

Judges 08-02-01b

Let's resume our study now in Joshua chapter 2. There is a pivotal verse here in chapter 2 at verse 10. The generation that served the Lord but could not and certainly did not transfer their momentum, their spiritual fidelity to the next generation, they were gathered to their fathers. Another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel.

And almost immediately the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals. These served the Lords, these are the Lords of the Canaanites, the Gods of the Canaanites. They forsook the Lord God of their fathers.

Now notice it says forsook. You cannot forsake something you have never been associated with. I have never forsaken Turkey, the country Turkey.

I've never forsaken the country of Turkey, I've never been there. I've been close to it, I've met and got out of the way of some Cypriot Turks. But I've never been to Turkey.

I can't forsake Turkey if I've never been there. You can't forsake someone that you've never had a relationship with. So when it says they forsook, and this is what the Hebrew verb means, what does that tell you? They did start with a knowledge or at least a familiarity with God.

And they abandoned that, they turned away from it. It's not like they didn't know anything. It's not like they had never heard.

But what they heard did not provoke curiosity, it didn't provoke interest, it didn't provoke any sort of response of a seeking nature. Instead they forsook what little they did know and they turned to these other gods. And it was easy because of this syncretistic influence.

It says they served the Baals. This is a wonderful book that I don't recommend that you get because there's five others just like it. It's a big set.

It's the Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament. I don't get to use it very often, but when I do it's great. There's an entry in here for the Hebrew word Baal.

And I want to give you some selected excerpts from the lengthy article on Baal. This, first of all, gives you the etymology and the secular use. And it's important to understand because here's our objective, here's my objective anyway.

How did this happen? To me it's inconceivable that you could go in one generation from serving the god that delivered your nation out of bondage to rank child sacrificing, temple prostituting, idolatry. How does that happen? Well, guess what? It is happening in this country. It is happening today in a very similar way.

The causes, the conditions, the successions and the relations are almost identical. It's just

warmed over Israel going into Baal worship today in Christianity. And it is subtle, it is insidious, it isn't nearly as clear cut as one might be led to think by reading this passage.

So here's the etymology and the secular use of the word Baal in the ancient Near East. The common Semitic word Balu means Lord and with the following genitive frequently means owner. Genitive means of, Lord of.

So you have this occurring in Akkadian Beli, not B-E-L-L-Y but B-E-L-I. Remember what does I do to a noun in ancient Near Eastern languages? It's my. So Beli is my lord.

So people would walk into the king and say good morning Beli and they would go on from there. In Akkadian B-E-L-B-A-T-E, B-E-L-B-A-T-E basically. B-E-L-B-A-T-E means house.

B-E-L-B-A-T-E is lord of the house. B-E-L-E-C-L-E, owner of the field. B-E-L-S-A-N-E, owner of sheep.

In Phoenician B-E-L-B-A-K-A-R, owner of a herd of cattle. B-E-L-S-A-N-E, owner of sheep. In Aramaic, very similar, B-E-L-R-A-K-A-B, owner of a war chariot and so on.

On and on and on. They find these in inscriptions and this is a documented use of the word from very ancient times. You find this used somewhat unexpectedly in Exodus chapter 21 where B-A-L-H-A-S-H-O-R is owner of the ox.

Remember in Exodus you're getting regulations about what should and shouldn't take place. The owner of the ox is called the bale of the ox in Exodus 21. If he falls into a pit then the owner of the pit is responsible.

The owner of the pit is the bale of the pit. B-A-L-H-A-B-O-R. In 22.7 B-A-L-H-A-B-I-E-T is owner of the house.

The husband is owner of his wife. Therefore B-A-L-H-A-B-I-E-T also means husband. And you find this for example in Genesis 20 verse 3, 21 verse 3 and 22.

Deuteronomy 22.22. Remember in the New Testament it says Sarah acknowledged Abraham and called him what? Lord. Called him B-A-L-H-A-H-A-B-I-E-T. She said well hello there Abram belly.

Abram my lord. He is lord of the house, head of the family and so on. Well that was the common parlance.

That's what the root meaning of the word was. Well obviously, and you have this in England today. You have your knighted people serve this and serve that.

And they are the lord of various things. Lord of the manor. You have the house of lords in the British Parliament.

House of lords? I mean come on, do they really think they are divine? It just means these are prominent individuals. They are the landed gentry and so on. Well in the ancient Near East this word very quickly became used for heavenly lords.

Or deities of an idolatrous nature. And that's documented in here. And it began to just stand on its own without any other genitive coming after it.

So the moon god Sin, S-I-N, is the name of the ancient Near Eastern moon god. And this is the one that morphed into Allah by the way. You can trace the etymology.

You can trace the development of Sin into Allah very easily in archaeology. He is the Bel-Haran, lord of Haran. The moon god was lord of Haran in Ugaritic.

There is the Hilal, lord of the shepherd's crook and so on. So this is very well attested. And it also occurs as a part of names.

Interestingly, if you try to say that Allah was the god that Muhammad dreamed up in the Koran. You know, Muhammad's father and uncle had names that incorporated the word Allah. Before he ever promoted Allah to be the one and only god.

