

Judges 08-01-25a

This is Friday, the 25th of January, 2008. We're in the Book of Judges. Let's take a moment as we begin to exercise our priestly privilege.

We can go to the Lord in prayer and ask His blessing and the ministry of the Holy Spirit so that our time will be well spent. Let's pray. Father, we are grateful for another opportunity to spend time studying and learning the truth of Your Word.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will superintend and will enable each of us to understand and to benefit from the truth that we see in Your Word tonight. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, we have had copious amounts of introduction. It's time to dispense with introduction and get on with it. So if you will turn to Judges 1. We have already noted that the book begins by backtracking a bit and covering the end of the book of Joshua.

And it is a lengthy introduction. What is the purpose of this introduction? It is to set the stage for what follows. That's what most introductions do.

That's what this introduction does. It sets the stage. And the stage that is set, the tone and the theme that is established here is failure.

What a great way to start a book. Failure. Disobedience.

Incomplete obedience. And by way of structure, Judges, although it seems like a hodgepodge, has a really nice structure. What two tribes are first addressed in this book? Judah.

Judah and Simeon start out and they go and do their attack. And after that, what's the next tribe that is mentioned? After they do the Adoni-Bezek thumb removal thing, it rehearses the story of Caleb and Ophniel and so on. Then what takes place? Verse 22 of chapter 1. The house of Joseph went up against Bethel and the Lord was with them.

The house of Joseph sent men to spy out Bethel. Now you'll remember, and this is the second major tribe. Simeon is kind of subsumed up with Judah.

So you have Judah, and now we have the house of Joseph, which is going to be, those are two tribes, but there's a leadership tribe in the house of Joseph, which is Ephraim. The younger son is the leadership tribe. The ten northern tribes are going to be known as the land of Ephraim in later days.

But you notice a bit of symmetry here because you have Judah with the supplemental Simeon component. Then secondly, we're going to have Ephraim with the supplemental Manasseh component, and they are featured at the beginning of the book. Now, can you think of any sort of reason why that might be? Is there anything about those particular tribes that comes to mind? Well, of course there is.

Judah is the leadership tribe. It is the signal tribe. It is going to be the leading tribe of the southern kingdom.

You're going to have basically Judah and Benjamin down in the south ultimately. But Judah, everyone knows this is supposed to be the leadership tribe, and they start out well. They inquire of the Lord, and they go up.

You notice when you get to the children of Benjamin, the house of Joseph went up against Bethel, and the Lord was with them, so the house of Joseph sent men to spy out Bethel. It says the Lord was with them, but it doesn't say that they inquired of the Lord, does it? The Lord was with them. Why? If they did not inquire, if they did not say, Oh Lord, where should we go or what should we do, then why would the Lord be with them anyway? Well, this is in accordance with His promise, isn't it? And if you look on a map where Bethel is located, it is in the tribal territory of Ephraim.

That's where they're supposed to go and what they're supposed to do. God said, I will be with you as you go and take possession of your land. So even though they didn't really inquire, there's no record of them praying and sacrificing or getting ready or preparing themselves spiritually in any way, but they went up against this objective.

Now, where have we heard of Bethel before in the recent history of goings-on here? We went through the book of Joshua. Did we see Bethel anywhere in the book of Joshua? Yes, we did. Joshua and the Israelites come across the Jordan River.

What's the first thing they do when they get on the good side of the Jordan? They stop for three days because they have neglected to take care of the circumcision ritual, which is a sign of the covenant. They do that before they do anything else. Then they go up against what city? Jericho.

March. Seven times. Seventh day.

Seven times. Walls fall down. Rahab, scarred thread, etc.

Then what? Ai. Send a few men. They take a drubbing.

Three dozen are killed. They come back. What's the matter? Sent into camp.

Achan. Pile of stones. Let's go back and do Ai right.

Then what happens? When they go against Ai, remember the scenario of that battle? There's another city involved, right? What is that city? Bethel. It's Bethel. Come on now.

You've got to get your neurons firing. Mine are firing. So if mine are firing, I know yours can fire.

Bethel. That's when we saw Bethel, at the beginning of the book of Joshua. Now, who won the battle of Ai? Feel free to respond.

Who won the battle of Ai? Israel. Joshua won the battle of Ai. Joshua never lost a battle, right? So the men of Bethel came out to aid their city mates, their near neighbors, and they got defeated.

