house of Abinadab (1 Sam 7:1) from the time of Samuel until the time of David (1 Chron 13:5-6).
 - Dan would name the place west of Kiriath-jearim, “Mahaneh-dan” (meaning “a place behind”)
- 18:13 The army of Dan traveled through the hill country of Judah to the house of Micah which was possibly the route that the 5 Danites spies had taken.

Read Judges 18:14-20...Micah’s Levite Gets a Better Offer from the Tribe of Dan

- 18:14 The ornamental, personal religion that Micah established drew unwanted attention to his home.
- 18:15 Clearly, the Danite army would not have made the diversion if not for the spectacle of Micah’s religion. The Danite army approached seemingly amicably.
- 18:16 An army of 600 would be imposing at one’s front door; the size of the army is emphasized in this verse.
- 18:17 The Danites were rapaciously greedy as they stole without hesitation; their main desire was prosperity. The five spies did this so quickly and adeptly that this must have been their purpose from the start.
- The story of Micah began with his stealing from his mother and admitting it, so Micah was in the same vein as these Danite thieves (Judges 17:2)
- 18:18 The priest questioned with objection as to what the spies were doing as they stole Micah’s religious icons.
- 18:19 Whenever Danites were challenged, they seemed to respond with to the challenger to “be silent.” Danites did not reason and were not open for correction (Judges 18:25). The greedy Danites appealed to the ambitious desires of the Levite and asked if it was not better to have a larger congregation.
- 18:20 The ambitious, hired priest standing with those who robbed his benefactor (Jn 10:11-13); to this “preacher” bigger “congregations” were better regardless of integrity or intent
- **According to Judges 18:17-19, what did the Tribe of Dan do to Micah’s house?**
 - They stole Micah’s false gods, wealth and hired priest.
 - **According to Judges 18:19-20, why did the Levite join the Tribe of Dan?**
 - The ambitious, hired priest standing with those who robbed his benefactor (Jn 10:11-13)
 - To this “preacher” bigger “congregations” were better regardless of integrity or intent

Read Judges 18:21-26...The Tribe of Dan is Confronted by Micah

- 18:21 The Tribe of Dan understood the wrong that they had done, and took precautions to have a rear guard by putting their families and possessions in front of them in case Micah were to attack from behind.
- 18:22 The tribe of Dan made some progress on their trip before Micah and his neighbors caught up with them.

18:23 Dan pretends ignorant innocence as to why the man that they went out of their way to rob would want to come after them.

18:24 Micah admits worship of the false idols under the supervision of the false priest.

18:25 Whenever Danites were challenged, they seemed to respond with to the challenger to “be silent.” Danites did not reason and were not open for correction (Judges 18:19).

18:26 Micah allowed the Danites to continue on their way because the one, true God was not on his side, and Micah understood that the Danites were too strong for him.

- **According to Judges 18:21, what makes the guilt of the Tribe of Dan evident?**
 - **The Danites took precautions to have a rear guard by putting their families and possessions in front of them in case Micah were to attack from behind.**
- **According to Judges 18:24, what makes the guilt of the Tribe of Dan evident?**
 - **The Danites took precautions to have a rear guard by putting their families and possessions in front of them in case Micah were to attack from behind.**
- **According to Judges 18:25, what was the response of the Danites with confronted with the truth?**
 - **Whenever Danites were challenged, they seemed to respond with to the challenger to “be silent.” Danites did not reason and were not open for correction (Judges 18:19).**

Read Judges 18:27-31...The Tribe of Dan Relocates by Massacring Laish

18:27 Just as Dan had pillaged from Micah, they would now pillage and destroy the quiet community of Laish.

18:28 Laish had enjoyed the benefits of being far enough from Sidon to be ruled over; however, because they had no one to rule over them, they also had no one to protect them. Very similar to “there was no king...” (Judges 18:7)

18:29 The Tribe of Dan had moved to the upper north of all the Tribes of Israel which equated to being the first to be attacked by any enemies coming down the “Fertile Crescent.”

- The Tribe renamed the city after their own image: “Dan”
- Dan was Rachel’s firstborn through her maidservant, Bilhah
- The Jordan River is named after the Danites as “Jordan” means “Out of Dan”
- Some Danites may have continued migrating to the west to the origin of another great river called the “Danube” which is the second longest in all of Europe after the Volga River.

18:30 The Tribe of Dan either replaced the young Levite with another pseudo-priest since Manasseh does not have the Levitical lineage or the ambitious priest was originally from one of the Levitical cities within the Tribe of Manasseh since Gershom was the son of Moses and not Manasseh (Ex 2:22, 18:3; 1 Chron 23:15,)

- The Assyrians would capture all of the tribes in the northern kingdom in the year 722BC.
- Ironically, the name of the priest “Jonathan” means “God has given / gift of God.”

