

Judges 08-01-11a

This is Friday, the 11th of January, 2008. We pick up after the holiday break and some various other reasons for delay with our study in the Book of Judges. We completed an introduction between Christmas and New Year's, somewhere in there, but it's all a fog and a fuzz in my mind, so we will finish up our approach and our introduction to the book tonight, and then we'll dive straight into the text.

Let's take a moment as we begin to ask God's blessing on our study. Father, we recognize and appreciate the great blessing that we enjoy in having relationship with You through Jesus Christ. We have Your Word, we have Your Spirit to enable us and to guide us and to invest our lives with meaning and with divine power so that our days and our weeks and our years are not spent in vanity and emptiness, but we are able to redeem the time, we are able to prepare for the future, we are able to anticipate the future, and it is all because of the work that the Lord Jesus Christ has done, reflecting Your love for us.

We thank You for this portion of Your Word and we ask Your blessing on it as we study it together. I pray that each one of us will find in it truth that will sustain and will encourage and will strengthen and will prepare us to be ready for every good work in the days ahead. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, the book of Judges, of course, continues the history that we began looking at in detail with the death of Moses and the taking over of leadership duties by Joshua. We went through that book in great detail.

And the hinge, the overlap between the book of Joshua and the book of Judges is in fact at the death of Joshua. We find this is going to be detailed for us not in the first few verses, but way down toward the end of chapter 2. And this, as I mentioned before, gives us one hint that the book of Judges has a very long introduction. The book of Joshua ended with the notice of Joshua's death and then the history of Eleazar dying and, of course, the disposition of the bones of Joseph and so on.

But we find that all of chapter 1 and a great deal of the first six verses, at least of chapter 2, all precede the notice in Judges of the death of Joshua. So, as is often the case in Hebrew storytelling from ancient days, the book of Judges backtracks a little bit and kind of gets a fresh start into this period of time. Now, when you think about this, you know from your general Bible knowledge that the Exodus is dated by conservative scholars somewhere in the general vicinity of 1450 B.C. 1446 is a nice number to work with.

Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, so the crossing of the Jordan and entering into the land would take place then in what year B.C.? B.1406. The conquest of the land proper, the formal strategic movement of the combined forces of all the tribes under Joshua lasted how many years? Seven years. Six plus one. And so you cross that 1400 year boundary and the

formal conquest would get you into the year 1399 B.C. There is then the settlement phase, the occupation phase, Joshua's injunctions as he moves into the final stages of his old age.

He gives his final warnings and then he kicks off. Well, there are a couple of things I would like to point out in terms of background and frame of reference for the study that we are about to engage in here in the book of Judges. Part of it is archeological and part of it is historical because as you know a lot of rocks get thrown at the Bible by the unbelieving world and great detriment is done to a fair understanding of Scripture even by scholars who claim to be believers but who do not accept the authenticity of God's Word.

I don't know how you can claim to be a believer in God and be a believer in Jesus Christ and not believe in the inerrancy of Scripture because if the history is off, if there are mistakes and egregious errors in Scripture on things that we can verify, that we can go look at the evidence, how can you have any confidence that the things that we cannot verify, the things of the Spirit, the unseen world, are in fact valid? Maybe God is actually a giant ogre up there just leading us along and when we get up there and Jesus takes us to Heaven we are all going to get incinerated. How would you know? If you cannot trust all of the Bible, you cannot trust any of the Bible. It's just that simple.

If there are genuine, serious, historical errors in Scripture, we've got a problem with our faith. I do not want to put my faith in a Bible that is demonstrably erroneous and you don't either. It just doesn't make any sense and God does not ask us to do that.

We don't have to suspend our disbelief. We don't have to sacrifice our reason and our intelligence on the altar of faith. You don't have to stick your head in the sand and say, well, I just have to ignore science, I have to ignore archaeology, I have to ignore geology and paleontology and so on because I'm a Christian and the facts clearly dispute the Bible so I've just got to close my eyes and believe the Bible.

You don't. God doesn't ask us to do that. What does Paul tell us in Romans? Creation is a witness to God.

What may be known of God is manifest in creation. If creation contradicts the Bible, what may be known of God is that He's inconsistent, that He can't get His story straight. He tells us one thing in the Bible and something else in the rocks and in the physical universe, then He's not a consistent God and our faith is in vain.