But their city was not taken. Their city was not destroyed. Their city was not burned.

But Ai was taken and crushed. And so I remember they came out and looked behind them, and here's the smoke ascending from the city because they got flanked. And then there was a great rout and slaughter and so on.

But it says nothing about Bethel being taken or conquered at that time. So now Joshua is gone. Ephraim says, you know what? Time to go ahead and take that town.

So they're going up against Bethel. So the house of Joseph went up and the Lord was with them. They sent men to spy out Bethel.

The name of the city was formerly Luz. And, of course, this takes us back to the book of Genesis. Remember, what's our first real notice of this town? What's the big thing that happened there? I had a little encounter with this obliquely because I was talking to one of my daughters whose teacher, whose English teacher, was making some mention of biblical things in their class for literature purposes and completely confused, mangled, and hopelessly obfuscated the whole thing.

She said that Jacob had a dream of angels going up and down on Jacob's ladder, and he grabbed one of them and wrestled with him until dawn. Now, what's the problem with this scenario? Well, first of all, where is Jacob when he has the vision of the stairway to heaven? Music in the background, angels ascending. Where is he? What's the location? Bethel.

He laid his head on a rock, very near this town of Luz. Why is it called Bethel? What does Bethel mean in Hebrew? What does Beit mean? House? What does El mean? So Bethel is the house of God. So, Bethel.

He has that dream, and he says, you know, if you'll be my God, I'll come back and sacrifice, etc., etc. He kind of makes a deal with God, and then he goes north, Laban, works for seven years, wakes up in the morning to find the wrong wife, works another seven years for the one, I say wrong in the sense of what he was expecting, another seven years, he finally gets Rachel, and now he's got Leah and Rachel, Teraphim, Escape, coming south, meeting Esau, coming across the brook, and that's when he wrestles with the man until dawn. How much time has he lapsed? 14, 15 years? So, tough to conflate those.

What were you doing 14 years ago in 1994? Well, I can barely remember. I think I was in Tahlequah that year. But anyway, that just tells you the status of public education.

But Bethel, this is where they go. Bethel, it's a significant town. This is the house of what now? House of God.

And who's going to attack it? The children of? The house of? Verse 22. House of Joseph. The house of Joseph is going up to take the house of God.

Now, here's an interesting free, no-charge suggestion. If you could think of two major Old Testament characters that prefigure the Lord Jesus Christ, who would you put as number one and number two? Joseph, obviously. And what's one of Jesus' most... Well, Joshua is up there.

We'll have to do three because he's not the one I'm thinking of. What do people call the Lord Jesus? Son of? David. David is the... You've got the two-fold presentation of the coming Messiah in the Old Testament.

Suffering servant, conquering king. Who's the picture of the suffering servant who becomes the conquering king? It's Joseph. Who is the conquering king who earlier suffered? David.

David and Joshua both, or David and Joseph both, go through a great time of testing and trial to ultimately be rewarded with a crown. So, you think about those two. Good answer with Joshua.

He's just not the one I'm thinking of at the moment. Now, if you think about Joseph, and you think about David, who is going to be the shining star in the house of Judah. You've got Judah and you've got Joseph.

Those two tribes, or tribe containers. And that's what you have starting out this book. And, of course, we look at it in hindsight.

David hasn't done his great epic things yet, but everybody in Israel knows that Judah is going to be the leadership tribe. He's going to hold the scepter until Shiloh comes and all of that. And these are the tribes that ought to be really getting it done.

And they start out doing the best. So you have these two tribes at the beginning. Now, if you are familiar at all with the book of Judges, and this is something just by way of outline, by the time you get over to chapter 17, this book divides into two big parts.

The first part is the cycle of the Judges. There's going to be seven cycles, actually six cycles of Judges. Okay? Six, they were doing well, and then they fell in, and then they cried out for a deliverer, and here's the Judge, and he does a great thing.

That's going to happen six big times. Okay? That's going to take us up through chapter 16. Well, that doesn't end the book, does it? You've got chapter 17 through 21, and in 17 through 21, we're going to have the history of two other tribes.

The book starts out with two big tribe introductions, Judah and Joseph, Ephraim primarily. At the end, it's going to end with Dan and Benjamin. Tribe of Dan, the tribe of Benjamin.