18:31 God had established His place of worship at Shiloh; however, Micah had worshipped his own personal way with his false religion, false god and false priest.

- **According to Judges 18:31, what did Dan worship?**

- **The Danites set up a carved image for themselves (even the ones stolen from Micah) instead of worshipping at Shiloh in the Tabernacle.**

Every man did what was right in his own eyes (Judges 19-21)		
Ref.	Sin	Sinner
1. 19:1-2	Levite couples with concubine who commits adultery	Levite & Concubine
2. 19:3	Levite travels to retrieve concubine	Levite
3. 19:4	Concubine's father delays Levite returning home	Concubine's Father
4. 19:15	Gibeah did not host, protect and honor the Levite	Benjamites in Gibeah
5. 19:22	Perverted Benjamites demanded Sodomy w/ Levite	Benjamites in Gibeah
6. 19:24	House owner offers his daughter and concubine	House Owner
7. 19:25	Levite gives concubine to perverted Benjamites	Levite
8. 19:25	Benjamites in Gibeah rape and torture concubine	Benjamites in Gibeah
9. 20:13	Benjamites protect perverted men of Gibeah	Tribe of Benjamin
10. 20:46	Israel destroys Tribe of Benjamin except for 600 men	Israel
11. 21:1	Israel makes futile oath to keep daughters from Tribe of Benjamin	Israel
12. 21:10	Israel destroys Jabesh-gilead except for 400 virgins	Israel
13. 21:21	Israel directs Benjamites to kidnap brides from Shiloh	Israel & Benjamin
<i>Man's efforts to correct the consequences of sin caused more problems</i>		

Read Judges 19:1-9...The Levite and the Unfaithful Prostitute

19:1 Micah had recruited a Levite from Bethlehem (Judges 17:7-9) to the mountains of Ephraim (Judges 17:1), but this Levite had been seduced away with the tribe of Dan (Judges 18:19-20).

- There was no king in Israel as they did not submit to the Lord's kingship.
- The Levites were meant to be sanctified/separate to the Lord (Numbers 8) of which the Temple priests and singers.
- This individual who was intended to live a righteous life made a poor decision to bind his life to this concubine.
- Believers should be careful that a momentary emotion does not result in long term grief.

19:2 The unfaithful concubine was scripturally deserving of death (Lev 20:10). Israel is later compared to an unfaithful harlot (Hosea 1:2).

19:3 As the Levite's concubine, she was as a "second wife" might be. Although the Levite is referenced as the concubine's husband, but he had no plans to finalize a marriage with this licentious woman. However, the father of this undisciplined concubine was pleased that the Levite pursued his daughter.

- The father "seduces" the Levite into being "retained" which is from a root word meaning to fasten upon or seize - exactly what Satan does with all who place themselves in his power, as, for example, the believer who goes beyond what is

written in Scripture. By just such persuasion to enjoy ease and pleasure has Satan enticed many a believer to fritter away a whole lifetime.

19:4 It is recorded twice that “they did eat and drink” (Judges 19:6).

19:5-6 Although the father-in-law seduced the Levite with only bread, they also drank together which may have impaired the Levite for travel.

19:7 Clearly, the father-in-law holds sway over the Levite.

19:8 It is recorded twice that “they did eat and drink,” (Judges 19:4,6), but in this verse, it is said only that “they did eat.”

- Drinking speaks of pleasure, while eating speaks of satisfaction, so that the absence of drinking on that fifth day might be symbolic of the fact that the pleasures of sin are short-lived.
- Ultimately, when a man like this Levite pursues carnal pleasures of the world, he will eventually lose the ability to find satisfaction in the spiritual.

19:9 The time of their departure was late in the day, and they had waited too late or possibly this was the Levite’s plan all along.

- The Levite may have intended to stay at Gibeah according to his plan or they may have been headed to the house of God as the Levite claimed (Judges 20:18) possibly to offer sacrifices for their sin, but they were too late. Believers should not continuously toy with sin, but need to repent immediately.

Read Judges 19:10-15...The Levite and Prostitute Travel Home

19:10-11 The unnamed servant (type of Holy Spirit) gives good advice to spend the night in Jerusalem. The Levite rejects his servant’s recommendation without realizing the depravity that Israel has fallen into (he is depraved himself).

19:12-13 Thirteen times, Gibeah “hill” is referenced as King Saul’s home (1 Samuel 10:26)

19:14 The looming darkness of night represents the presence of trouble times without spiritual sight.

