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JUDGES
*'My strength is made
perfect
in weakness'*

**16th Australasian
Christadelphian
Youth
Conference**

HANDBOOK

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GOD'S STRENGTH MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS

1. Faith necessary factor in deliverance - *"No king is saved by the multitude of a host"* Psalm 33:16.
2. N.B. the 'weak things' chosen by God to confound the mighty:

(1) left-handed man	3:15-16	(5) 300 men with lamps	7: 6,16
(2) an ox goad	3:31	(6) woman with a stone	9:53
(3) tent peg	4:21-22	(7) a social outcast	11: 2-3
(4) woman	5:7	(8) jawbone of ass	15:16

BETHLEHEM JUDAH - CROSS SECTION OF COMMUNITY

1. Though *"little among the thousands of Judah"* (Micah 5:2), yet village produces cross section of characters

Elimelech and Naomi - failure and desertion under trial Ruth 1:1-2

Mahlon and Chilion - Weak and sickly brothers Ruth 1:2

Boaz - Strong man, exhibiting faith in the midst of apostasy Ruth 2:4; 4:14

Jonathan, grandson of Moses - Worthless, indolent, turns apostate

Concubine of Levite - Loose and faithless woman Judges 19:1-2

Ibzan - the Judge Judges 12:8

2. *"Out of thee shall he come forth unto me"* Micah 5:2
3. Samson typical of Israel especially during this period *"Right in my eyes"* 14:3 (Mg) Epitome of their behaviour

Background

"EVERY MAN DID THAT WHICH WAS RIGHT IN HIS OWN EYES"

INTRODUCTION - Failure through compromise

1. Time of entry into land "iniquity of the Amorites". Gen 15:16
2. Order of extermination. Deut 7:1-4
3. "When Israel was strong" Judg 1:28, they compromise.
N.B. Retrogression Judg 1:27,29,30,32,33
4. "They were mingled among the heathen". Psa 106:34-36
Heb. 'Braid', 'intermix', used of 'traffic or mortgage'.
5. 4 times "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes".
Judg 17:6; 18:1; (cp Deut 12:8); 19:1; 21:25
6. Record of violence and bloodshed = immorality.

DIVISIONS

- 1:1 - 3:7 Failure through compromise
 1:1-36 Failure of tribes to consolidate inheritance
 2:1-5 The rebuke of the messenger of Bochim
 2:6-23 Declension after death of Joshua - summary of failings
 3:1-4 The nations left to prove Israel
 3:5-7 Israel's failure under trial

3:8 - 16:31 History of the 12 Judges (Including 6 Heroic Episodes)

	<u>Judge</u>	<u>Meaning of Name</u>	<u>Tribe</u>
3:8-11	Othniel		
3:12-30	Ehud		
3:31	Shamgar		
4-5	Deborah/Barak		
6-8	Gideon		
9	Abimelech - (the Bramble king)		
10:1-2	Tola		
10:3-5	Jair		
10:6-12:7	Jephthah		
12:8-10	Ibzan		
12:11-12	Elon		
12:13-15	Abdon		
13-16	Samson		

Chapters 17 to 18 First Appendix - Corruption of Doctrine

Chapters 19 to 21 Second Appendix - Corruption of Practice

THE FIRST CAMPAIGN 1:1-8

Principles

1. Typical History

- (a) Joshua conquers enemy, makes inheritance possible. Josh 23:9,14; cp Heb 2:14
- (b) Calls upon people to worship God "*in sincerity and truth*". Josh 24:14; cp John 4:23
- (c) Israel faithful in days of Joshua and elders who follow. Josh 24:31; cp Acts 20:29
- (d) No king - rapid decline. Judg 17:6; cp Matt 24:48-49
- (e) Failure through compromise. Judg 1:29; cp Rev 2:14,20
- (f) Corruption in practise and doctrine. Judg 17-21; cp 2 Tim 3:8

- 2. Canaanites delivered into Israel's hand - all that was needed was faith.
- 3. All Canaanites were to perish. The flesh found this repugnant and paid for their softness to wickedness.

Questions

- 1. What does Canaanite mean? Trace their history through the scriptures. (Deut 9:3; Zech 14:21; Gen 9:18)
- 2. Why was Judah chosen to go first? (Consider Num 10:14; Zech 12:7; Gen 49:10 - Christ, leader of Judah)
- 3. Why did Simeon not have an inheritance? (Consider Gen 49:7; Num 26:14; Josh 19:1,9 & Num 25:9,14)
- 4. Was Adoni-bezek's punishment just? Is maiming what God desired?
- 5. When will Judah fight successfully again for Jerusalem? (cf Zech 12:5-6)

JUDAH'S CAMPAIGNS 1:16-21

Principles

1. The Kenites (descendants of Jethro), leave Jericho to live a hard, but separated life as sojourners in the inheritance of Judah.
2. Judah takes inheritance in mountains, but is not strong enough in faith to take the valleys. The first compromise.
3. Caleb, an example to all those younger than he, drives out the Anakim from Hebron to secure his inheritance.

Questions

1. Who are the Canaanites we have to fight with?
2. What is our inheritance - can we take it now?

CAMPAIGNS OF HOUSE OF JOSEPH 1:22-26

Principle

1. All enemies of the truth must be stopped - there is no such thing as a helpful enemy!

Question

1. What was wrong with Judah's compassion in verses 25 and 26? Surely he had sided with Israel?

FAILURE OF REST OF TRIBES TO CONSOLIDATE 1:27-36

Principles

1. Strength in numbers, certainly doesn't mean strength of faith.
2. To dwell with the enemy courts certain danger.
3. The world has always had greater persistence than the majority of those living the truth.

Questions

1. The term "the Canaanites would dwell" in verse 27, takes on a different light in the R.S.V. - what is it?
 2. How far had the Amorites penetrated into Israel's territory? (Examine verses 34 to 36)
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MESSENGER OF BOCHIM 2:1-5

Principles

1. Yahweh will never break his covenant. (cf Judg 2:1; Deut 31:16,20; Lev 26:15; Isa 50:1 & Rom 11)
2. Israel unfaithful to the conditions of the covenant.
3. Yahweh 'gives them up' - the Canaanites they wouldn't destroy, become their snares.

Questions

1. Is the messenger ("Angel" - Heb. Malak) of Yahweh, an immortal one? (cf Judg 5:23; 6:11,12,20-22; 13:3,16,17,18,20,&21; 18:20-21 also Isa 63:9 & Exod 23:20-23)
 2. Look up the meaning of Gilgal and follow its significance in scripture. How closely is it linked with Shittim ("Acacia" or "thorns")? (cp Judg 2:3 with Micah 6:5)
 3. How can we relate Israel's covenant conditions (v2), with the way we are required to live under Christ?
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THE DEATH OF JOSHUA 2:6-10

Principles

1. Same record as Joshua 24:28-31. After denunciation by angel, Joshua convenes assembly at Shechem (Josh 24:1) - the place of decision (Josh 24:14-15), 'Sanctuary of Yahweh' (Josh 24:26).
2. The people go out to possess the land - under the greater Yahoshua, Israel will be "*settled after their old estates*". (cf Ezek 36:11)
3. Under strong leadership, Israel did not waver.

Questions

1. How was Joshua, the Son of Nun, a true Ephramite? (Look up the meanings of the names)
2. Does the "falling away" (apostacy) of the 4th generation, have any specific relevance today? In what ways can we as individual young people combat a similar decline if it existed, or began to exist?
3. For what did Mount Ephraim become noted, in the later chapters of Judges?

****COMMENT**** - It is suggested that between verses 9 and 10, is the time period in which Appendices I & II (Chapters 17 to 21) are set.

PATTERN OF HISTORY OF JUDGES SUMMARISED 2:11-19

Principles

1. Israel did THE evil against Yahweh - mentioned 6 times - Judges 3:7-12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1 and the above account.
2. Yahweh sells them (Yahweh owned them, they were His, bought with a price!) Refer Judges 3:8; 4:2; 10:7 and Rom 7:14; 1 Kings 21:25.
3. Judge was 'raised up' (v16), but when 'dead' (v19), Yahweh's presence was no longer among people. Jesus once 'dead', now 'raised up' - Yahweh will never leave or forsake us. (Heb 13:5)

Questions

1. When it says in verse 18 "*it repented Yahweh*" - did this affect His purpose with Israel? Support your answer with scripture.



THE WORSHIP OF BAAL - Judges 2:11

1. Supreme male deity of Phoenicians and Canaanites, often associated with "Asherah", the supreme female deity. (v13)
2. "Asherah" often rendered "groves" (Judg 3:7; 2 Chron 33:3), Heb. "straight" - immoral object of sexual licence. (Isa 57:3-8)
3. "Baal" ("Lord, Master, Possessor") - title used for whatever form of idolatry or immorality "possessed" the people.
 - (a) BAAL-PEOR - title signifying the corruption of young women (Num 25:3), a lasting shame (Deut 4:3; Hos 9:10).
N.B. 'Joined themselves unto Baal-peor' (Psa 106:28 quoting Num 25:3). Paul's exhortation in 1 Cor 6:13-20.
 - (b) BAAL-BERITH - Judg 8:33 - Enslaved to a false covenant.
N.B. Use of this title with Abraham (Gen 14:13) "owners of a covenant" (Roth ft/note).
4. Term 'Baal' used for husband (Exod 21:22; Lev 21:4 mg). Israel confused Baal with Yahweh (Hos 2:16-17).
5. Term 'Baal' used as "Lord" and "Master" also confused Israel (Jer 23:27).
6. Jehu, appointed scourge of house of Ahab, turns house of Baal into a public toilet. (2 Kings 10:27)

THE NATIONS LEFT TO PROVE ISRAEL 2:20 - 3:4

Principles

1. Yahweh allows the Canaanites to remain to prove Israel.
2. Canaanites were left to teach Israel how to fight (v2).

Questions

1. Yahweh left the nations amongst Israel, when He could have miraculously driven them out. Why could Israel not blame God for causing them to err?
 2. Does God work in the same way today?
 3. We are to fight the warfare of faith (cf 2 Cor 10:4-5) - do we attack or defend? What weapons do we bear?
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THE ABSOLUTE FAILURE OF ISRAEL 3:5-7

Principle

1. Marry into the world and you will forget Yahweh and worship idols.

Questions

1. Has the principle above, lessened throughout the ages?
 2. What does Paul say on this matter?
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The 2 Appendices

chs. 17-21

****COMMENT**** - Although chapters 17 to 21 representing 2 appendices, occur at the end of the book of Judges, these in fact, belong chronologically before chapter 2 verse 10 and after chapter 2 verse 9. This highlights Israel's rapid and tragic decline.