The two most promising tribes are at the beginning. If anybody's going to get it done, it ought to be Judah. If anybody's going to get it done, it ought to be Ephraim, right? Sons of Joseph, House of Joseph.

But at the end of the book, what do we finish up with? If you know anything about the history of the tribe of Dan, if you remember anything about that stuff that happens, Benjamin practically gets wiped out. Remember they've got to go tackle women and that kind of thing to keep from having the tribe go extinct? You remember? We'll be seeing it before long, before too long. And this is a promise.

We are not going to dally in judges. We are going to be swinging through this book from now on because we've got such a great foundation in the introduction. So, all I'm saying is think about the book.

Think about chiasm. Think about structure. Think about the way the Hebrew mind works.

Two big tribes at the beginning. Two big tribes at the end. Everything in terms of potential.

Everything in terms of failure. What does this tell us? By the way, I'm giving this to you in Hebrews. Right to left for you.

This is the beginning and this is the end. So, what does this tell you? What is the theme of the book? It reminds me of what Paul says to the Galatians. You were running well.

Who hindered you? God gave you a promise. God gave you a land. God gave you victory.

God gave you conquest. God gave you a great leader. What happened? You start out with Joshua.

The last thing he does is give you a charge. You say, oh yeah, sure, we can do that. He says, no you can't.

You're going to fail. You need to wake up and pay attention here. You need to do what God says.

Be obedient. Follow his law. Exterminate these Canaanites.

Oh yes, okay, we're awake now. Of course, yes, we will do it. Joshua dies.

Judah and Ephraim start out kind of, sort of doing okay, but by the time you get to the end of the book, you've got Dan and Benjamin. Disastrous, wholly discouraging, depressing progress of the book. And six times God tries to wake them up.

We're going to have six major judge cycles in between the beginning and the end. That's why we have this long introduction that we've spent so much time on. That's why you have that long coda in chapters 17 through 21.

That's the bracket. Here's the potential. Here's the best that Israel ever does right at the beginning, and here's what it turns into.

This must not be the story of our lives. We can't start out getting saved, getting interested in

the Word of God, learning promises, principles, and doctrines, taking notes, getting in there and really getting with it, with the Word of God, and then going lame, going blind, going numb, going dazed and confused, and wandering off the path. This book is a warning for those who start well.

These people are the victors of the northern and southern campaigns. This is the undefeated army of Joshua that starts out this settlement. There's sort of a truism or a fabled idea in the Marine Corps that there are great combat Marines that absolutely cannot exist in a peacetime environment.

You know, your chesty pullers and your Dan Daly's and your guys who raise the flag on Iwo Jima and so on. They're great in combat. They're great fighters, but when you try to put them in a barracks duty situation or a peacetime environment, they just don't know how to function because they're just fighters.

And then you have, on the other hand, say, well, he's a great barracks Marine, but he can't find his hip pockets with a flashlight in a three-man working party when he's in the field. He's hopeless when it comes to actually doing tactical, strategic kind of things. Well, we are called to be both.

Israel did a great job under the great leadership of Joshua in achieving great victories. Great, great, great. Great leadership, great victories, great job.

Now they're supposed to settle. Their mission is different. They're supposed to drive out the remaining Canaanites, shouldn't take too long, sort of a militia action on the part of the individual tribes, and then dwell.

Our mission changes. You think about your life thus far, however old you are. You may just be a teenager.

You may be up there well past me. Doesn't matter. Think about your life.

It starts with great activity and gradually slows down. As a teenager, you are not as hyperactive as you were as a little kid. Trust me on this.

You watch little two- and three-year-olds, nothing is that hyperactive ever again in its life. It's just uncontrollable. It's out of all human conscience.

And as you get older, you slow down. Well, you assimilate. All your neurons and synapses and things develop and connect in your first few years of life.

And you develop the brain you're going to have. This is why they try to teach foreign languages to tiny kids. Because you reach a point where you can no longer make those French noises.

You can no longer make those guttural Semitic noises. After a certain period of time, you gel. And you start, you know, it's entropy.

It's just all downhill. From the age of six or so, it's all downhill. And there's a steeper downhill after about 22 or 23.

And when you hit 40, it is just a straight drop off. You are traveling at 9.8 meters per second squared. It is just straight down.

But here's the point. God calls us. It's by design.

It's a part of our experience under the curse. God works all things together for good. Anybody can be young.