19:15 No one in this Benjamite town would host the guests – possibly because they understood that the sexual deviants would harass the hosts.

Read Judges 19:16-21...The Levite/Concubine Find Shelter in Gibeah

19:16-17 Although no Benjamite took these travelers into their homes, an elderly man from the Ephraim mountains was farming the fields of Benjamin and encountered the travelers.

19:18 Although the Levite was in route to the house of the Lord, no person had been willing to allow the “wandering Levite” into their house.

19:19 The Levite was fairly confident in his personal provisioning, but he did not understand that these items would not be a refuge to him against worldly men.

19:20-21 The elder offered his provisions with the requirement that the travelers would enter his house with him.

Read Judges 19:22-26...Gibeah’s Sexual Deviants Desire to Rape

19:22 The homosexuals (the world) not only seek to corrupt the Levite (the Church) by dragging the Levite (believers) down to its own depraved level.

- 19:24 The old man's offer to hand his daughter over to the mob, speaks symbolically of the willingness of faith to submit to any indignity for the sake of God's honor, and the deliverance of others from the consequences of their sin. The concubine, however, represents, not only the false church, but also the error that would go beyond God's Word to justify the gratification of lust. His willingness to hand her over also, is the symbolic declaration that true faith is also willing to give up everything that is dishonoring to God.
- 19:25 The refusal of the rabble to listen is the symbolic declaration that a world bent on the gratification of lust, will not listen to the voice of God's representatives in the Gospel.
- 19:26 In the daylight, often the perversion of sin becomes clear.

Read Judges 19:27-30...The Levite Finds His Concubine Dead

- 19:27 The old man's house represents a company of believers, and it is significant that she who had been in that house briefly, but who had left it in the darkness of night, returned, but died outside the door.
- She who had been so close to being wife to a Levite, died as a harlot concubine.
 - The Levite seems to have arisen from his rest without as much concern as he should have had towards his concubine.
- 19:28 The Levite does not show compassion in his response to finding his concubine; the Levite's actions seem cold and calculated.
- 19:29 The Levite had come to the realization that all of Israel was profoundly degraded and degenerate.
- 19:30 Although Israel had escaped Egypt, Egypt had not escaped the behaviors of the Israelites...God's people are capable of committing the same sins as when they were sinners. The flesh in the believer is the same flesh that dwelt in him when he was an unbeliever.

7 Judges 20, 21

Read Judges 20:1-7...The Levite Tells a One-Sided Story

- 20:1 All of the self-righteous tribes gathered (as was right in their own eyes). Dan was in the northern-most part of Israel while Beersheba was in the south. Those in Gilead on the other side of the Jordan River also joined at Mizpah.
- 20:2 The Israelite army at Mizpah consisted of 400,000 men ready to fight.
- 20:3 Benjamin was not represented at this gathering of judgment.
- 20:4 The Levite emphasizes that he stayed in a town of the Tribe of Benjamin.
- 20:5 The Levite uses deceptive language; the men of Gibeah desired to have sex with him (Judges 20:22) and the Levite had given to the sexual deviants his concubine (Judges 20:25).
- 20:6 The Levite does not mention God, but instead focuses on the heritage of the Israelites.
- 20:7 The Levite asks the Israelites to make their decision based on his one-sided story.

Read Judges 20:8-17...All of Israel Judges the Tribe of Benjamin

- 20:8 As those from Gilead had made this same promise to Moses, all of Israel agrees to correct the wrong to the Levite.
- 20:9 The Israelites would use lots to determine the sequence that the tribes should assault the Benjamites.
- 20:10 The plan was to utilize a tithe (ten percent) of the men to act as the supply chain to provide food for the warriors in case of an extended battle with the Tribe of Benjamin.
- 20:11 The Israelites were united as if they were the errant Levite to bring judgment on Bethlehem.
- 20:12 Prior to battle, it seems that Israel would often send spies/witnesses to call the guilty or innocent to judgment.
- 20:13 How different the whole outcome might have been had the other tribes approached Benjamin in a humbler spirit! But when men aren't right with God, they can't be right with one another, so it is only to be expected that the demand of haughty self-righteousness should have been answered as it was by equally haughty offended pride.
- 20:14 The men of Benjamin joined together to protect their brothers.
- 20:15 The Benjamin army was only a fraction (26K - 6.5%) compared to the Israeli army of 400K men.
- 20:16 The 700 appear to represent the small obedient remnant always found in the midst of the professing but apostate mass of the nation, and found also today within every group of professed believers - even spiritual men, unduly influenced by the voice of the majority, may ally themselves with wrong causes. These men did not miss (Hebrew – chata) which is the same root word for “sin”
- 20:17 The men of Israel had an overwhelming advantage in number of warriors. The number “400” is an extension of “40” symbolizing test/trial.