You've read Paul in Corinthians talking about what it means if your faith is in vain. If Christ is not raised and the dead are not raised, we are a pitiful bunch. That's a paraphrase.

So, thankfully, and I'm here to tell you that the more you investigate with a fair and open mind, the more you're going to realize, listen, I welcome, bring science on, bring the paleontologists on, bring on the astrophysicists, bring on any scientific fact they want to uncover. Be careful that what you're getting is a fact and not an interpretation of fact, but the facts do not conflict.

And all you have to do is where there is doubt, give the benefit of the doubt to Scripture, just like we do in the courtroom.

You're innocent until proven guilty. There is a presumption that this person has been wrongfully dragged up before the court, and you've got to prove that he actually did it. And if you can't prove it, then the assumption is he must not have done it.

If you can't prove it, he must not have done it. He walks, he's a free man, he is guiltless, there's nothing on his record. That's the way it works.

Well, we as believers ought to at least have that much deference for God's Word. I will presume that God's Word is accurate, inerrant, and infallible, unless and until someone can prove to me beyond a reasonable doubt that it's wrong. I have an engineering degree, I have a well-rounded and fairly in-depth scientific background, I read copiously, I read nature, I read science articles, and I've got a subscription to Scientific American, and I read those things cover to cover.

I keep abreast of what science is saying, what science is uncovering, what's going on in the world of DNA, what's going on in the world of astrophysics, and so on. And for whatever my credibility is worth, I will tell you that I see nothing that even remotely threatens my understanding of Scripture, and what God says about creation in Genesis or anything else. Well, all of this is background, and each of us has to resolve that puzzle for himself.

You can't take my word for it. You can either say, well, I am content that God's Word is accurate, and I don't really need to go satisfy myself on these questions, because I don't really feel like delving into all of this science and all of this background. All I'm telling you is, I can give you assurance from my own personal experience, that if you ever do choose to delve into it, you have nothing to fear.

And no faith is worth having if it does have something to fear from the truth and from the facts. I will tell you that being a Mormon has got something to fear. If you start digging into actual history, are you going to find the lost tribes and Hebrews here on the American continent, as the Book of Mormon would have us believe? No.

And Nephi and all these other supposed alleged imaginary figures, that Jesus left Israel and came to America after the crucifixion? No. And there is substantial archeological evidence that there was nobody remotely resembling a Hebrew anywhere on this continent at any time until after the days of the European explorers. But, as we'll see tonight, there is good, solid archeological evidence for the biblical account of the Exodus, the invasion, the conquest, the occupation, and the settlement of this land.

And this is the foundation upon which our study of the Book of Judges rests. These people either were or they were not in the land that had been vanquished by the armies under Joshua. So that's one element.

We also have a scriptural conundrum, an apparent contradiction in scripture itself, that we need to address, and it directly relates to the Book of Judges. It has to do with the statement made by the Apostle Paul in the New Testament. So both these things are going to be addressed in our first session tonight.

Lord willing, and I don't bog down. First of all, let's talk a little bit about the archeological evidence. And I'm going to simply give you some observations by one of the foremost archeologists ever to stick a spade into the dirt in Israel.

And this is Yohanan Aharoni. He has been an archeologist in Israel. He is an Israeli himself.

He is not a Christian, by the way. But he does find the biblical account supported in the rocks. I'm just going to give you quickly a few of the observations that he makes in a survey of all of the many digs, all of the many finds, all of the many unearthings of various cities and towns and tells in Israel.

First of all, the settlement by Joshua and these armies occurs toward the end of the Bronze Age and before the Iron Age really begins. Officially and formally in the standard chronology, you've got Early Bronze, Middle Bronze, and Late Bronze, which basically spans the second millennium B.C. You start at about 2000 B.C., a little bit before actually. And you move through Early Bronze, Middle Bronze, and Late Bronze in this part of the world during that 1,000 years.

By the time you get down to around 1,000 and around the time of the monarchy under Saul and later David in Israel, you move into the Iron Age. And you remember that there is a notice about the status of who can be a smith and who can sharpen plows and so on in the first book of Samuel. Well, this gets us down to the late 11th century B.C., right before the turn of the millennium.

So, all I want to do is just quickly point out a few things that Aharoni has said. This is from an article he wrote for Biblical Archaeology Review. It is true, he says, that the widespread use of iron occurred at the time when Philistine hegemony was broken.