It takes no talent. It takes no skill. It takes no gift.

Anybody can be young. But to be middle-aged and to be old, you've got to be crafty. You have to be skillful.

You have got to find ways to overcome everything that is going missing. It's like Apollo 13. You know, anybody can fly a perfectly good aircraft.

Anybody can fly a perfectly good spacecraft. But just start breaking stuff and see if you can still fly. This is where you separate your truly great people from your just merely mediocre bus driver types.

Now, think about this. This is the book of Judges. I am telling you, this is the book of Judges.

The book of Judges starts with a bunch of winners. They are young. They are vigorous.

They are victorious. They have got it nailed. They have got it wired.

They have never lost a battle. And they are settling down. It's like, okay, this should be pretty sweet.

This should be pretty simple. And they are going to fall so far and so hard onto their face that God is going to have to send in foreign armies to decimate them, to humiliate them, to break their pride, and to leave them groveling and calling out for God. That's what's going to happen.

Now, this is not a good pattern to emulate. I used to write up awards for people or commendations and so on. Lance Corporal Omnifrats here valorously did this, that, and the other.

He is a credit to himself in the United States Marine Corps. He is an example worthy of emulation. It's one of the things you always put toward the end.

An example worthy of emulation. Everybody ought to be like this guy. They ought to look at him and go thou and do likewise.

This is not the example to emulate. This is the example to avoid. This is the warning.

There is warning music playing in the background of all of this. So, when it says that the house of Joseph went up against Bethel, the Lord was with them. They sent in a spy.

Why did they have to send in a spy? They never went into Bethel under Joshua. The men of Bethel came out and they slaughtered him. But they didn't go into the city.

They didn't take the city. There weren't enough of them at that time. They didn't have the full-fledged campaign going.

So they need somebody to tell them what the lay of the city is, which was formerly loose. When the spies saw a man coming out of the city, they said, Show us the entrance to the city and we will show you mercy. He showed them the entrance.

They struck the city with the edge of the sword. But they let the man and all his family go. And the man went to the land of the Hittites, built a city, and called its name Luz, which is its name to this day.

Now, what is the moral of this story, if any? Does it seem to have any significance at all? What would you think? Why would God include this in his inspired word? Why do we care that the man went to the land of the Hittites and built a city with the very same name? Well, let me ask the question this way. What were God's instructions for cities within the tribal boundaries? What are they to do to every inhabitant of those places? Now, was there an exception with Rahab? They didn't do that to Rahab. Why? Did Rahab do something beyond help them win? Did Rahab unlock the gate and let the armies in? What did Rahab do? Why was Rahab special? Why is she in the line of David and in the line of Christ? I know that your God is God.

She joined Israel. Did she go off and found another city called Jericho somewhere, have a passel of kids? What's the difference here? You would think, well, hey, somebody helps you win, you give them a free pass and let them do what they want. There is a difference, isn't there? What about this man? Is this what the house of Joseph was supposed to do to win a victory? Well, we'll do it the sneaky way.

We'll get a guy to turn traitor against his own people and we'll give him a free pass. Is this the kind of thing we want to cultivate? Do we look with great honor and great dignity and great approval on making people turn traitor against their own people? Is loyalty and fidelity anything that we value at all? Not to render any kind of a moral judgment against all of our espionage activities, but I do think that there is a principle to be taken into account. Is it a good thing to entice someone to turn against their own people? Is this something God smiles on? In the Bible, when you see someone turning against those who formerly embraced and loved and trusted him, this is the original sin, right? This is Lucifer in the throne room of God.

This is not keeping faith. This is not keeping covenant. This is not being true and loyal and trustworthy.

And yet, this is the means by which they win the victory. So, what is the great signal feature of

this victory? When you think of this victory, compare this to the Jericho victory. What do you think of when you think of Jericho? The Israelites, all they did was obey and march, and God knocked the walls down and God gave them the victory.

What is the great key to the victory over Bethel? God is glorified because he did what? They got a guy to show them the secret way into the city. And they gave that guy a free pass. That guy did not join Israel.

He didn't do that because he believed in the God of Israel and wanted to worship the God of Israel, wanted to join the people of God, wanted to intermarry with them. He's a traitor. And they let him go.

And he went and built another city, just like the one that they destroyed, just in a different place. Are the Hittites one of the ites that the Israelites are going to have to deal with? Yes. This is just problem deferred, isn't it? There's another city just like the one they took.