- (i) The 2 historical accounts of corruption are set in the very early period of the Judges.
 - 1. They are linked together as occurring at the same time (19:1).
 - 2. In the 2nd appendix, Dan already established in the north (20:1).
 - 3. Their establishment in North recorded in 1st appendix (18:29).
 - 4. In the 2nd appendix, "Phinehas, son of Eleazar" is the High Priest (20:28). He figured in the overthrow of the Balaamite influence (Num 25:7-8) and in the controversy soon after settlement of the tribes in the land. (Josh 22:13-14)
- (ii) FIRST APPENDIX - CORRUPTION OF DOCTRINE Chapters 17 to 18
 - 1. Story of Micah's idolatry with Jonathan, the grandson of Moses. (18:30)
 - 2. Of the tribe of Dan, establishing their own inheritance in the North. Becomes centre of apostasy. (18:31)
- (iii) SECOND APPENDIX - CORRUPTION OF PRACTICE Chapters 19 to 21
 - 1. Horrible outrage of Levites concubine in Gibeah.
 - 2. Revenge against Benjamin, near extermination of that tribe.
- (iv) These accounts are selected to indicate general condition of whole nation. N.B. Leading characters from same localities.
 - 1. From Mt. Ephraim:-
 - Micah (17:1)
 - The Levite (19:1)
 - 2. From Bethlehem:-
 - Jonathan (17:7)
 - Levite's concubine (19:1)

FREEBOOTERS OF DAN COMMANDEER MICAH'S GODS & PRIEST 18:11-26

Principles

1. An ecclesia who travelled away from God's heritage, stole foreign gods, elected an unqualified leader and still expected to be blessed by God!
(cp v6)
2. Ambition and base ingratitude (vs 19,20), demonstrated by the flesh.
3. The blindness of idolatry (cp Isa 44:14-18)
 - v24 'My gods which I have made'
 - v24 Micah seeks to 'protect' his gods
 - v26 Men of Dan too strong for him even though he had gods

Questions

1. Is there any significance in the 600 men of Dan? Any connection with Judges 3:31 or Judges 20:47?
2. Verse 21 relates a 2nd Exodus. What does this mean to Dan? Is this why Dan is not mentioned in Rev. 7:4-8?
3. Dan withdrew themselves from the chastisement of Yahweh, received at the hands of those whom Yahweh had left for that purpose (Judg 3:1-4). How did the Father view this?
4. What exhortation does verse 22 carry, in light of fellowship issues today?

CUT IN 12 PIECES 19:29-30

Principles

1. It took a horrific deed to cause the Israelites to act on something, which should have been eradicated when they took their inheritance.
 - They merely act on the "effect" here, not considering they were all to blame for the cause.
2. Blood (ties) runs thicker than right principles (i.e. water). Benjamin stands by and defends Gibeah. Compare also this record and 1 Sam 11:4,7; Judg 21:8,12; 1 Sam 31:11-13.

THE GATHERING AT MIZPEH 20:1-7

Principles

1. There is often ecclesial unity when a brother has erred. Had this unity existed previously, the problem may not have arisen.
2. This gathering had all the trappings of a powerful ecclesial force. Apart from Jabesh Gilead and Benjamin (cf Judg 21:8), all the 'ecclesia' was there (v2) with their 'chiefs' or 'cornerstones' (cf Isa 28:16). It was obvious from proceedings, however, that not one had any spiritual qualifications.
3. The tribe amongst whom the incident occurred refuses to come. Benjamin obviously knew of the problem because the Levite had cut the concubine in 12 pieces and sent one to each tribe.
4. The assembly asked no questions of the accuser (Judg 20:12-13) and only made demands of the defender. Poor ecclesial policy. (See Prov 18:17)

Questions

1. Where was Mizpeh and how important did this place become? What does Mizpeh mean? Is this significant?
 2. What details had the Levite left out? Why did he do this, and were they not important?
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THE FIRST ENCOUNTER 20:18-21

THE SECOND ENCOUNTER 20:22-25

ISRAEL'S HUMBLE APPEAL 20:26-28

THE LESSON IS LEARNT

v18 The children of Israel	v23 The children of Israel	v26-28 The children of Israel & all the people
Asked counsel of Elohim	Asked counsel of <u>Yahweh</u>	Asked counsel of <u>Yahweh</u>
Who shall go up first	<u>Shall</u> I go up again to battle	<u>Shall</u> I go out to battle
	Against Benjamin my brother	Against Benjamin my brother or shall I cease
	Went up & wept before Yahweh until even	Wept & sat before Yahweh & fasted until even
		Offered burnt & peace offerings
	<u>YAHWEH'S ANSWERS</u>	
v18 Judah first	v23 Go up against him	v28 Go up for tomorrow I will deliver him into thine hand

Questions

1. Does verse 18 and verse 26 speak of Bethel, the place (the house of God) or Shiloh, the place of the tabernacle? (cp vs27,28)
2. What does Gibeah mean? When else had Israel been defeated in similar ways as verse 21 indicates? What had happened after the defeat?
3. What secured Israel's victory on the 3rd occasion?

TEMPERS COOL - THE REMORSE OF ISRAEL 21:1-7

Principles

1. Don't swear rash vows (Eccl 5:4-6)
2. Changeable emotions reek of hypocrisy (cp Judg 20:26). This is always followed by a change of policy. (cp vs 4,5) Here they circumvented an earlier vow unto Yahweh.
3. Keeping an even temper is far better, than trying to solve the problems that come through hot headedness.

Questions

1. Who were the people blaming in verse 3 for this predicament?
2. Where should they have gone if they really wanted an answer to their question of verse 3?
3. Why would God not have accepted the offerings of verse 4?



Othniel

Judges 3:5-11

- v5-7 Israel's Sin - Intermarriage and compromise with the world
- v5 - Israel dwells among the nations
- v6 - Intermarriage between Israel and nations
- v7 - Israel drawn away and serve other gods

Principles

1. Israel in passive role living side by side before those whom Yahweh had declared He was to destroy because of their iniquity (Exod 34:11). Lack of faith and refusal to be separate led to compromise and departure from the Truth (Psa 106:35-36).
2. Israel willingly and purposefully intermarried with the nations so as to be assimilated into their society and worship.
3. Israel departed from the one true God and became polytheists with its associated debased worship (note Exod 34:11-17, also see Rotherham's preface to Judges).

Judg 1:28 - *"When Israel was strong they put the Canaanites to tribute and did not utterly drive them out".*



Judg 2:2

Judg 1:32 - *"But the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: for they did not drive them out".*



Judg 2:3,11-12

Judg 1:34 - *"And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain: for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley".*



Judg 2:14

Questions

1. Instead of actively destroying their enemies they "*mingled*" (to braid, inter-mix, literally to traffic by barter) with them (Psa 106:35). Compare 1 Cor 10:11-14. Do we dwell among the Canaanites in the same sense?
2. How can we assess our relationship with the world? (see Jn 15:19; Jas 4:4; 1 Jn 2:15-17;3:1; Jn 17:14-16) To what extent is it possible to keep ourselves separate?
3. The Bible represents the relationship between Israel and the Ecclesia with Yahweh as a wife to her husband. When Israel forgot Yahweh and served other gods, how did Yahweh view it? Are we in the same position? (Note: Jas 4:4; 1 Cor 10:22; see principles in Num 5:11-31)

- v9-11 Israel's Deliverance - Yahweh raises up Othniel
- v 9 - Yahweh raises up Othniel
- v10 - Yahweh delivers through Othniel
- v11 - Yahweh's peace reigns during Othniel's lifetime

Principles

1. Israel's cry is heard by Yahweh (Psa 106:44-45) and He remembers His covenant of promise to the fathers and so once again accepts His first-born. Othniel is raised to deliver Israel - a Kenezite, like Caleb, who showed more faith than any in Israel (cp Lk 7:9). He previously went up fearlessly to possess his inheritance - Kirjath-sepher (the city of the book) which name afterward was changed to Debir (living oracle). Thus worldly learning was replaced by the living power of God's word in Othniel (Force of Ail).
2. Yahweh strengthens Othniel and Yahweh delivers the enemy into his hand. The emphasis is on Yahweh's strength manifested through one man. Note: The type of King of the North, Cushan of "double wickedness" (see Dan 11:44; Ezek 38:10-12), comes against Israel. God raises up Othniel, "*the lion of God*" of the tribe of Judah, to deliver Israel by the force of the Spirit of Yahweh.
3. The land had rest during the days of Othniel for 40 years (period of probation). Yahweh's protection afforded Israel peace, whilst they obeyed His laws. Once their leader and judge died, they forsook His commandments.

Questions

1. Why did Yahweh deliver Israel when they cried? Does Yahweh deal with the individual as with the nation?
2. How does the theme "*strength from weakness*" exhibit itself in v10?
3. If we follow in God's principles, can we expect peace now, or is it only a future promise? (cp 1 Tim 4:8 with 1 Cor 15:19)

EHUD, ANGERED BY THE IDOLATRY, RETURNS TO PUT TO DEATH ITS KING 3:18-25

Principles

1. The carved images at "Gilgal", angers Ehud, to the extent that he is determined to execute his plan without delay, "to roll away" Israel's reproach. (Col 2:9-11) Consider Gilgal in relation to the history of Israel. (Josh 4:19-24; Josh 5)
2. Israel had cast aside the principles of circumcision and now are back in bondage to the flesh.
3. Ehud refuses to submit to the servitude of one representing the power of the flesh, that "waxed fat" at the expense of Yahweh's people. (Rom 6:12-19)
4. The spirit of Yahweh comes upon Ehud, the son of the right hand, who is shut up of his right hand (A.V. margin) - a thing of weakness, which God makes strong for the work of deliverance. (2 Cor 12:9)
5. He played on Eglon's superstition and weakness, in his plan to remove the "diabolos" from power. (Heb 2:14) He left in victory. (Rom 6:11; 2 Cor 5:15,17)

Questions

1. What significance does Gilgal have upon Ehud, in relation to Israel's past history? Why should the quarries at Gilgal make Ehud determined to execute his plan immediately?
2. Was the dagger that was on his thigh connected in any way to Gilgal, and if so, how? (Consider Josh 5:2-3)
3. Ehud being fully persuaded that Yahweh was with him, drove the dagger into the stomach of Eglon with such force, that he couldn't remove it. Is there any significance in this act, and how does it have relation to our walk in the truth?