When is that? Who broke the power of the Philistines? It wasn't Joshua. The Philistines weren't really around. This is the time of David.

David is the one. Remember Saul begins. You've got Goliath.

And that begins the downfall of the Philistines. And it continues on forward. Remember early on, you had the Ark of the Covenant and Eli and Hophni and Phinehas.

And that didn't go so well for Israel. And the Philistines prevailed. But there is an early sign that things are going to start moving in a different direction when God Himself gives them a sign and they send the Ark back.

And it's within the lifetime of Samuel that the king who will defeat the Philistines is anointed.

And so all of that is a turnaround, period. At first glance, this idea that there is widespread use of iron, when they look at the layers in archaeology in the time of Saul and after, and they say, well, look, all this iron is showing up.

And so you would think that previously iron making had been a Philistine monopoly, but thus far no substantial archaeological evidence indicates that iron was widely used, even in Philistia before it was widely used at Israelite sites. If they had a monopoly, in other words, when you go and excavate Philistine towns, you would expect to find lots of iron there, but not a lot of iron in the Israelite towns. But it turns out nobody was using iron that much.

It wasn't really valued and it wasn't really well understood and well known until the time of the early monarchy. In the only Philistine capital that has been extensively excavated, Ashdod, remember what went on in Ashdod? Go back to your story of Hozni and Phinehas. Iron implements were not found in the early Philistine strata.

At Tel Qasile, a city founded by the Philistines on the bank of the Yarkon River, there is no iron from the two earliest strata. Indeed, iron first appears only at the end of the 11th century in Stratum 10. They don't find any in Stratum 12 or 11.

And the only thing they found earlier than that was one iron blade with an ivory handle, but it was an exceptional find and it was in a temple. And it seems to have been a ceremonial object, something sort of symbolic, but it wasn't in common use even amongst the Philistines. And so he says it's doubtful that the Philistines had a monopoly on iron production.

But for our study, what I mainly want to point out is a different observation that he makes in this regard. When you look all over the country, in this place where we are seeing the judges operate, the area conquered by Joshua, what they do see is not so much an introduction of iron or something else, but they see around the year 1200 especially, give or take of course, and this depends on your chronological understandings, there is suddenly a new settlement layer. Cities and towns spring up all of a sudden where there never were any before.

And this is very significant as we look back on Joshua and look forward to judges. This is what the archaeologists... Remember Aharoni is digging in the dirt. He's not reading the Bible and trying to find ways to prove it.

He's digging in the dirt and using the Bible simply as a reference to see if these things are so. He's not deeply invested. He's not a deeply religious Jew and he's certainly not a Christian.

But he finds that the biblical account from Joshua and judges corresponds to what they find in the dirt. And this is what he says. Starting around the year 1200, it is a decisive turning point in the history of this region.

The Israelite settlement differed from every previous occupation wave in the country's history. Throughout the entire Canaanite period, there had been striking differences in the density of settlement. Think about where people live.

What parts of this land do people typically dwell in? It's not supposed to end a sentence in a preposition. Don't do that if you're a teenager. In which parts of the country do the Canaanites dwell? The valleys were intensely settled.

People lived in the valleys. Strong and important kingdoms were found on the coastal plain, in the Shephelah and in Jezreel and Jordan valleys. The flat and fertile plains were convenient for cultivation.

In the foothills, again the Shephelah, copious springs flowed. By contrast, in the hilly regions, only northern Transjordan. Now think.

Northern Transjordan. What do we call that area? Who were the kings that got defeated on the other side of the Jordan toward the north? Remember Og, king of Bashan and Sihon? And that's Gilead. That's where Reuben Gad on the half-tribe of Manasseh chose to settle, right? Well this, he says, had been settled previously in the Canaanite centuries that preceded Israel coming.

So think about it now. In the land, archaeology has found old Canaanite settlements in the plains and in northern Transjordan. Jezreel and Jordan valleys.

And the northern part of Upper Galilee was also densely settled. That's way up north where you're eventually going to have... have what? Yeah, hot sores up there. Upper Galilee was densely settled.

Most of the hilly regions were thinly settled. Large areas in the hills were forested with thick scrub that discouraged settlement and agriculture. In the central hills, the Canaanite occupation was concentrated along the backbone, down the watershed road that ran from Debir, Hebron, and Jerusalem in the south to Bethel, Tapua, Shechem, Tirza, and Dothan in the north.