Read Judges 20:18-35...Israel Attacks Benjamin Three Times

- 20:18 Israel approaches God with their agenda that they would be attacking; they did not ask Him whether they should go. The concubine who was living immorally in Judah represented the corruption of Judah.
- God selected Judah to go up first, not to lead Israel to victory, but instead, to receive the brunt of the judgment.
- 20:19-20 As was the custom with Joshua (Joshua 6:12), the Tribes of Israel prepared to attack in the morning Gibeah (meaning “hill”) would become the hometown of Saul, and the place that he returned after becoming king (1 Sam 10:26, 11:4)
- 20:21 With only 26,000 warriors (Judges 20:15), Benjamin was able to slaughter 22,000 combatants from the other Israel tribes.
- 20:22 Although they lost the first battle, Israel was positioned to engage in the same way as before when they were defeated.
- 20:23 After losing the first day, Israel asked God if they should attack again, and He responded positively. He sent Israel to lose another battle; again, using the Benjamites for His judgment against all of Israel.
- 20:24 This second day Israel came after the Benjamites in like manner as before.
- 20:25 The smaller army of Benjamin with only 26,000 warriors (Judges 20:15), was able to slaughter 18,000 combatants from the other Israel tribes.

- 20:26 The third time that Israel approached God, they offered burnt and peace offerings to obey the Lord in His terms. This was the only time that all of the children of Israel came to the house of God.
- 20:27 The ark of the covenant (representing the presence of the Lord) was also introduced – approaching the Lord His way.
- 20:28 The third time that Israel approached God, only the High Priest inquired of the Lord (approaching Him on His terms). Another option is also introduced that Israel was willing to cease if directed by the Lord.

Read Judges 20:29-48...Israel Ambushes Benjamin

- 20:29 The strategy, the same as that used against Ai, reminds us that obedience to God isn't something divorced from intelligence, nor are faith in God and our minds mutually exclusive.
- 20:30 The Israelites appeared that they would approach the third battle in the same way as they had when they had lost twice before.
- 20:31 During the third battle, the Benjamites were able to slaughter 30 men (Judges 20:39)
- 20:32 The warriors of Benjamin believed they were in control of this battle while Israel manipulated them to ambush Gibeah from behind.
- 20:33 Baal-tamar means lord of the palm, but the palm tree is one of the Biblical symbols of righteousness (Ps 92:12)
- 20:34 Because of prior victories and a home land advantage, Benjamin was unaware of their forthcoming defeat.
- 20:35 It was the Lord who beat/smote Benjamin that third day. Benjamin had begun with 26,000 warriors (Judges 20:21) and had lost 300 men during the first two assaults leaving only 25,700 men to fight this third day. During this third battle, Benjamin lost 25,100 men leaving only 600 from the tribe of Benjamin.
- 20:36 This was the first recognition that Benjamin had lost the battle.
- 20:37 The Israeli warriors in the ambush slaughtered all of the inhabitants of Gibeah.
- 20:38 The sign that Gibeah was defeated would be a large cloud of smoke as it was burned to the ground.
- 20:39 Thirty Israeli warriors were killed before Benjamin realized that Gibeah had been ambushed and all was lost (Judges 20:31).
- 20:40 The Benjamite stronghold reduced to ashes is similar to the Tribulation era, when the judgment of God reduces also to ruins the great edifice of man's erecting - man's great financial, educational, military, and religious institutions.
- 20:41 When Gibeah was lost and the Israeli army turned to fight, the warriors of Benjamin were horrified.
- 20:42 Benjamin attempted to flee into the wilderness; however, they were slaughtered by the warriors in front as well as those who ambushed from behind.
- 20:43 There was no escape; the Benjamites had miscalculated coming judgment and waited too long to flee.
- 20:44 Of the deaths of Benjamin, 18,000 died in hand-to-hand combat.
- 20:45 Of the deaths of Benjamin, 5,000 were captured fleeing on the highways and killed them at Gidom while 2,000 were killed elsewhere.

- 20:46 Aggregately, of the deaths of Benjamin, 25,000 warriors died leaving 100 Benjamites who had not fought, but instead had remained in Gibeah. In total 25,100 died from the Benjamin tribe (Judges 20:35).
- 20:47 The rock could symbolize Jesus as His people flee to Him (the rock) – Rev 6:15. The Benjamites hid four months which is the same amount of time that the Levites concubine had stayed away from her Levite husband (Judges 19:2). The number 4 is often used as the cycle of nature and 4 extrapolated out (i.e. 4 months or 40 days) can symbolize a time of testing/trial. Rimmon means “exalted”.