THE GATHERING OF THE FAITHFUL TO TREAD DOWN THEIR ENEMIES 3:26-30

Principles

1. Ehud escaped to "*Seirath*" (rough she goat). This female goat was offered for the sin of omission, when brought to one's knowledge (Lev 4:27-29) Israel had forgotten Yahweh and His covenant of circumcision.
2. His second weapon, the Shophar, (the sword having been left in the belly of Eglon) was used to invoke the help of Yahweh. It speaks of the Mediator, the leader and defender of the flock, or the 'Shepherd of Israel'. This highlights the work of the Lord Jesus Christ as the horn exalted. (1 Sam 2:1-10) The dead ram raised to life by the power of God. (Heb. 2:9-10)
3. Ehud gathered the faithful to "*Mount Ephraim*" (double fruit - the typical firstborn), by a blast on the Shophar. (Psa 110:2-3; Gen 49:10) It was used to assemble Israel on many occasions. It announced the year of Jubilee or year of release (Lev 25:9), it warned them of approaching danger (Joel 2:1), and it will announce the return of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess 4:16) and the change of this body into incorruptibility (1 Cor 15:52).
4. The faithful followers led by Ehud, now united, go down to cut off the fleshly oppressors of God's people, at the place of crossing, "Jordan". This represents the winding and treacherous probation of the saints, that descends and dissipates into the Dead Sea, where Ehud suffered no man to pass over. (1 Cor 15:50; Gal 5:19-21)
5. The Moabites are subdued (from the root, "to bend the knee" i.e. to bring into subjection) that day under the hand of Israel, and eighty years of peace results. (Isa 45:23-25)

Questions

1. Ehud blew the Shophar in Mount Ephraim. What significance is there in this, in relation to the history of Israel?
2. What is important about the "fords of Jordan"? Consider not only Israel's past history, but the times of Christ himself.

Shamgar

Judges 3:31; 5:6

Principles

1. "*Shamgar*" - some suggest it signifies "Desolation Removed" which was, to some extent, the result of his courageous actions.
2. "*The son of Anath*" - some commentators believe that this indicates Shamgar came from the town of Beth-Anath in Galilee (Josh 15:59). If this is so, he showed a brotherly concern for the safety of Israelites in Judah and Benjamin (the usual area of Philistine aggression). "*Anath*" signifies "affliction", which was widespread and severe in Shamgar's day, as we can see from Judges 5:6-8.
3. He "*slew of the Philistines*" - this is the first mention of the Philistines actually being fought by Israel, and the last before Samson's great task - which implies that Shamgar's faith and courage had a lasting effect for many years afterwards.
4. "*Six hundred men*" - a number that speaks of the arm of flesh on which the gentile multitudes relied - 6 x 10 x 10. Apparently the slaying of the 600 Philistines was accomplished singlehanded, but we are not told whether they were killed in one incident or over a period of time.
5. "*With an ox goad*" - an ox goad speaks of service, even if unwilling at first. Israel, who were Yahweh's ox (Hos 4:16; 10:11), had to be goaded out of its idolatry by the oppression of foreign peoples. Saul of Tarsus attempted to kick against the ox-goad of conscience (Acts 9:5). This use of what is ordinarily weak, but which becomes devastatingly effective in the hands of a man of faith, is illustrative of 1 Cor 1:27-29 and 2 Cor 12:9.
6. We are reminded that the Judges accomplished their deliverances, not from natural ability or strength, but "*out of weakness were made strong*" through faith and the grace of Yahweh.

Questions

1. How can our actions make lasting impressions on those in and out of the Truth?
2. The world trusts on the might of its own arm. What are the weapons of our warfare?
3. Can you define modern Philistine characteristics?
4. When fighting for a cause, how do we know whether we are doing God's service or not?

Deborah & Barak

Judges ch 4 & 5

Judges 4 - CO-OPERATION IN FAITH

ISRAEL SOLD TO JABIN THE CANAANITE - SIN'S POWER PREVAILS 4:1-3

Principles

1. 80 years of peace had not proved of benefit to the ecclesia of God. Ehud was dead. "*Ehud*" means "united" or from a Hebrew root "to collect one's thoughts". Gesenius - "gather thyself together i.e. attend". But Israel had not used the period of ecclesial peace for attending to God's word nor to unify on the basis of truth. They returned to the "*evil*" of doing that which was "*right in their own eyes*".
2. Jabin II (cp Josh 11) had been allowed to re-form and return, this time with iron chariots. Iron "*breaks in pieces and bruises*" (Dan 2:40); such was the mighty oppression on all the government and economy of Israel.

Questions

1. Why aren't peaceful periods always conducive to spiritual fortification and growth?
2. Consider the spiritual circumstances of Yahweh selling Israel. How do the following verses draw out this principle?
Rom 1:24 "*God gave them up...*"
Rom 6:16-18 "*...his servants ye are to whom ye obey...*"
Rom 7:14 "*I am carnal sold under sin...*"
3. How is Harosheth ("carving, cutting") a link to Ehud's record (cp 3:19)?

Principles

1. Deborah was an Ephraimite - a proud tribe judged by a woman (*"the weaker vessel"* - 1 Pet 3). There was no man, no counsellor, among the men of Ephraim (Isa 41:28). This was a reminder and a rebuke to Ephraim.
2. Another Deborah was likewise the nurse of Israel's children (Gen 35:8). She was buried beneath *"the oak of weeping"* (cp Josh 24:1,20,25-26); probably the same area in which Deborah arose a *"mother in Israel"*. It was here that Jacob buried the household gods (Gen 35:4) and here that Israel chose new gods (Judg 5:8).
3. Barak and 10,000, with no weapons, gathered to Tabor (fragile) at the inspiration of a woman (*"Deborah"* - *"a bee"* or *"orderly motion"*) - elements of weakness to defeat the mighty General Sisera - *"warlike array"*.
4. 10,000 willingly jeopardized their lives to the death and were prepared to leave their wives and children and city of refuge to place their refuge in Yahweh and *"wrestle"* (Naphtali) for their *"dwelling"* (Zebulun).
5. vv8-9 - Deborah and Barak were partners in faith's encounter with the enemy. Notice the principle of esteeming a brother and sister better than self. See Phil 2:3-4.
6. *"hand of a woman"* - that no flesh might glory. The final victory of spirit over flesh was to be gained by the seed of the woman (Gen 3:15). Herein is a type of Christ's victory over sin and death. Sisera stands as a type of the propensities that rule in human nature. This was put to death by being bruised in the head and on account of which captivity was led captive.
7. Heber was their Judas but Yahweh turned his wicked counsel into victory. *"Heber"* (a community) set his family aside from Israel and the exceptional faith of the Kenites. He lived near the Sanctuary (Kadesh) but never sought *'refuge'* in Yahweh.

Questions

1. What do we know of Deborah's character?
2. What do we learn of Barak's character (Heb 11:32)?
3. How do the following verses relate to this record?

2 Cor 10:3-5	<i>"weapons of our warfare not carnal"</i>
	(Judg 5:8 no carnal weapons)
Eph 6:12	<i>"wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities... powers..."</i>
Eph 6:16	<i>"...shield of faith"</i>
4. Make a list of incidents that demonstrate the principle of *"strength made perfect in weakness"*.

VICTORY IN DIVINE STRENGTH - FAITH IS REWARDED 4:13-17

Principles

1. Sisera arrayed his forces - an unparalleled military build-up, a war machine unequalled and unrivalled in history. Compare present day Soviet military machine.
2. Isa 54:17 *"No weapon formed against thee shall prosper"*.
3. Though fleshly men's hearts failed them for fear, 10,001 men lifted up their heads because their *"DAY"* of deliverance had come. Judg 4:14 - the day of Yahweh is a *"day of battle"* ordained for Divine victory. See Zech 12-14.
4. *"Barak"* (lightning) discomfited (to put into commotion) *"Sisera"* (warlike array). See Psalm 18:14.
5. *"Into thine hand"* - It was thence up to Barak to decide Sisera's fate. Barak faithfully dispensed Yahweh's commission (Deut 7:2).

Questions

1. The power to subdue the influences of sin in our lives has been placed in our hands through the Word of God. What have we done with it? How have we used the Word to subdue sin's influence in our life? How do we personally view sin?
2. How does the following Scripture relate to Judges 4:16?
Hab 3:13 *"Thou woudest the wicked...by discovering the foundation unto the neck"*
Mic 5: 6 *"They shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword...in the entrances"*
Gen 22:17 *"Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies"*
3. How did Yahweh go before Barak (4:14)?
4. How far is Tabor from the battlefield?

Judges 5 - SONG OF DEBORAH - LEAD CAPTIVITY CAPTIVE

An Epitome A glorious song of a true mother in Israel, sung in good company with Miriam, Moses, Hannah, Mary and the Lamb. It tells of the:

utter destruction of the flesh
complete exaltation of Yahweh alone!

10,001 men on that day became the vehicle of Yahweh's manifestation through whom He showed wondrously "the hiding of His power" in Cherubic manifestation. On that day was revealed the hearts of many. Action not resolution was the test of those who "loved Yahweh". The song may be divided into 3 parts:

1st Strophe 5:1-11

YAHWEH'S GIFT - PRAISE FOR LONG-HAIRED LEADERS v1-3

Principles

1. Barak went beyond natural abilities to do something quite beyond man - they went in faith (Rom 4:20-21).
2. As Deborah and Barak looked down on the carnage and tangled, twisted chariots, they spontaneously burst forth into this song of praise and victory.
3. v2 - co-operation in faith is highlighted. Here was true "unity".
4. Kings were to stop their mouths to listen to a woman.

Questions

1. How may Isaiah 52:15 apply in verse 3?
2. Explain how the principle of a woman's subjection to a brother is not set aside in this record. Consider Eph 5:21,24; 1 Cor 11:3; 1 Tim 3:11-12.