So this is the ridgeline, the high ground. Now stick with me. I know this seems a little dry, but it's going to be important.

This was also the picture in Gilead and parts of southern Transjordan. The few communities that existed were concentrated along the length of the King's Highway on the mountain plateau. Remember, people used to go across Jordan to make that northern and southern trip.

Now here's what Aharoni says. All this changed with the coming of the Israelites. The unoccupied and very sparsely settled areas in the hill country were the very regions of most intensive settlement by the tribes of Israel and their relatives.

The reason is clear, both from the Bible and from the archaeological evidence. At the beginning, the Israelites lacked the strength to overpower the strong Canaanite cities, particularly those in the plains, which could make effective use of their superb battle chariots. The Israelite tribes had no choice but to content themselves in the first stage of their settlement with peripheral areas where they faced opposition only from the forces of nature.

Thus Joshua advised his own tribe, If you are a numerous people, go up to the forest and clear ground for yourselves. Remember that? In the middle section of the book when he was talking to his own tribe. What tribe is Joshua from? Careful now.

What tribe is Joshua from? Yeshua? Not Judah. Ephraim. Tribe of Ephraim.

Remember, Ephraim is one of the Joseph tribes. This is one of the things that ties together the shadows and the pictures of Jesus in the Old Testament. The first Yeshua is from a Joseph tribe.

So he told his own tribe, If you are a numerous people, go up to the forest and clear ground for yourselves. The tribe of Joseph said, The hill country is not enough for us. Yet all the Canaanites who dwell in the plain have chariots of iron.

So Joshua said to the house of Joseph, You are a numerous people and have great power. The hill country shall be yours. For though it is a forest, you shall clear it and possess it to its farthest borders.

We saw that in Joshua 17. This is exactly what archaeology reveals. These previously scrubbed forested areas suddenly get settled in what the standard chronology says is 1200 B.C. Which is actually closer to, it's in the 1300s by this time when you adjust the chronology.

It's exactly in the time of the conquest and settlement phase. Many of the initial Israelite settlements, Aharoni says, are known from archaeological surveys, but only a few have been excavated. No doubt more detailed answers concerning the dates of Israelite settlement and its character can be obtained from intensive research on these communities, rather than from the large tells where most excavation has been concentrated until now.

These are the tells where Israel took over an existing city of long standing. For example, an illuminating picture of early Israelite communities was revealed in a survey in southern Upper Galilee. Upper means the higher ground in Galilee.

This territory was not occupied at all prior to Israelite I. Unoccupied. Except for a few sites from Middle Canaan, circa 1800 B.C. that appeared here and there. A dense network of Israelite settlements was discovered in this area.

Founded over a short period of time at small distances from one another. Density of settlement was never again as high as in Israelite I. You've heard over and over, if you pay any attention at all, or if you do any reading in this area, people say, oh, there's no evidence that there was any sort of a conquest, there was a gradual infiltration, or some of the indigenous people just suddenly formed this identity and called themselves Israelites and invented all of this history later. Wrong.

Archaeology refutes and contradicts that view. In the Israelite I layer, which standard chronology dates circa 1200 B.C., and this is in the period of the judges, this is the period of Joshua and immediately following, there is a sudden appearance of a dense network of

settlements. Now remember, a lot of these areas in Israel, you'd think, well, Israel is so small, surely they would have dug up the whole thing by now, it's hardly the size of the state of Rhode Island.

But archaeology has only been able to drill down in very specific sites. They like to go to cities where they're hoping to find a library, they're hoping to find inscriptions, they're hoping to find palaces, they're hoping to find treasure, they're hoping to find splashy things that people will finance next year's excavation. They don't want to go out to some little lonely hill out in the middle of the Shephelah and dig down and study a little village.

But that's what Israel established, because initially, even when they initially drove people out of a village like Jebus or Jerusalem, remember, the occupants eventually came back and retook it. They couldn't hold those big towns, and God told them, you're going to have to gradually grow and become stronger. You're going to go in and occupy, and as you become stronger, you will drive these people out more and more completely.

That's exactly what archaeology shows. Listen to Aharoni. A dense network of Israelite settlements was discovered in this area, Upper Galilee, the southern part of it, founded over a very short period of time at small distances from one another.