Read Judges 21:1-7...Israel Mourns the Loss of the Tribe of Benjamin

- 21:1 As the daughters represent fruit (offspring) and wives represent a spiritual expression of a man, this is symbolic of the men of Israel not sharing the Lord with the Benjamites (neither did they testify of the Lord to any of the neighboring nations). Mizpah means “watchtower” or “outlook.” The reckless vow of Jephthah was also made at Mizpah (Judges 11:29-34).
- 21:2-3 In sorrow, the men of Israel went to the “house of God” to question the Lord.
- 21:4-5 The men rose early to make an altar, but there is not mention of a sin or trespass offering. The men had also made a foolish vow with grave consequences (Judges 11:30). While Believers should be energetic about the Lord, His will is to be followed as man’s plans may not achieve His purpose.
- 21:6-7 Without guidance from the Lord, Israel planned how to fulfill their rash vow while satisfying their compassion at a single time.

Read Judges 21:8-15...Jabesh Gilead is Slaughtered for Benjamin Wives

- 21:8 Since Jabesh-Gilead had not joined the Israelites against Benjamin, Jabesh-Gilead would not have taken the vow. They could have given their daughters without all of the men/women/children being slaughtered.
- 21:9 Jabesh-Gilead (“dry” – “hill of testimony”) was a town east of the Jordan River in the half-tribe of Manasseh (1 Sam 11:1, 31:11-13; 2 Sam 2:4-6).
- 21:10 A thousand men representing the twelve tribes of Israel went to annihilate the people of Jabesh-Gilead.
- 21:11 Although all of the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead were killed, the township went untouched.
- 21:12 Jabesh-gilead could represent any organization falsely claiming to be among God’s people. Scripture is giving a glimpse of the coming destruction of false systems of religion.
- King Saul may have come from one of these women as he was a Benjamite with a special affinity for Jabesh-Gilead.
 - Saul’s first act as King was to defeat Nahash the Ammonite in defense of Jabesh-Gilead (1 Samuel 11:4-11)
 - After Saul was killed by the Philistines and hung his corpse to the wall of Beth-shan, the men of Jabesh-Gilead retrieved his body as well as the bodies of his sons (1 Samuel 31:8-13)
- 21:13 “*The whole congregation sent*” shows that the message of God’s peace is not a work reserved just for a few: every Believer has a part in it. It was only those Benjamites who had taken refuge in the rock (symbolic of Christ) that were safe.

Rimmon means “*exalted; pomegranate.*” Exalted clearly refers to Jesus. Pomegranates inferred fruitfulness to the Jew and these men would be wholly responsible for bearing offspring for the survival of the tribe Benjamin (Judges 21:23). The pomegranate can also be symbolic of the testimony to righteousness; while the actual number of seeds vary, Jewish tradition is that the typical pomegranate has 613 seeds corresponding to the 613 commandments (mitzvot) of the Torah/Pentateuch. These spared Benjamites would need to come under (submit) to the law of the Lord.

21:14 The manmade plans were not enough to satisfy the need (Judges 20:47).

21:15 The Lord was the ultimate one to destroy the Tribe of Benjamin.

Read Judges 21:16-25... Benjamin Encouraged to Kidnap 200 Women From Shiloh

21:16-18 The “gap” was attributed to the Lord, but Israel had compassion on those whom the Lord had judged.

21:19 The answer to every man’s conundrum is held in the Lord. The annual feast of the Lord in Shiloh (“peace giver”). The first (400) wives (2/3 necessary) were collected at a judgment (slaughter) while the latter (200) wives (1/3 remaining) were collected at the feast.

21:20-21 The Benjamites were encouraged to take wives as necessary from their place of joy (vineyards), and then return to the land of Benjamin (son of my right hand). This might be construed as coming under Jesus’ authority. The act of the Benjamite men had taken the Levites concubine which had started this entire war; now the broader Israel is planning and encouraging forcefully taking several hundred women.

21:22 Man’s reason and rationale to circumvent consequences is always faulty.

21:23-24 Finally, Israel returned to the territories granted them by the Lord.

21:25 “*In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did what was right in his own eyes.*” (Dt 6:18, 12:8, 13:18; Judges 17:6; Prov 12:22, 14:12, 16:25, Ez 13:2, Is 5:21, 65:2)

- God’s people are not to live by sight (Numbers 15:39; 2 Corinthians 5:7)