FROM CAPTIVITY TO MT. SINAI 5:4-5

Principles

1. Deliverance from Egypt was memorialised, never to be forgotten. (Exod 12:14) It also is typical of the deliverance of God from that day forward, particularly of the greater deliverance under the leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ. See Psa 83:9-12; Psa 68; Deut 33:1-3; Hab 3:3.
2. The victory is also typical of the Lord Jesus Christ's victory and exodus from sin and death. (Eph 4:8)

Questions

1. Explain how this victory is typical of the Lord's victory over flesh.

"WAR IN THE GATES" 5:6-8

Principles

1. The truth was threatened in the days when men walked in crooked paths.
2. Their military strategy was typical of their spiritual condition.

Questions

1. Why is Shamgar mentioned in verse 6? Could Shamgar have assisted?
2. Make a comparison with Deborah in Genesis 35.
3. What is the significance of the 40,000 when Barak was only commanded to call 10,000.

FROM CAPTIVITY TO MT. TABOR 5:14-18

The Spirit in Deborah searches Israel for faith and faithfulness.

Principles

1. There are those who responded to the call of Yahweh among the tribes of Ephraim, Benjamin, Machir (Manasseh), Zebulun, Naphtali and Issachar. They could see the jeopardy the truth was in, and offered their own lives in response to Barak's call.
2. Verse 15 - "*they came willingly and swiftly*", into the valley they rushed at his feet. (Comp. Bible)
3. Reuben made resolutions and were conscience stricken.
4. Gilead once afraid they would be excluded from Israel (Josh 22:24-26), now found the Jordan a convenient boundary.
5. Dan preferred to pursue their worldly commitments, than come to the aid of his brethren.
6. Asher was a tribe very close, but they chose to visit their holiday homes on the coast, at the appropriate moment.
7. Zebulun & Naphtali were prepared to suffer the reproach of Christ. All who open their lives to such reproach for Christ's sake, shall not lose their reward. (See Matt 5:11-12; 2 Tim 2:12)

VICTORY - WICKED TRODDEN DOWN 5:19-23

1. Taanach and Megiddo were still Canaanite strongholds (Judg 1:27).
2. "*From heaven was the battle fought*" (Roth). See Psa 68:33, Yahweh rides in the heavens. Note also Deut 33:26-29.
3. "Trodden down strength" a common figure for dominion - see Deut 33:29; Mal 4:3. Contrast the prancings of the horse hoofs.
4. Meroz - Gesenius - "refuge", "to draw in" - they drew back from participation (Heb 10:39) - located about 7½ miles south of Kedesh Naphtali, if forms a contrast with this city of refuge.
5. They failed to perceive the calling as being of God.

Questions

1. How did the heavens literally fight?
 2. What is the significance of the appearance in the record of the angel of Yahweh?
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3rd Strophe 5:24-31

YAHWEH'S GIFT - Jael - SIN'S POWER CRUSHED IN THE HEAD 5:24-27

Principles

1. These verses record the faith of Jael, as she with deliberation of action, destroyed the enemy of Yahweh.
2. In reconciling the two accounts (Judg 4:18-24 and Judg 5:24-27), Jael smote Sisera as he lay asleep. In his last death throes, he partially rose only to crash, destroyed at the feet of a woman. As it were, we have the two goats of the day of atonement, one destroyed and one (Jael = wild goat) alive, to deliver Israel from the power of sin's oppression.

SISERA'S MOTHER MOURNS, AWAITS FLESHLY GIFTS 5:28-30

Principles

1. False confidence is disappointed. Prov 10:24 - *"The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him, but the desire of the righteous shall be granted"*.
2. Compare 5:19 - *"Plunder of silver, they took not away"* (Roth)
3. Damsel is Hebrew for "womb", indicative of the purpose for which these women were captured (Judg 5:11). Is it any wonder that Deborah should find consolation in the consternation of these people?!

FINAL CHORUS - VICTORY OVER ALL ENEMIES 5:31

Principles

1. Those who love Yahweh, are those who love not their lives unto the death, and who willingly offer themselves.
2. A.S.V. *"... be like the rising of the sun in its might"*. The coming of the *"Sun of righteousness"*, will illuminate a world in gross darkness. We are living in such days, which if not shortened will mean the destruction of all flesh. May the day therefore, soon dawn upon us and the hidden things of darkness be revealed and God's glory fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. (Isa 60:1-5; Psa 19:4-6)

Questions

1. How is this typical of the destruction of the final enemy? (1 Cor 15:26)
 2. In the context of this incident, who are those who love Yahweh? (See Matt 16:25; Mal 3:16)
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Gideon

Judges ch 6 - 8

OPPRESSED BY MIDIAN 6:1-6

Principles

1. Israel again commit "the evil".
2. The number of the covenant - 7. God delivers them into the hand of Midian for 7 years. Midian a descendant of Abraham.
3. Israel driven from their inheritance to unproductive tracts of land.
4. Israel sowed "evil" and reaped destruction but not sustenance ('preservation of life').
5. Israel plagued by grasshoppers as God had so plagued hard-hearted Pharaoh.
6. In their "paupered" condition the cycle brings them to supplicate God for deliverance.

Questions

1. What is "the evil" Israel did in Yahweh's sight? Are we sometimes guilty of this? How?
 2. Find the number of either allusions or direct references to '7' in these three chapters and outline their significances.
 3. Do you think it is significant that their oppressors were: (a) Midianites, (b) Amalekites? Discuss the significance of these races to Israel.
 4. How complete was the devastation of the land by the eastern hordes? Are there times when the truth suffers like this today?
 5. Is there a reason why the Scriptures speak of their multitudes as like grasshoppers?
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Principles

1. Special angel of God's presence sent to the oak which symbolized the strength of Israel based upon the promises to Abraham (cp Gen. 12:6; 14:13).
2. It belonged to the one 'Yahweh supports' (Joash) and 'whose father is help' (Abiezer). Contrast Israel's present position.
3. Gideon ("hewer down") because of the oppression was forced to thresh wheat in the hollow rock of a winepress.
4. The angel addresses Gideon with a title of a mighty warrior (cp Ruth 2:1; Isa. 9:6).
5. Gideon addresses the angel as lord, but does not recognize him as an angel.
6. Gideon's answer from the angel is not recorded, it was unnecessary because Gideon understood it. See Deut. 31:16-18. His own family position contributed to 'the evil' Israel was doing, the Angel's look was enough to answer him.
7. Gideon was sent in the strength of conviction that Yahweh was with him and would repeat the miracles of Egypt.
8. Gideon's expression of inadequacy highlights the theme 'strength through weakness' and so he is encouraged by the promise that sustained Moses. (Exod. 3:12) and Joshua (Josh. 1:5) and ourselves (Heb. 13:5).
9. Gideon in v17 uses the words of Moses in Exodus, demonstrating (a) his desire to be like that faithful man and (b) his desire for the events of the Exodus to re-occur.
10. Gideon desired God to consume his minchah (meal offering) as a sign of its acceptance.

Questions

1. What is the significance of the oak mentioned in v11?
 2. Was the angel's description of Gideon in v12 fitting when we consider he was threshing wheat in a winepress?
 3. What is the purpose behind Gideon's entreaty in v13?
 4. Was Gideon's lack of qualifications (v15) sufficient reason for reluctance: Do we sometimes use similar reasons as the basis for being excused?
 5. What is the purpose behind the sign Gideon seeks?
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Principles

1. Before Gideon could deliver Israel from the oppressor he must first remove the cause of oppression - idolatry. He must start at home.
2. 'The same night' v25 shows his individual sacrifice must be carried over until the whole nation is cleansed.
3. For 7 years Moab had oppressed them and for 7 years Israel had served 'Baal-berith' (the Lord of the Covenant). Cp Judges 8:33.
4. Two bullocks one for a national offering (positive) and the second a 7 year old to repudiate the 'Baal-berith' altar. The male bull and the female 'asherah' (grove) were associated with the false worship.
5. Gideon is instructed to act in accordance with his name - "hew down" the grove.
6. An ordered altar of unhewn stone set up in contrast to baal's brick altars (cp Isa. 65:3).
7. Ten men, an aggregate number, labour to overcome spiritual darkness. They cast down 'the prince of this world' and cut off fleshly lusts.
8. The sacred bull had been caused to ascend to Yahweh and peace established.
9. It was obviously Gideon's work as he was so opposed to Baal.
10. Gideon was named Jerubbaal - 'baal's contestor'. The folly of idol worship was now seen.

Questions

1. Why does the record mention Gideon's commission to overthrow Baal occurring on the same night as his offering being accepted? Is there a lesson for us?
2. What is the significance in mentioning the bullock of 7 years?
3. Why does it mention 10 men as accompanying Gideon?
4. Outline the full significance of Gideon being termed 'Jerubbaal'. Can you relate it to (a) Jesus (b) to us?

GIDEON GATHERS HIS ARMY 6:33-35

Principles

1. The hordes come for their annual forage and camp at 'Jezreel' (God sows). This is appropriate, as the typical day of Jezreel was drawing nigh. (cp Hos. 1:10-11; 2:21-23).
2. Gideon's weakness was clothed upon (see mg) by Yahweh's spirit.
3. The support began with his family and spread to his tribe, Manasseh, then to Asher (who reversed their stand of 5:17) together with two of the northern tribes who had responded to Barak's call (5:18).

Questions

1. Is there any great significance in mentioning the place, Jezreel, where the enemy camped?
 2. If someone we know needs help should we leave it to others?
 3. Perhaps we have failed to support in the past, like Asher (5:17), what can we do now if the trumpet blast calls for help?
 4. What lessons do we learn from Zebulon and Naphtali cp 5:18 with 6:35.
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THE SIGN OF THE FLEECE 6:36-40

Principles

1. Gideon does not doubt God, but sees the weak link in the chain as himself - human strength may fail at such a crisis.
2. The first sign left doubts in Gideon's mind as it was not impossible for the fleece to retain a little moisture. The second sign confirmed his faith because it was an outstanding miracle.

Questions

1. Why does Gideon question his part in God's stated purpose?
2. Is there a lesson for us in this?
3. Is it wrong to ask a sign, or even two, from God? Why is Gideon's sign given yet when Zecharias asked a sign (Luke 1:18-20) he was struck dumb?