Density of settlement was never again as high. Some of these were initially occupied, and then they dwindled away, and we'll see why as we go forward. Pottery from early Israelite 1, 1200 B.C. to 1000 B.C. even exceeds pottery from Israelite 2, which is 1000 B.C. to 587.

Carrying away to Babylon. There is a greater density of pottery and pot sherds and lamps and all the kind of stuff, the detritus that they find from occupation in the period from 1200 to 1000 than there is from 1000 to the carrying away to Babylon. That's how many people were suddenly on the scene.

A similar situation is found in the hill country of Ephraim and Judah. In particular, along the slopes, somewhat farther removed from the spine of the hill country, surveyors discovered many small settlements that had their beginnings in the period of initial Israelite penetration. Many were never occupied again, even in Israelite 2, which is 1000 B.C. to 586.

Excavations have been carried out at a few of these places, for example at Shiloh, at Ai, at Khirbet Radana, at Mizpah, and Gibeah of Benjamin. In all of these, occupation was actually established with the Israelite settlement. There is no earlier Canaanite occupation on those sites.

There is a gap of hundreds of years between the Israelite settlement and the next earlier occupations. If they do dig down and find earlier occupations, they are from the time of Abraham. Hundreds of years earlier.

Most of these communities were destroyed before the end of Israelite 1 in the middle of the 11th century at the latest. Do you know what that is? This is the period of the judges. These are

the cycles of oppression when the Ammonites or the Philistines or another of the neighbors suddenly comes in and wreaks havoc.

These villages that the Israelites had established under Joshua in the early period of the judges get destroyed. There will be a destruction layer, and some of them are not reoccupied. So there is an initial very dense occupation, and then the weaker villages and the less defensible ones, as they are attacked by these enemies that Israel never got rid of, and that oppressed them because of their lack of faith, weed out the weak.

And many of these are never reoccupied again. So what am I saying? What is Aharoni saying? The evidence in the rocks exactly conforms to the biblical account. Contrary to what you will see on websites, contrary to what you will read on atheist, agnostic, secularist publications, archaeology in no way supports the idea that there was no Israelite invasion and that there was no Israelite occupation.

Quite the contrary. It is there in dozens and dozens and dozens and dozens of sites where the pottery and the culture, we will see as we go forward, even the culture is distinct and different. When there is simultaneous occupation in the Philistine region, remember the Philistine region to the west, toward the Mediterranean, is kind of its own area.

Israel didn't live in Ashdod. They didn't live in Gath. They didn't live in some of these other Philistine cities.

Remember the five cities of the Philistines? The Bible never says Israel occupied those cities. And when they excavate contemporaneous layers in Ashdod and in these Israelite occupied villages, the physical culture is different. The pottery is different.

The level of sophistication is different. The Philistines are more sophisticated. They will find some iron implements.

They will find fine worked things that have been exchanged in trade with the Mycenaeans and so on. They don't find any of that in the identical layer of these Israelite occupied towns. The Israelites seem to be more nomadic.

They dig cisterns. They dig storage pits. They do entirely different things than the Philistines do.

They also have a unique form of architecture. The houses in village after village after village, dozens and dozens and dozens of these villages, when they go in and excavate them, there is a standard Israelite architecture for their houses. And the houses are four room dwellings.

And they are real easy to describe. Imagine the Roman numeral three with an underline. Take three strokes and put an underline.

Now expand those strokes into rectangles and merge them together. And that's the plan of an Israelite one house. Three long rooms that all adjoin a horizontal room.

The three rooms have doors that open into the one central room. And sometimes that room is actually more of a courtyard or a partially open area, almost like a covered porch. Three rooms all abutting this horizontal type of room.

They find these all over the place. And they have roofs that are supported by stone pillars, square stone pillars. They find the sockets and they find the pillars themselves.

Many times these pillars have been carried off and reused in later buildings and so on. But they'll find the socket where that pillar used to sit, a square cutout right at the corners where you would expect a support pillar. In the later days, in Israelite two, they find this same essential plan, but there will be a set of steps or a stairway.

And all the Israelites did in later years was put a second story over the first. But the essential plan is the same. There's just dozens, hundreds of these little houses made of these rectangular rooms.

They don't find those in the Philistine settlements. They don't find them in the Canaanite villages. They appear all of a sudden out of nowhere in the Israelite one settlement phase, all over the land.