This has just pushed the problem into the future. And this is the metaphor, this is the symbolic value of this little episode. You do not really solve your problem by temporarily removing it.

The city of Luz has effectively been removed to a different location by stealth and by traitorous activity, by getting in league with someone who is untrustworthy. They made a deal with an untrustworthy man, a man who cannot be trusted. Betrayed his family and friends and neighbors.

Got them all killed. Is this a man you want living amongst you in Israel? Do you think the house of Joseph wanted this guy to join? No. So they use him and then he goes and builds another city just like the first one.

So from verse 27 through the end of this chapter, what does it tell us? Manasseh did not. You can just stop right there. Manasseh did not.

Verse 29, nor did Ephraim. Verse 30, nor did Zebulun. Verse 31, nor did Asher.

Verse 33, nor did Naphtali. Verse 34, the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountains for they would not allow them to come down to the valley. There's your victorious Israelites.

The tribe of Dan. A little harbinger, a little theme music there for the last part of the book. The Amorites were determined to dwell in Mount Heres in Ajalon and in Sha'albin.

The Amorites are dwelling where? Does this town have any sort of a familiar ring to its name? What's Ajalon? What happened in Ajalon? Joshua, on one of the great days of the southern campaign, says, Son, stand thou still and moon over the valley of? Ajalon. This is one of the... Never was a day when God heeded the voice of a man as at the valley of Ajalon. And who's living in Ajalon now? The Amorites.

It's pathetic. It's awful. And yet, this is the picture.

Remember, as goes national Israel in the Old Testament, so goes the individual believer now. And before we get too down on this generation in Israel, we have to ask ourselves the question, have I given away the valley of Ajalon by lack of faith, lack of perseverance, lack of enthusiasm, lack of dedication, lack of taking the Word of God and making it the object of my faith and standing upon it and swinging my sword and slaying the Canaanites in my soul? Because this land that these people are to take and hold represents our soul. There are enemies in our soul that we were born with, that have been born and raised in our soul, and yet we are to drive them out.

They are the natives. Can you imagine the United Nations trying to hash this thing out? Well, you know, you really ought to try to dwell peacefully together. You should partition the land and you should give them some and have a democratic government and let them vote and all of the things that you're trying to do in this very same little patch of land today.

Do you think that would have worked back then? Well, it was tried. Why should we kill these people? They're smiling and they've said that they'll they'll willingly not attack us and if we just won't take their lives, well, okay. Not enough faith to drive them out.

God promised He would be with them. God in good faith was with them even when they didn't appeal to Him, even when they forgot to pray and forgot to sacrifice, forgot to pay attention to the source of their victory. He did it anyway.

But the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountains. It's horrible. The Amorites were determined to dwell in Mount Heres in Aijalon and in Sha'albim.

When the strength of the House of Joseph became greater, they were put under tribute. So they sort of came to an accommodation. Well, you can stay here if you pay money.

Pay me money and you can stay. They didn't go back when they were stronger and finish the job and drive them out, put them to the sword as God commanded. The boundary of the Amorites was from the ascent of Achrebbim from Sila and upward.

So you will remember in later days when you get down to 1 Samuel and the days of Saul and Jonathan. The kids are in the back going over the story of Jonathan and his armor-bearer. Remember Moses and Senna, the shining peaks and the valley in between, the camp of the Philistines.

I can't think of the name of the town. Saul has gone up to Geba and he's on the other side. There's two ridges there.

They're on one side and Saul's on the other. Jonathan gets tired of waiting and he and his armor-bearer go up. And the Philistines, he says, well, tell you what, we'll pray to the Lord and we'll expose ourselves, we'll make ourselves visible to this Philistine forward guard, this

outpost.

And if they call to us to come down, we'll know that God doesn't want us to attack. But if they say wait there and we will come up, we'll know that God has given them into our hands. And what happens? They say, hey, wait there, we're going to come up.

And they're overconfident. They come up and there's a great picture that Rebecca drew of Jonathan basically pitchforking these guys over his shoulder with his spear. In her picture, they're actually flying through the air and the armor-bearer is waiting back there with a sword in each hand to do them in.