Judges 7

THE DAY OF MIDIAN

THE TEST AND SELECTION OF THE 300 7:1-8

Principles

1. Jerubbaal 'contends with Baal' and 'hews down' his followers.
2. Israel 'trembles' (Harod) before Midian.
3. Their enemies lay between them and their families - between Tabor and Gilboa.
4. Too many - but they were only 32,000 (v3) and the Midianites 135,000 (Judges 8;10). No human exaltation, the victory would be Yahweh's (cp Psalm 33:16; 44:1-8; Isa. 59:16).
5. The fearful must return from the battle (Deut. 20:8; Phil. 1:20-21).
6. Before the battle is commenced another class of followers are tried (v4), (or as the Septuagint puts it "purged" i.e. as gold). A tried faith was the basis of selection.
7. God chooses, not Gideon.
8. They were dangerously exposed at the well of "trembling". Those fully aware of the dangers were chosen. Their eyes would be upward - they would deliver Israel and fully appreciate it to be Yahweh's victory.
9. 300 - only 1% of original army. Many are called but few chosen. Disciplined yet aware of weakness. Cp Abraham's 318 trained servants (Gen. 14:14).
10. Yahweh saves by many OR BY FEW (1 Sam. 14:6; 2 Cron. 14:11). The 300 were retained Heb. 'seized' or 'fastened upon'. Chosen dedicated vessels.

Questions

1. Why is the name Jerubbaal used in v1?
2. Do you see any reason in Gideon's army assuming a position south of the enemy?

3. What classes were excluded from Gideon's army and why? Is there a lesson for Christ's soldiers in this?
 4. Why were so few chosen?
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THE FOURTH AND FIFTH SIGNS ACCOMPANIED BY
PHURAH AND A SUPERSTITIOUS DREAM

7:9-14

Principles

1. God's merciful provision of yet another sign to a fearful brother.
2. vll. Roth. "Thy hands shall grow strong" i.e. Yahweh would strengthen him and show him how to conduct his campaign.
3. The barley was the bread of the poor, Israel were so. It was also an indication of Passover and the deliverance from Pharaoh's host by the angel of God.
4. Midian's host like the tent would be inverted by an object of weakness.
5. Gideon, assured that the sword he wielded to 'hew down' with, was strong because Yahweh supports (Joash).

Questions

1. When have we had similar feelings to Gideon's fears and reluctance?
 2. Was it significant that Gideon take Phurah with him/ Is there a lesson here for us?
 3. What are some of the significances of the barley bread inverting the Midianitish tent?
 4. What was it that strengthened Gideon when he heard it? Is there a lesson for us?
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Principles

1. The mg v15 shows Gideon now clearly saw what he must do.
2. Humiliated after receiving five signs he thanks God for his mercy and tolerance.
3. Yahweh's deliverance of his people now effected. They must rally to the victory.
4. Three companies to give appearance of large army, as did Abraham (Gen. 14:15), Saul (1 Sam. 11:11) and David (2 Sam. 18:2).
5. 300 trumpets - seem like 300 armies. Pitchers with lamps within - earthen vessels containing divine light (2 Cor. 4:7).
6. Gideon led as Christ leads and we must follow (Isa. 55:4; 2 Cor. 4:6; Heb. 12:1-3). Divine lights is to be manifested by all.
7. v18 RSV, RV "For Yahweh and for Gideon". 'For Yahweh' - as the giver of victory. 'For Gideon' - the inspired leader of Israel (his name feared by reason of the dream).
8. Enemies of truth are caught not understanding the signs of the times.
9. Panic ensured Israel need not move. Their enemies came to them. They could stand still and see Yahweh's salvation (cp Exod. 14:13,16) on this "the day of Midian" (Isa. 9:4).
10. Like the future Gogian their hand was against each other (cp Exek. 38:21), when Yahweh "called for a sword".
11. The rest of Israel rallies to victory.
12. Appeal to Ephraim to aid in the warfare of faith.
13. At the 'house of the fords' Beth-barah) of 'the descender' (Jordan) they took the two lesser princes (others were kings).
 - * Oreb - 'a raven' unclean bird (Lev. 11 5) that picks eyes out of help-less animals.
 - * Zeeb - 'wolf' attacks the flock (defenceless sheep and lambs) with ferocity (Ezek.22:27; Jer.5:6; Zeph.3:3; John 10:12, etc). Israel's enemies.
14. Oreb slain on a rock (tzur) from whence came the divine fire (6:21) and Zeeb on the upper rock (Sela) where Gideon placed his offering. See future application. Psa. 83:1-4, 9-18; sa. 9:4-5; 10:24-27.

Questions

1. What lessons do we learn from Gideon's response to divine forbearance (cp Rom.2:4 lesson for us)?
 2. In their cry "for Yahweh and for Gideon", is there an application of this today?
 3. Compare "the day of Midian" then and that to come?
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Judges 8

FAITH VICTORIOUS DESPITE ENVY AND INDIFFERENCE BUT TRIUMPH SOURED BY THE SNARE OF ERROR

8:1-3

THE ENVY OF EPHRAIM

Principles

1. The proud tribe who did not respond originally but only when victory was assured. In Judges 12:1 they make the same charge to Jephthah who does unto them (12:5-6) as they did to the Midianites.
2. Their chiding (same word) was as Israel to God (Exod.17:2; Psa.103:9) "to wrangle".
3. Since it was Yahweh's victory none ought vaunt themselves.
4. The victory was seen in the death of the princes of flesh. cp Isa.10:26
5. "A soft answer turneth away wrath" (Prov.15:1). Their anger (ruach - breath, wind, exhaltation) was abated.

Questions

1. What will become of those who are proud and hypocritical?
2. Why could the men of Ephraim take pride in what they had achieved?
3. What do we learn from the manner of Gideon's dealings with his brethren?

THE NEUTRALS OF SUCCOTH AND PENUEL 8:4-9

Principles

1. "FAINT YET PURSUING" - theme for the day. Languishing, faint and weary on the truth's service.
2. The booth dwellers acted more like conspirators of this world than strangers and sojourners motivated by faith.
3. He asked only assistance not active participation but they failed to trust God for fear of the present. Faithless generation. Would not meet any cost for the truth.

4. Zeba = 'sacrificial slaughter'
Zalmunna = 'defence is denied'
This was what they had done to Israel and this would be their end (Psa. 83:11). They were kings (of greater importance than the princes of 7:25).
5. Their failure to support the truth (Gideon) - Matt. 12:30.
6. Despite ecclesial disunity (though tragic if ever it happens) and failure of others to support, Yahweh will give victory to the faithful - to those who endure to an end. (Matt. 24:12-14).
7. Gideon as the type of Christ would again 'tear' (Heb. 'thresh') (i) the wheat would be separated from the chaff. (ii) pricking thorns, those cursed and rejected (cp Matt. 25:33-46) (iii) there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Luke 13:27-30) (iv) beaten with many stripes (Luke 12:45-48) (v) briers speak of final rejection (Heb. 6:8-12).
8. Penuel - 'face of God'. Yet they turned their face away. God saw and he would remember and repay. To the righteous Yahweh is a strong tower (Psa. 61:3). But these ungodly were self-sufficient in their tower, disinterested in the war of faith. The tower once destroyed, demonstrated that one should only trust in Yahweh.

Questions

1. What should we do to help those labouring in the truth? (cp Titus 3:13).
 2. Are there any neutrals in the warfare of faith? What becomes of those who think they are neutrals?
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THE FINAL VICTORY 8:10-12

Principles

1. Gideon seeks total eradication of the enemy. He takes 'the caravan route' (RSV) aside from the main highway so that he might surprise the remainder. He passes through Manasseh's towns of eastern Gilead and comes when (RSV) v12 "the army was off its guard".
2. They fled "like whirling dust - as stubble in the wind" (Psa. 83:13). Gideon continued to pursue, there was to be no rest until they "perished" (Psa.83:17) that all men acknowledge Yahweh (Psa.83:18).

Questions

1. When should a truce be declared with the truth's enemies? When is it "enough"?
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2. Can we ever be caught off guard? What could result? How can we be on guard?
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THE LESSON OF THE THORNS 8:13-17

Principles

1. v13. Again it was "that night" in which actions and consequences began to flow.
2. These men were "described" (NB mg 'writ'). Their names were "written in the earth" (Jer. 17:13) recorded for judgement.
3. 77 men (ish) but they were unfaithful to the covenant. The HYPOCRISY of Brethren declared!
4. He shows them Zebah and Zalmunna about whom they had "taunted" him.
5. He 'taught' them - see mg. "made them to know" - a practical and painful lesson of Moses' words (Num. 33:50-55).
6. And at Penuel he demonstrated the vanity of those who trust in the flesh (cp Psa.91:1-16). Yahweh is a sun and shield (Psa. 84:7-12).

Questions

1. Why is there always an emphasis in the record of 'that night'? How does this compare with our attitude of putting off until tomorrow what can be done TODAY, while it is still called TODAY?
 2. What will become of those who are unfaithful to the covenant?
 3. How do these lessons demonstrate the need for trust in Yahweh?
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DESTRUCTION OF ZEBBA AND ZALMUNNA 8:18-21

Principles

1. Zeba and Zalmunna had been preserved as an object lesson to Succoth and Penuel.
2. In an earlier battle Gideon's brothers, who showed the same family likeness and regal appearance had been slain by the Midianites at Tabor.
3. Had they respected the kingly status of his brothers he would have respected theirs.
4. He seeks to (1) humiliate them by having them slain by a boy, and (2) impress the lesson of the thorns on his son.
5. As they request they die 'honourably' at Gideon's hand.
6. Gideon takes the "moon crests" off the necks of their camels. (same word ornaments Isa. 3:18). The symbol of Yahweh's victory over their gods.

Questions

1. Do you think it was providential that Gideon's brothers had not been preserved?
 2. Why did Gideon ask his son to slay Zeba and Zalmunna? What lessons are there here for young people today?
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GIDEON REFUSES THE MONARCH 8:22-23

Principles

1. Because of what he had done, in a wave of popularity they sought to make him king (cp John 6:15). Such popularity is shortlived (cp v35 and John 6:66). They also offered him a dynasty.
2. It had not been Gideon's victory, but as he well knew it was Yahweh's victory.
3. Gideon declined their invitation acknowledging Yahweh's sovereignty (cp Exod. 15:18; Num. 23:21; 1 Sam. 8:7). No man was king in Israel - but unfortunately many had also forgotten Yahwey and to them "THERE WAS NO KING IN ISRAEL" (Judges 21:25).