There are dozens and dozens of archeological digs and surveys and studies and reports that all reflect the identical same thing. Same kind of pottery is found, collarneck jars of a certain size and type, lamps of a certain size and type, plans of these houses of a certain type. And they all appear suddenly in the Israelite one layer.

Now, that does not comport with the theory that the Israelites sort of drifted in gradually out of nowhere and didn't conquer anything and didn't burn anything and didn't fulfill what the Bible says in Exodus and in Joshua. So, Aharoni, I'm going to give you one more thing from him. The settlement picture in the biblical Negev, what does Negev mean? What's the Hebrew word Negev mean? That's the south.

What happens as you move south in the land of Israel? You start getting into that flat, arid, plain place. The settlement picture in the biblical Negev is especially illuminating. This is the transition zone between the settled area and the southern wastes, north and south of Beersheba.

Remember Beersheba? We talked about its former name and how it was Kiryat Sefer and how the various towns right along the southern border there were occupied. This area, the biblical Negev, was not occupied at all in the late Canaanite period, 1550 to 1200 BC. Actually, in a good chronology, that's going to shift upward a little bit.

In this arid area, Israelite settlements were established in the Israelite one phase at every possible site. These previously unoccupied, not so well-watered areas, just on the border of the desert in the south, not occupied at all. All occupied.

Beersheba, for the first time in its history, and three others, Arad, Tel Malhata, and Tel Massos, after a long period of abandonment. This kind of follows the pattern in the other areas, where they had been occupied in the 1800s and 1900s, then not occupied at all, and then suddenly occupied again by the Israelites. Tel Massos is especially important for understanding the Israelite occupation of Canaan.

Tel Massos was destroyed at the end of Israelite one, about 1000 BC, at which time it had been an unfortified village for about 200 years, and was spread over an area of about 10 acres. It had three strata. The latest strata, which came to an end, as mentioned above, at the end of Israelite one, made use in large measure of earlier structures.

The second stratum is the best preserved. This is where we find all those house plans I was talking about. They've got a picture in the article here that shows you the three rooms with the other one sideways.

This house plan did not originate at Tel Massos. We do not know where this plan developed. However, it is clearly a well-defined architectural feature, which is a trademark of Israelite occupation.

So, I could go on. I could give you a lot of other things, but here's the main thing. Don't let anyone lead you down a path and tell you that archaeology disputes the biblical historical record of the occupation of the land of Canaan.

That is absolutely not true. And anyone who tries to float that theory is not paying attention to a survey of all of these digs. Now, here's the second thing, while I've still got time to cover it.

The Apostle Paul makes a statement that we need to address. He talks about the fact that in Acts 13, verse 20, and if you turn there real quick, you'll see that he is talking about the history of the people of Israel and the history of God's working amongst them. And in Acts 13, verse 20, Paul makes a statement that pertains to our study of the book of Judges.

He's at Antioch and Pisidia, and he stands up, motioning with his hand, and he says, Men of Israel, you who fear God, listen. This is verse 16 of chapter 13 of Acts. The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm he brought them out of it.

Now for a time of about forty years he put up with their ways in the wilderness, and when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he distributed their land to them by allotment. Look at verse 20, After that he gave them judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. Afterward they asked for a king, so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years.

And when he had removed him, he raised up for them David as king. This is the apostle Paul giving a chronology in the inspired book of Acts. Now, here's the problem.

Modern scholarship agrees that David began his reign right around 1000 B.C., specifically the year 1011. And he reigned for forty years just like Saul did. So his reign goes from 1011 down to 971.

Solomon picks up at 971 and goes down to 931, another forty years. So you have a hundred and twenty years. Saul reigns for forty years.

David reigns for forty years. And Solomon reigns for forty years. You've got a hundred and twenty years.

And we know those dates. One of the ways we can pin that down is the dedication of the temple under Solomon, where he says this is 480 years after the Exodus. And that puts the Exodus, guess what? At 1446 B.C. Because the fourth year of Solomon, remember he picks up in 971, right? That's Solomon's first year.

Well, the temple is dedicated in his fourth year, and that's the year 966. So 480 years before that puts the Exodus at 1446 B.C. So if you're taking notes, mentally or otherwise, here's your chronology. Exodus, 1446 B.C. The reign of David begins 1011 B.C. and runs to 971.