And Elizabeth very astutely pointed out that you know there were only two swords in all of Israel at that time. And so we have to assume that Jonathan borrowed his father's sword, gave his sword and Saul's sword to the armor-bearer and that's why they can do that in that picture. But in that story, suddenly as this great defeat begins to take place in the past because they are, as you say in the military, very canalized.

They are brought in. It's like if you see the story of the 300. Same type of thing.

You channelize, you narrow them down to where their numbers don't help them. Well, suddenly there's great confusion in the Philistine camp. First thing you know, they're killing each other.

There's a big rout. Saul says, hey, there's a victory going on. Let me chime in and join.

And so he attacks through a different path and they start routing the Philistines and chasing them. And they chase them west. And in the passage, there is a mention of a town that they chase them all the way to.

And that town is Aijalon. That's as far as they go because Aijalon is the border beyond which is Palestine, Philistine land. Gath and Ekron and all those other Philistine towns, the five cities of the Philistines.

Aijalon is the border. They go that far and no farther. And that's where Joshua stood on that great day.

There never was such a day. And look how they've diminished. They've driven into the mountains.

They lose the plains. They lose Aijalon to the Amorites. So, as a result, in chapter 2, and yes, we are now in Judges 2, then the angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim and said, Now, the angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal.

What is Gilgal? What does it represent? What happened there? I already did a review of this earlier tonight. Joshua and the Israelites, the Ark of the Covenant, go across the Jordan, raging spring tide, 17 miles upstream of the rock. They go across.

They stop and for three days they take care of the circumcision thing. Why? That is an act of obedience, isn't it? They want to make sure that they are in full compliance and full obedience. Every aspect of the covenant.

Joshua looks around and says, You know what? God cannot truly bless us until we come into full compliance with His covenant, with His law. And they stop, backed up against the raging river for three solid days, disabled, because they know they have to get right with God even if it makes them vulnerable. Disabled with circumcision wounds is what happened when Simeon and Levi went up and slew the guys who got tangled up with their sister Dinah.

Remember that? Jacob says, I don't want you in my company. You took these guys when you tricked them into hurting themselves and then you attacked them while they were wounded. Well, Joshua and his entire army is in that same situation and they do it anyway because it's faith.

It's obedience. I will obey even if it doesn't make tactical sense. It is no accident that it tells us where the angel of the Lord came from.

Because the last place we saw Israel as a whole in full, faithful compliance with God's covenant is Gilgal. And so the angel of the Lord comes up from there to Bochim and he says, Now, where is Bochim? What is Bochim? Well, it is going to be the name of this place. It isn't any place yet, but we're going to find out a few verses down that it's going to get its name because of this incident.

He came up to where there was an assemblage of elders of Israel. And the angel of the Lord speaks and he says, I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land of which I swore. Now, this is the angel of the Lord and he's speaking in the first person for God.

We've talked about this before. This doesn't mean that the angel is God any more than when I talk to you on the telephone, I don't look at the telephone and say, Well, hi there, Brother Matt, or hi there, Brother Dan, or hello there, daughter, or whoever's talking to me on the phone. This is a device, a mechanism through which the message comes.

And the message comes in the first person. The telephone is not the person at the other end of the telephone. The angel of the Lord is not God.

Otherwise, why would it say angel? It would just say, God came. It tells us back in Genesis, God came and ate a meal with Abraham. God spoke with Abram.

God talked to him about what was going to happen in Sodom and Gomorrah and so on. Not here. Angel is malach.

It means messenger. The messenger of the Lord came. And he is speaking for God.

He is delivering exactly the words of God. He didn't modify them. He didn't change their person

or anything.

Here's what God says. Thus saith the Lord, as I'm sure what he initially spoke. I led you up from Egypt.

I brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers. And I said, I will never break my covenants with you. And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land.

I say again, you shall make no covenants with the inhabitants of this land. What's a covenant? It's a deal, right? It's an arrangement. It's a settlement.

It's a compromise. Did the house of Joseph make a covenant with the man from Bethel? Is that obedience or disobedience? And they say, well, but we got the victory. You know, God was with us when we went up and then we got the victory.

Well, if God was with them, why did they need to make a deal? It's not necessary. Why do you have to do something when God has already promised? Why did Abraham ever have to sleep with Hagar when God had already promised that Sarah would have a son, that he would have a seed? Well, he couldn't wait for God. He got his own plan, even though he had the promise.