Questions

1. Why did Gideon decline the monarchy?
 2. How do the events of this section compare with attitudes today?
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THE SNARE OF GIDEON'S HOUSE 8:24-27

Principles

1. Gideon's request for the golden earrings was no doubt inspired by the fact that the golden furniture for the Tabernacle was made from Egyptian golden earrings (Exod. 35:20,23). An earring of gold is likened to an obedient ear (Prov. 25:12). He had failed to remember that the golden calf had also been made from earrings (Exod. 32:2).
2. Midianites and Ishmaelites are exchangeable terms (cp Gen. 37:25, 39:1 with Gen. 37:28,36). They were a gaudy race (v26), part of whose vain attire were these earrings (Hos. 2:13).
3. About 9 kg of gold (approx. 300 ounces), or on today's values well over \$100,000. The wealth was of no interest to Gideon. In addition he requested their "moon crescent pendants" and the costly purple that spoke of royalty (cp Esther 8:15; John 19:2,5 with Jer. 10:9; Ezek. 27:7), and the camel collars to which wisdom is likened (Prov. 1:9). The collar is on the neck of an unclean animal (Lev. 11:4) - (see also in relation to us Song of S. 4:9).
4. Gideon usurps the priesthood after refusing the monarchy by copying the blue garment of the High Priest which supported the breastplate of Judgement. (Exod. 28:6-30). The breastplate spoke of Divine authority and judgement. It was used in the absence of effective priesthood. (1 Sam. 23:6-9; 30:7).
5. Ophrah not God's choice of central worship.
6. Gideon's ephod soon became a "snare" (Heb. 'noose' or 'trap') to Israel. (see 1 Tim. 6:10). Gideon and his house like Hezekiah lapsed into error after great success (cp 2 Chron. 32:23-26).

Questions

1. Why did Gideon wish to make an ephod?
2. Was he right in making an ephod? Do we do things like this at times - how?
3. Why is idolatry likened to spiritual adultery? Comment on James 4:4.

Principles

1. Midian was subdued (Heb. 'Kana' - root word for Canaanites) cp Judges 4:23, 'to bend the knee'.
2. Their heads hung in shame - pride abased (see Lam.2:10 and ct Psa. 24:7).
3. The land was at rest 40 years a period typical of God's rest (cp Jud. 3:11; 5:31; Heb. 4:9).
4. Alas "Baal's contender" and the "hewer down" gave opportunity for Baal's worship to revive. He seems as he got older to have limited his influence deliberately and not lived up to his name. His house became ensnared, just as Micah's had with his ephod (cp Jud. 17:5).
5. A large family typical of the nations (Exod. 15:7; Deut. 32:8) speak of the sons of God - given in the "rest". They were "of Gideon's body, as we are of Christ's, called" sons of Jerubbaal (Jud. 9:25) those who contend and strive with flesh and blood to overcome it (cp Heb. 2:13-16).
6. Gideon's many wives and concubine, that may have been a Canaanite, contributed to his undoing. Shechem - Heb. 'shoulder' by implication 'burden bearer'. Gideon could not carry this burden.
7. The concubine's influence and Gideon's pride combine to call this troublous offspring by that which Gideon had refused. "Abimelech" - my father is a king.
8. Gideon died in peace and prosperity but the seeds of wickedness had been sown in the new generation - and the results were certain to be idolatry and bloodshed. The influence of older generations frequently dissolves with the passage of time (cp Josh. 24:31). There is then an urgent need for faithful leadership (Heb. 13:7,17; 2 Tim. 2:2).
9. From a position where Israel had wrongly attributed victory to Gideon (8:22) later men, those of Shechem, attributed their defence to Baal (9:46). Yahweh's deliverance again forgotten.
10. Yahweh "remembered him for good" (Neh. 5:19). "and what shall I say more? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon... who through faith... out of weakness was made strong (6:16), waxed valiant in fight (8:4), turned to flight the armies of the alien (7:22)" Heb. 11:32,34

Questions

1. What do you think of Gideon's association with his concubine? Do you think there are lessons on marriage here for young people?
2. Why do you think the record of Gideon ends on such a negative note? For warning?
3. What effect does the passage of time have on adherence to the truth? What can we do about this?
4. How is Gideon throughout the record a type of Christ (particularly in the use of his two names)?
5. Gideon although forgotten by Israel was remembered by Yahweh for good. What must we do to be likewise remembered?

Abimelech

Judges 9 - THE DESTRUCTIVE POWER OF FLESHLY AMBITION

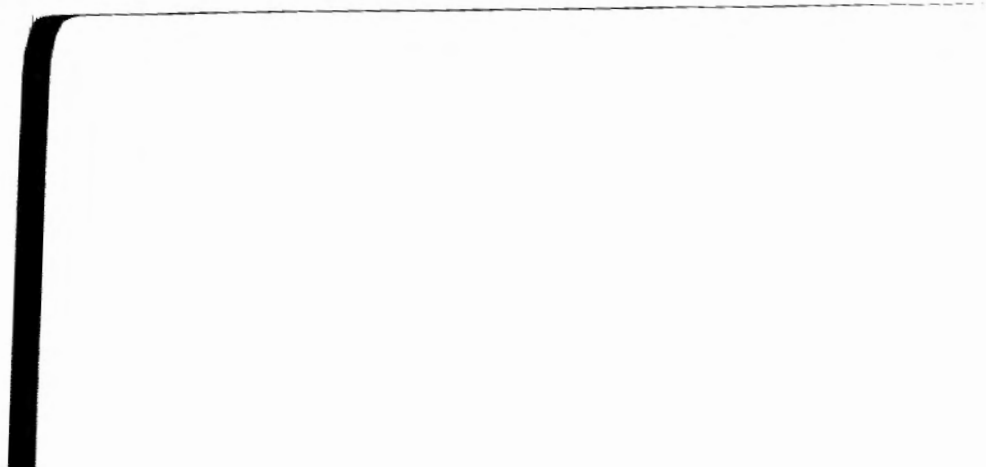
ABIMELECH SEEKS THE THRONE 9:1-4

Principles

1. "*Abimelech*" (Father of the king) with regal ambition went to Shechem to his mother's brethren. In so doing he disassociated himself from his father, Gideon, and his work. He associated himself with Ephraim and despised Manasseh.
2. He seeks elevation on the grounds of fleshly relationship and not because of merit.
3. He is encouraged by the Shechemites by the provision of 70 shekels of silver from the idolatrous worship of the house of Baal-berith, the ancient god of Shechem. The money he used to hire vain and worthless men to follow him.

Questions

1. What had Gideon's 'work' been and should it have been perpetuated?
2. Ephraim consistently vied for ecclesial pre-eminence. What place has ecclesial rivalry got in the service of the Truth?
3. On what basis is it that those in the Truth will sit on thrones and when will that be? (Consider 1 Cor 4:8)
4. Contrast those who followed Abimelech for hire and true companionship in the Truth.



ABIMELECH WARNED OF SHECHEM'S TREACHERY 9:30-33

Principles

1. Even those without merit will have faithful adherents who, for whatever reason, remain loyal to their cause. Abimelech had Zebul.
2. Like his master, Zebul was not to be trusted. Though he acted as a confidant he was practising deceit. This is the way of the world. Avoid it.

Question

What contrast can be made between Zebul's reaction to Gaal's boast (v29-30) and the advice Paul gives in Eph 4:26-27?

SHECHEM TAKEN AND DESTROYED 9:34-45

Principles

1. In a manner very much like a spoilt child, Abimelech had no concern at all for Shechem (as evidenced in his lack of action when it was enclosed by bandits v25) until someone else wanted it. In like manner the world cares not what we do until it is evident that our desires are for the things of the kingdom. The world fears that challenge to its authority and seeks to destroy it in us.
2. Dulled by sleep and celebrations, Gaal and the men of Shechem were defeated; so much so that Zebul was easily able to expel those who had escaped back into the city.
3. Abimelech's desire for revenge was not to be sated until the city was in ruins. When the people came out into the fields they were surrounded and destroyed; the city was captured, its walls broken down and it was rendered barren by being sown with salt.

Questions

1. What significance was there in Gaal's standing in the "*entering of the gate of the city*"?
 2. Draw comparisons and contrasts between Abimelech's treatment of Shechem and the parable of the fig tree in Luke 13:6-9.
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ABIMELECH - SLAIN BY A WOMAN 9:50-55

Principles

1. Abimelech's vengeance was not extinguished at the destruction of Shechem and its inhabitants. It is evident his unpopularity was widespread and the rebellion had been taken up in other centres.
2. "*Thebez*" (brightness), a short distance to the north of Shechem, was besieged and then captured with the inhabitants fleeing to the supposed safety of their 'tower'.
3. Abimelech was struck on the head by an upper millstone cast by a woman.
4. Seeking to preserve his reputation and to avoid his memory being tarnished by the epithet "*a woman slew him*", Abimelech had his armourbearer thrust him through with a sword (see also 1 Sam 31:4).
5. Israel is again leaderless - "*There was no king in Israel...*".

Questions

1. How could it be said that fire came out "*from the men of Shechem and from the house of Millo and devoured Abimelech*" (v20)?
2. What shame would there be in him dying by the hand of a woman? What significance does the "*upper millstone*" have?
3. Why was he concerned with his reputation at death? Why do men want their names to be remembered? (Consider Eccl 8:10; Isa 26:14)

SUMMARY 9:56-57

Principles

1. The words of Jotham are fulfilled.
2. God is just in all His dealings with men.

Tola

Judges 10:1-2

Name meaning: A (red) worm

Principles

No great event in the brief mention of Tola's judgeship - or is there? Consider the enormous task that lay before him as he began to judge. Abimelech's grasp at power and military glory had left a legacy of anarchy, bitterness, bereavement and parochial jealousies. The people of Shechem had sought shelter in the temple of Baal Berith and the result was ruin. Tola's divinely appointed work was to mercifully re-establish order, justice, righteousness and peace where chaos reigned, revealing Yahweh as the true *"refuge in times of trouble"*.

Tola set his mind to something nobler, more glorious and more demanding than *"the pulling down of strongholds"* - namely the elimination of apostasy and the fostering of harmony in the ecclesia. No doubt the healing of dissension after the civil war under Abimelech would require all the kindness, resolution and clear-sightedness of a Christ-like character.