Solomon is 971 to 931. Now, what's the problem? Paul says in Acts, after God had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment. After that, He gave judges for about 450 years.

So on the face of it, you say, okay, the Exodus is 1446, forty years in the wilderness, you're down to 1406, Joshua conquers the land for seven years, you're down to 1399, but let's just round it off to 1400 for easy math. If God gives them judges, even if you don't allow for the settlement phase and the death of Joshua and all the rest of it, if you start at 1400 and He gave them judges for 450 years, that puts you down to 950 B.C., when He says, then they asked for a king and God gave them Saul the son of Kish. Well, do you see the mathematical problem here? 950 B.C., you're down into the reign of Solomon.

Solomon dedicates the temple in 966, so Paul's numbers don't work out. You say, well, maybe you're speaking loosely. Who knows? It's a small, minor problem.

No, it isn't. Listen to me now. What did we start out by saying? If the Bible has a demonstrable error anywhere in it, the whole thing cannot be trusted.

You're going to say, well, no, just the 13th chapter of Acts can't be trusted. I'm going to trust all the rest. Not so.

It's either right or it's not. It's either trustworthy or it isn't. So, here we are in the book of Judges.

We're going to be covering this, Paul says, 450 years. Chronology, in our standard understanding, I'm perfectly willing to put the date of the Exodus somewhere in the vicinity of

1440, 1446, 1450, somewhere in there. Forty years of wandering.

And it is demonstrable, and you can prove from other sources, that our dates for David and Solomon and Saul and that are pretty accurate. So, what do we do about this 450-year statement? Well, a couple of solutions have been proposed. And they bear directly on how we're going to approach our study of the book of Judges.

Now, remember that I've briefed you in the past when we went through why the Bible, when we went through fundamentals and a couple of other studies. I've told you before that the chronology problem that centers at this point in history, and to which I've referred, even when we were talking about Aharoni's views, has to do with a misunderstanding of Egyptian king lists. In a nutshell, what's the problem? We have found Manetho and some of these other guys who have listed out the kings of Egypt, and they basically took all of those Egyptian pharaoh reigns and just stacked them all up, and they said, okay, here's the chronology in Egypt, and that's the backbone from which everything else branches out.

And what we have since come to understand is not all of those kings were sequential. Some of them ruled in upper and or in lower Egypt coterminously at the same time. And Egyptian chronology has been artificially stretched, which has caused problems because all of the archaeology and the chronology of the ancient Near East is tied to Egyptian dates.

That's the backbone. Well, that backbone actually has slipped a few disks or needs to, and there's some extra vertebrae that have come in that shouldn't be there, and that has goofed up the chronology. That's in a nutshell what the chronology problem is for the 500 years between 1500 and 1000 B.C., and actually some beyond that.

Velikovsky, David Roll, many other prominent authors have written and addressed this in detail, and if you're interested, I encourage you to read their work. But in a nutshell, all we need to know is you have to take some dates and some assumptions with a grain of salt because they are demonstrably not possible. Now, if you take the data that we're going to see in the book of Judges and add it up, there are notations.

In Judges 3, verses 7 through 11, it tells us that Othniel judged over a period of time. There was an oppression period of 8 years. In chapter 3, verses 12 through 30, there's an oppression period of 18 years.

Chapter 4, we've got an oppression period of 20 years. Chapter 6, we have an oppression period of 7 years. It tells us how many years these outsiders, these bad guys, Ammonites, Philistines, whoever came in and oppressed the land, then it gives us a period of a judge and how long his period of judging lasted.

So in chapter 10, verse 1, it tells us Tola, the son of Pua, came and he judged Israel 23 years. So different ones, Othniel judges 40 years, another judge will judge 80 years, another guy will judge 40 years, and so on. Well, if you add all these years up, here's the point.

If you add them all up, the total of years that Israel was oppressed is 111, and the total for the judges is 96 years. So there is a grand total of 407 years of oppression, judgeship, and rest. If you total all these up, total up all the data that's given to us in the book of Judges, chronologically speaking, it adds up to a time of 407 years.

You say, hey, this is great, that's pretty close to what Paul says, about 450 years. The problem is still, we know the dates for David, and we know the dates for the Exodus, and you cannot fit 407 or 450 years in there. How do we resolve that? Well, we'll have to stop and take our break.

When we come back, I'll tell you.