These people have the promise and yet they're augmenting, they're supplementing, they're vamping on God's plan. They're making up their own little variations and saying, well, you know, it'll work this way. And then they'll justify it by the results.

Well, look, we've got the city, don't we? Well, for the time being. But you've got another city just like it growing someplace else because you made a deal and you did not slay that man. So the angel of the Lord comes and says, look, this is what God says.

I brought you up to the land, I promised you victory, and I told you to make no covenants with the inhabitants of this land. Tear down their altars, but you have not obeyed my voice. Why have you done this? Therefore, I also said, I will not drive them out before you.

This is one of the major purposes right here of this introductory section. It gives us the two tribes who sort of started out well but tailed off, and that's what the whole nation is going to do through the course of this book. But it also establishes beyond any doubt that the failure of the tribes of Israel to take and hold their inheritance is not God's fault.

Remember our memory verse? The arm of the Lord is not shortened that it cannot save, nor is his ear heavy that he cannot hear. Your iniquities are separated between you and your God. Your sins have hidden his face from you so that he will not hear.

Your sins. It isn't that God has lost his power to save, and it isn't that God has lost his power to hear, it is that your sins have become such an issue that he will no longer listen, and he will no longer save. And this is the point that the angel of the Lord is establishing right here at the beginning of the story.

You have not obeyed my voice, therefore I will not drive them out. Now God already promised that he would drive them out. So which is it? God says, I will drive them out.

Now he says, I will not drive them out. What changed? Israel made a commitment to God at Mount Sinai. Israel made a commitment to God when they crossed the Jordan.

Israel made a commitment to God just before the death of Joshua, didn't they? All that the Lord has said, we will do. And God said, on that basis, I will drive. This is a conditional promise, isn't it? It's a conditional promise.

If you don't meet the condition, God does not have any obligation to keep his part. That's what's being established here. Because you have not obeyed my voice, I will not drive them out.

They shall be thorns in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you. So it was when the angel of the Lord spoke these words to all the children of Israel. Now how can he speak to all the children of Israel? Well, in the first place, is this actually God speaking? It is the angel of the Lord speaking, isn't it? How is this word going to get relayed to all the children of Israel? He's speaking to their representatives.

He's speaking to their elders, to their leaders. They are going to go back and say, you know what, I was down there at Bochim, and an angel of the Lord appeared. We haven't seen anything like that in years.

We haven't seen miraculous interventions by God since the pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud disappeared. But an angel appeared. Joshua told us once what the angel of the Lord looked like that was commanding the armies back when we first got ready to cross into this land.

Well, we saw the guy, and this is what he said. And it's not a happy message, but this gets distributed like lightning to all the people of Israel. Now, what's the point of this? Why wouldn't God just say, you know what, surprise, surprise, I'm not going to be there.

I'm not going to drive the people out. It is communicated, isn't it? And there's a principle here. When we begin our apathetic indifference, when we begin our less than perfect obedience, when we begin our slow, ever-accelerating slide, God will warn us.

We will receive warning from God. It is not God's will that any should perish, but that all should come to change of mind. That's Scripture.

That's a fact. It is not the will of God. God isn't standing back saying, you know what, some of these people aren't going to believe, some of these people aren't going to obey, and I can't wait to hammer them.

I'm going to let them get so far, and then I'm just going to come down on them like a ton of bricks. God is way above that level of human pettiness and human vindictiveness. It is not the will of God that anybody undergo this discipline, that anybody perish.

And God will send the message of warning. This Bible class stands, this section of Scripture stands as a warning. We need to examine ourselves and see where we are obedient and where we are not.

We need to examine ourselves to see where we are apathetic, where we are indifferent, where we have compromised, where we have decided to make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and allow space and allow time to that which is not of God and which should not be in our soul. It can be worry. God says, fear thou not, over and over and over again.

Fear thou not. God has not given us a spirit of fear, but a power and love and a sound mind. Now, do we make a covenant with fear? Do we say, well look, let me buy you off.

Let me flee to my mountain and you can stay in the valley. Perfect love does what? Casts out fear. Perfect love doesn't accommodate fear.

It casts it out. We have solutions from God. We have the presence of God that will absolutely get rid of fear.

Just like these Israelites can get rid of the Canaanites. Well, let's pause here and take our break. When we come back, we'll pick up in chapter 2 and see what the consequences are of these words from the angel of the Lord.