His father and grandfather are named. Can this be an idle detail or is there a significance in their names? Tola's name signifies "a worm", a term of disparagement (even today!). In some places the term is used of one in a humble or despised condition (Job 25:6; Isa 41:14 See its use prophetically of Christ in Psa 22:6). What a contrast (in name at least) to the vanity and pride of Abimelech! Considering his task, the other names given in vl are of interest. As judge he had to combine severity with goodness and we find that while Puah means "blast of wind", Dodo means "loving".

Tola did not desert an ecclesia that was in trouble; his home in Shamir was close to the scene of Abimelech's domination.

Questions

Many brethren and sisters are quite eager to criticize and tear down, but how many are willing to patiently *"strengthen the things that remain"*? What qualities are needed for the task?

Jair

Judges 10:3-5

Name meaning: Enlightener

Principles

To Israel's spiritual wounds was applied the balm of Gilead in the form of Jair "the enlightener".

Gilead means "heap of witness" and in referring back to the boundary mark between Jacob and Laban (Gen 31:45-53) was always a reminder of the separation that must exist between Truth and error, Israelitish and gentile ways.

Camon ("elevated"), Jair's headquarters, and Havoth-Jair ("the villages of Jair") are all in the territory of the eastern half of Manasseh. These villages are named after Jair's namesake and probable ancestor (Num 32:41; Deut 3:14) who originally captured most of Bashan from the Amorites.

Jair had so well educated his large family that he could trust each of his thirty sons to administer justice over the thirty cities of Havoth-Jair. As Josephus says of Jair: "He was a man happy in other respects also, but particularly in his children who were of a good character". Such responsible positions would require spiritual discernment and sound knowledge of the Law.

Jair's sons rode asses, which not only pointed to their exalted position but, as beasts of burden, were a reminder of Israel's role as the servant of Yahweh.

The administration of the world during the Millennium is typed here. Christ "*the light of the world*" will rule from Zion "*beautiful for elevation*" and will exalt his "*seed*" (Isa 53:10) to rule with him (Rev 2:26, 20:6) over various areas of the earth (Lk 19:17 here termed "*cities*") according as they have used their opportunities now "*as obedient children*".

Questions

Are we aiding, and how can we aid, either our parents or others in the Truth's service?

Jephthah

Judges 10:17 - 12:7

"Jephthah" - Name means 'He openeth' - i.e. the womb. The Hebrew name, Jephthah, appears also as a place name, JIPHTAH (Josh 15:43). It is a shortened form of JIPTHAEHL, a place name meaning 'El (God) opens (the womb)' or 'El (God) frees (the captive)' (Josh 19:14,27). Related is the Hebrew personal name PETHAHIAH meaning 'Yahweh has opened' (1 Chron 24:16; Ezra 10:23; Neh 9:5;11:24).

That Judges 10:17 should commence this new section can be seen by examining both chs 10 and 11. The preliminary matter of Israel's sin, of their oppression by the Ammonites, of their repentance and return to the God of their fathers, and of Yahweh's merciful acceptance of their penitence and prayer was concluded in 10:16. The history of their deliverance by Jephthah begins here in 10:17.

AMMONITE INVASION v17

Questions

1. What was the background to the Ammonite invasion?
2. Had the Ammonites encamped in Gilead before? If so, over what period of time and for what purpose?
3. Mizpeh - or Mizpeh of Gilead. What other notable event took place here? (cf Gen 31:25,49)
4. What does Mizpeh mean? What does its name therefore imply?

LEADER REJECTED 11:1-3

Principles

1. The chapter begins with an unfaithful woman - it closes with a faithful woman.
2. It begins with a broken vow - it closes with a fulfilled vow.
3. The story of how Jephthah delivered Israel not only speaks of Yahweh's mercy to His people, but also shows how He taught them a lesson by making them dependent upon one whom they had wronged.
4. Jephthah cannot boast in his ancestry - no virtue in the flesh. He is a man of no reputation - despised and rejected by his brethren.

Questions

1. Who are the probable ancestors of Jephthah? (cf Num 26:29,30; 1 Chr 7:14)
2. Do you see any relationship (type) between Jephthah being the son of a harlot and another 'mighty man of valour'?
3. Since Gilead (it seems) had legitimate children by his wife as well as Jephthah by an harlot, what law would be used to expel Jephthah from their home and from the inheritance of their father? (cf Deut 23)
4. What is a better word or words for "*strange*"?
5. Do we see a similar set of circumstances when Jesus was called a Samaritan, John 8:48?
6. Where is the land of Tob and what does it mean?
7. What does "*vain*" mean here and what type of men did Jephthah therefore gather around himself? Suggested reading: Story of the Bible vol 3, no 2, p27.
8. What does it mean that "*they went out with him*"?

AMMONITE WAR v4

This verse brings us back to 10:17 and reunites the two streams of narrative. In fact, the first three verses of ch 11 should chronologically appear before 10:17.

JEPHTHAH CALLED vv5-6

Principles

"The elders" - these are the same as the princes in 10:18. These men would have been Jephthah's own brothers or close relations. No Saviour is to be found in all Israel, cp Isa 59:16.

Questions

1. Do you see any similarity between Jephthah and the Lord Jesus Christ's first and second advent in relation to their brethren?
2. Why do you think "captain" is used here first, and later in vv 8-9 he is to be their "head", and in v11 their "head and captain"? Also compare their determinations in 10:18.

JEPHTHAH APPOINTED vv7-11

Research this section with a view to making comparisons with other great men of the Bible. Jephthah's brethren made a vow at Mizpeh that they must honour even though it is a vow they would prefer to avoid. Consider this in relation to Jephthah's later vow made at the same place.

AMMONITE NEGOTIATION vv12-28

Principles

In this section there are many nations involved in the background, including the Ammonites, the Edomites, the Moabites and the Amorites. In order to understand the background to this negotiation there can be no better way of developing a good understanding of the events referred to than to trace the history in a chronological sequence. Mark that sequence with the various Scriptural sources in the margin of your Bible. This is best done with a small map marked in your margin with the route and place names drawn in. Read a summary of the events from The Story of the Bible, Vol 3, no 2.

JEPHTHAH INSPIRED v29

Questions

1. Why does Jephthah involve Yahweh with the gods of the nations in this encounter? Is the outcome to be on the basis of carnal weapons? (cp 2 Cor 10:4)
2. Does Yahweh determine the boundaries of nations and their inhabitants? (cp Dan 4:17; Acts 17:26-31)
3. What is your opinion of the marginal reference which says "*Jephthah seems to have been Judge only of North-east Israel*"?
4. Cp vv29-30 where it says that the "*Spirit of Yahweh*" came upon Jephthah. Does this mean Yahweh was with Jephthah when he vowed his vow?

JEPHTHAH'S VOW MADE vv30-31

For reference compare as many translations as possible e.g. The Amplified Bible, Douay, RSV, RV (mg), Moffatt, Rotherham, New World, N.E.B. etc.

Questions

1. Was the vow that Jephthah made binding on him? (Cf Deut 23:23; Num 30:2; Josh 9:18-19; Lev 27:28-29; 1 Chron 11:6; Eccl 5:2-6)
2. In the context of the various translations you have read, should the word in v31 (AV) be "*whatsoever*" or "*whomsoever*"?
3. Do you think that Jephthah had human sacrifice in mind?
4. From where would he have developed such an idea that Yahweh would be pleased with such a vow?
5. Do you think he meant what he promised?

AMMONITE DEFEAT vv32-33

Trace this victory on your map.

Question

Where is Aroer, Minnith and the "*plain of the vineyards*"?

JEPHTHAH'S RETURN v34

Questions

1. Where else in Scripture can you find that the young maidens came out with singing and dancing to meet the warriors returning from war?
 2. Where else in the O.T. does a similar statement occur as and she "*was his only child*"?
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JEPHTHAH VOW PERFORMED vv35-40

Principles

Again consider as many translations as possible so as to gain the context of these verses.

v35 "*Thou hast brought me very low*" - literally, thou hast thoroughly bowed me down ie. with sorrow.

"I cannot go back" - a forcible illustration of the evil of rash vows.

The character of Jephthah's daughter, like that of Isaac, was such that she was prepared to be a sacrifice, that Yahweh's name might be honoured - a submissive and faithful daughter of Yahweh who would accept death rather than cause her father to break his vow. Consider Christ's attitude - "*not my will but thine be done*". Though Jephthah's name indicates 'fertility' he died without issue.

Proposition I:

That, because it was an outrageous sin to engage in human sacrifice, Jephthah did not sacrifice his daughter but instead committed her to a life of perpetual virginity and some form of dedicated service unto Yahweh.

Proposition II:

Nothing can be more expressive than the narrative of these verses. In fact, except for the natural horror we feel at human sacrifice, there is nothing to cast the least shade of doubt upon the fact that Jephthah's daughter was offered up as a burnt offering, in accordance with his vow. Josephus says it was neither "conformable to the law, nor acceptable to God". It was a stupid and rash vow but Jephthah also understood the consequences of breaking a vow unto Yahweh (cf again Lev 27:28-29; Eccl 5:2-6).

Questions

1. Why should Jephthah or any other father be grief stricken because his daughter should give her life in dedicated service unto Yahweh?
2. Are not all saints called upon to do that?
3. Where is the Scriptural warrant for a vow of perpetual virginity? (literal)

Principles from the Great Judge - Jephthah

The story of Jephthah outlines how an illegitimate son of Gilead could turn unto Yahweh and because of his great faith in Yahweh be used in the Divine scheme of things to deliver Israel from their enemies.

He was of flesh and in this state he made a dreadful and foolish vow; yet in the grief that confronted him he realised the principle that it was better not to vow than to make a vow unto Yahweh and not keep it.

He was a great man, a hero of the Truth, in that while he was oppressed on every side he laboured for the salvation of Israel and he laboured for the purity of the Truth.

Bro H.P. Mansfield in 'The Story of the Bible' beautifully summarises the final section of Jephthah's life in this way:

"The boasting of Ephraim was now at an end. When they came streaming back defeated from the field of battle to cross the Jordan, they were met by Jephthah's men who asked, "Are you an Ephraimite?" If they said 'No', they were put to a further test. They were told to say 'Shibboleth' (which means a river). The Ephraimites could not pronounce this word properly. Their accent was different to that of the Gileadites, and instead of saying Shibboleth, they said Sibboleth. This showed that they had lied to Jephthah's men, and they were punished accordingly. Thus by this simple test, the Ephraimites were shown to be liars as well as insolent and overbearing. It was but a little thing - the pronunciation of a letter - but it revealed much. Life is like that. It is in the little things that we show our true character. It is how we conduct ourselves in small matters - in our homes, or at work, or at school - that reveals our true characters. It will be upon our 'Shibboleths' that we will be judged at Christ's second coming, and if we are found to be liars, like the Ephraimites, we will suffer a similar fate. Many use this incident in relation to doctrines of religion. They ridicule the need for purity of belief, by claiming that to demand such is like the Gileadites insisting on the Ephraimites pronouncing 'Shibboleth'. But God demands purity of doctrine; He requires that we correctly pronounce the things He has set down in His book. The test that Jephthah made revealed that his enemies were lying to conceal their true identity, and the fact that they could not pronounce this letter showed them up for what they were. The lesson to us is, Be careful of the small things in life'.

Jephthah continued to judge Israel for a further six years, and then was laid to rest in one of the cities of Gilead, awaiting the reward that will surely be given him at the second coming of Christ."

JEPHTHAH AS A TYPE OF CHRIST

Of lowly birth - his parenthood questioned John 8:41
Hated by his brethren Luke 19:14; John 15:25
Sought to kill him - an outcast Mark 12:7; John 8:48
Went into a far country Luke 19:12
No inheritance Luke 9:58; 20:14
His vain followers 1 Cor 4:9-13
Filled with Spirit of God Isa 61:1

Israel became dependent on one whom they had wronged

Will be accepted of his brethren Rev 1:7
Raised up as captain - head Isa 55:4
Became Israel's saviour - deliverer Rom 11:26

Through their Deliverer they had victory over their enemies

Established Yahweh as the supreme God Zech 8:7,8
Nation's idols destroyed Zech 13:1-5
Established Yahweh as Judge Isa 33:20
Brings peace to his people Psa 72; Isa 9:6
Rebels purged out Ezek 20:38
Pride humbled
Fulfils his vow Psa 116:14,18

THE PRIDE OF EPHRAIM

Why was this tribe so haughty considering all other tribes to be subservient:

1. Chosen as firstborn Gen 48:13-14 "*Ephraim*" means 'Double Fruit'
2. Son of Joseph - Great Deliverer in Egypt
3. Exalted as Standardbearer - 'Ox' - the 'Serving Worker'
4. Position nearest Tabernacle
5. Joshua of the tribe
6. Given two representatives in dividing the land - Num 34:17 Joshua,
:24 Kemuel
7. Claimed extra portion of land Josh 17:14-18
8. Tribe placed in centre of land - Shechem, Bethel, Shiloh chosen as
sites for Tabernacle
9. Joshua and Eliezer buried in Ephraim

YET Ephraim reduced numerically when they entered the land - second smallest to Simeon.

Psalm 78:5-11 - Ephraim and EPITHET OF FAILURE.

Ibzan

Judges 12:8-10

Name meaning: Splendid

Period of judging: Seven years

Principles

Ibzan probably came, not from the Bethlehem, south of Jerusalem, which usually is explicitly termed "*Bethlehem of Judah*" (ch 17:7,9; Ruth 1:2; 1 Sam 17:12) or "*Bethlehem Ephratah*" (Mic 5:2), but from the Bethlehem in the territory of Zebulun (Josh 19:15).

The aspect of Ibzan's life which the Spirit has singled out is his concern for his family; and we may be sure that even if we neglect our responsibilities in that direction, the eyes of "*the Righteous Judge*" will not overlook it when He brings "*every work into judgement*".

We note that Ibzan had thirty sons and thirty daughters and that he was particularly careful to arrange and direct the marriage of every one of them. In other words, he decided who they were going to marry. He sent his daughters "*abroad*" in the sense that he chose husbands for them outside of his own household, not necessarily in far-flung portions of the land.

It is right, nay necessary, for godly parents to ascertain whether or not a young brother or sister, to whom one of their offspring may be attached, is truly a suitable partner. Their criterion being, of course, faithful devotion to the Truth.

It goes without saying that the parents' duty is to absolutely forbid and oppose marriage with the alien.

Questions

Do we have the spiritual insight to see the wisdom of Yahweh's commands concerning marriage?

Do we have the humility and wisdom to submit to them?

Do we have the courage to insist upon their observance?

Elon

Judges 12:11-12

Name meaning: Oak-grove

Period of judging: Ten years

Principles

Elon was of the same tribe (Zebulun) as his predecessor, Ibzan, living only 10km north of him.

It is interesting that Elon and Aijalon (where he was buried) are written with exactly the same letters, only the vowel points differing (see the back of Strong's Concordance).

Elon's record in Scripture is virtually a blank, but his name is "*written in heaven*" and his deeds, words and thoughts are remembered by God without error or omission.

We can take comfort in the fact that although we find not even our names in "Holy Writ" our Heavenly Father cares for us also. As Paul counselled the Hebrew brethren: "*God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love which ye have shewed towards His Name*" (Heb 6:10).



Samson

TYPICAL OF NATURAL ISRAEL

Samson's failures typify the failure of the nation.

Israel - *"Every man did that which was right in his own eyes"*
Judg 17:6; 21:25

Samson - *"She is right in my eyes"* Judg 14:3 (mg)

	<u>THE TYPE:</u>	<u>SAMSON</u>	<u>ISRAEL</u>
1.	Nazarite from birth, separated to Divine service	Judg 13:5	Lev 20:24-26
2.	God was the Source of his amazing strength	Judg 15:14	Exod 15:13
3.	His strength inexplicable to his enemies	Judg 16:5	Micah 7:16
4.	He was invincible as long as he was faithful to his vow	Judg 16:9, 12,14	Deut 28:7
5.	He was constantly led astray	Judg 14:15; 16:1,4	Judg 2:17-18
6.	He lost his God-given strength when he broke his vow	Judg 16:17-20	Lev 26:15-20
7.	His sin led to blindness - the chains of captivity	Judg 16:21	2 Kings 25:7
8.	A captive slave in the prison house	Judg 16:21	2 Chron 36:15-21
9.	A glorious future awaits him	Heb 11:32	Rom 11:25-26

THE RUIN OF THE LION 14:5-9

Principles

1. Yahweh's power given to men for a specific purpose
2. The slaying of the lion an enacted parable to warn Samson

Questions

1. What qualification is needed before men receive Divine assistance and power?
2. Samson pondered the killing of the lion and the unusual position of the swarm of bees. What was God trying to show him?

THE WEDDING FEAST 14:10-18

Principles

1. The danger of fraternising with the world
2. Samson's misuse of God's enacted parable
3. The betrayal of trust by Samson's worldly friend

Questions

1. N.B. Samson's mother never attended the feast. Could you suggest some reason?
2. Samson was given 30 friends at the feast. Would they be a help to him?
3. Did Samson's riddle really illustrate how clever he was?
4. Samson the strong man had one very weak spot in his character.
 - (a) What was it?
 - (b) Is it a common or uncommon weakness?

SAMSON SLAYS 30 MEN OF ASHKELON 14:19-20

Principles

1. Divine purpose is often forwarded even in the folly of men
2. Worldly associations always end in bitter frustration and animosity

Questions

1. Was Samson justified in killing 30 men of Ashkelon?
 2. The "*Spirit of Yahweh*" associated with him in his attack - why?
 3. He returned to his father's house. Was this a good idea?
 4. Samson's worldly girlfriend left him for another.
 - (a) Was this a good or a bad thing for Samson?
 - (b) Do you feel sorry for him?
 - (c) What do you imagine he would have said to his father and mother?
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SAMSON RETURNS TO TAKE HIS WIFE 15:1-2

Principles

1. Samson's failure to learn lessons
2. The power of desire resists the power of reason
3. Samson is finally frustrated

Questions

1. Discuss the inability of human nature to learn the lesson of bitter experience.
 2. Samson's return to worldly friends was on account of physical attraction. Is this the best reason to form a partnership in life?
 3. Why won't human desire heed sound and reasonable advice?
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SAMSON BURNS CORNFIELDS OF PHILISTINES 15:3-6

Principles

1. Again the Divine purpose is forwarded even in man's failure
2. The gentiles suffer the just retribution of God

Questions

1. Any significance in 300 foxes?
2. How serious was the destruction of the agricultural prosperity of the Philistines?
3. Samson's worldly friend is destroyed by her own people. What do you think of this?

THE TREACHERY OF THE MEN OF JUDAH 15:7-13

Principles

1. Circumstances force Samson to now oppose Philistines
2. In the warfare of faith Israel is divided
3. The treachery of brethren

Questions

1. Would God be pleased with Samson's opposition to the Philistines?
2. Were the men of Judah right in refusing to help Samson?
3. Why did they fear the Philistines?
4. In betraying Samson, of whom do they remind you?

SAMSON SLAYS PHILISTINES WITH JAWBONE 15:14-20

Principles

1. God's strength made perfect in weakness
2. In victory Samson learns humility

Questions

1. Was there any significance in the choice of the weapon?
2. Samson immediately suffered thirst - for what reason?
3. What did Samson learn from the whole experience?
4. In the victory of faith, who is always the champion?



SAMSON AND DELILAH 16:4-20

16:4-14

Principles

- 1. The danger of emotional involvement with gentile partners
- 2. The danger of underestimating the power of gentile persuasion

Questions

- 1. The record states that Samson "loved a woman". This is a new development. Discuss the comparative power of -
 - (a) a physical attraction
 - (b) an emotional involvement
- 2. What is the possibility of a physical attraction developing to an emotional involvement?
- 3. Even in the Truth human nature is deceitful. What trust could we have therefore in any association with those outside the covenants?



SAMSON BREAKS HIS VOW 16:15-20

Principles

1. The truth demands respect for and faithfulness to its demands
2. God is with those who remain faithful to their calling
3. The need to confide in God and not the world

Questions

1. How would we withstand an appeal to betray our trust when it comes from one with whom we are emotionally involved?
2. Why did Samson reveal his secret to one who had betrayed him 3 times previously?
3. Was there any strength in his long hair?

SAMSON IN CAPTIVITY 16:21-27

Principles

1. The ultimate and tragic result of continuance in sin
2. Bringing the Truth into disrepute by immoral behaviour
3. Painful experience often necessary to impress the lessons of life

Questions

1. Was it altogether a bad thing for Samson to lose his eyesight?
2. His prison house duties would have mirrored some of his past failings. What do you think he would have thought about?
3. How do you think Samson would have felt in being made sport of and as a triumph for Dagon?