Back when there were 360 idols and deities and so on. This was already a part of names. So, in the same way Baal would occur.

And you have this even in the Old Testament. Jeru-Baal for example. Ish-Baal, man of Baal, man of the lord.

Back when the Israelites could use Baal to refer to God. But as Baal worship came into prominence and into disrepute. The Israelites quit using the word Baal to refer to God anymore.

In the same way that we don't typically use the word gay very much anymore. And we don't use the word queer very much anymore. In their normal senses.

It used to be... Boy, have you ever read Nancy Drew stories? She was always getting a queer feeling. You know, as she walked into a dark house or whatever looking for clues. Well, you know, you can't say that now without a lot of overtones.

Because those words have become associated with a whole complex of ideas that are not happy ones. Oddly enough, the word gay isn't associated with a happy connotation at all. And the same thing happened with the word Baal.

And so in later editions of scripture, the scribes would actually replace the element Baal in names with something else. So this happened beginning at this time in history. Egyptian sources make explicit references to Baal.

But they show that Baal was regarded as the god of the storm. He is a war god who wields the

katak weapon like Baal in the Ugaritic myth. And there is a whole mythology in Egypt that eventually associates the Egyptian god Seth with Baal.

And they kind of get amalgamated together. And this is what typically happened in the ancient Near East where these religions would flow into one another and a lot of syncretism and amalgamation would occur. So this whole idea that I mentioned earlier about the association with fertility.

He is both a war god fighting against monsters like Leviathan and Tanin. Conquering dangerous enemies like Yam and Mot. Which of course are associated with the sea and with death.

And he defeats cities. His equally violent lover Enat frequently helps him in battle. He is the king over whom or above whom no other god can stand.

The one who gives substance to all living creatures. Now you can see how Israelites would say, well of course our god, the god that Moses wrote about in Genesis. He is the god above whom no other can stand.

And he is the god who gives substance to all living creatures. So they are the same. Well, when his sweet rain revives field and seed, the heads of peasant farmers are lifted up.

These are all quotes from inscriptions and ancient statements made about Baal. When he returns to the earth, men begin to dream of streams of oil and honey, the symbols of abundance. When he withdraws, the parched land cannot be plowed, vegetation withers.

This gives rise to despair. And so he is above all this god of clouds, winds, thunder, lightning, rain, dew and snow. All life at this time is dependent on precipitation.

So he is the god of life. And so certain elements would be picked out and identified. Well yes, that's our god too.

And this is what is happening today with perversions and distortions of the god of the Bible and trying to synchronize and amalgamate him with these other things. So we need to be aware that this has been happening for millennia. It's been happening for century after century after century.

And we shouldn't be surprised that it is happening in our day as well. And we should know better. And we should be quick to refute such false associations.

Can you imagine what it would have been like if there had been just scores of people in Israel who had stopped and said, wait a minute, this Baal has nothing to do with the god of our fathers. He is not the god of our deliverance. Yes, god controls the weather, but because you say your god controls the weather, that doesn't make it the same.

And Mohammed said that Allah was the god of Abraham. That doesn't make it so. Just because

he says it 600 years after Christ and 1600 years after David and 2000 years after Moses, that doesn't make it right.

And we need to be aware and be vocal when these issues come up. Otherwise, we are culpable. Now people will be culpable for getting taken in and deceived by these things, but we don't need to be culpable as the preceding generation that knows better.

So, chapter 2. The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, served the Baals, they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them. They bowed down to them, and they provoked the Lord to anger. And it gives us quite a bit of detail here.

And because of it, he delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them. He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around. And notice their enemies are all around because they failed to be obedient.

They didn't get the enemies out of the way. It's interesting to look at a map of ancient Israel and the tribal assignments that were made. It's not like the millennial assignment.

You remember that? They're in layers. They're horizontal strips all the way across. And each of them has a little border against the Jordan and against the Mediterranean Sea.

They've got a geographical protection. And you've only got one tribe at the top and one tribe at the bottom that's got any exposure to the outside. Well, in the original tribal assignment, just for your own amusement, look at that map and look at which tribes are exposed to the outside.

Your weakest tribes, like Ephraim and Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh, have got exposure all over the place because they stayed on the wrong side of the Jordan. And they don't have a protected border. Within the land, a lot of the tribes, like Simeon, had protection.

They were encapsulated and surrounded. And a stronger tribe, like Judah, protects a weaker tribe, like Simeon. And that was God's design.

And that's how this survey was made and how the appointments were made by Lot for the assignment of the land. But this all gets wrecked when the tribes do not capture and hold their assigned territory because now there are incursions. And formerly protected tribes are now vulnerable and are exposed.

And the weak underbelly is attacked by the unrepentant, unregenerate, unreformed, and undead Canaanites who should have been eliminated. So God had made provision, but through disobedience, that provision is nullified. And that's the principle.

God has made protection and provision available to us. But through disobedience, through faithlessness, through apathy, through accepting the status quo and not knowing our God and

remembering Him, we can lose those promises, those expressions of God's grace and God's love. So as a result, if you look at the end of verse 15, they were greatly distressed.

A lot of people today feel greatly distressed. This word, if you look at like an inner linear or something that's just giving the gloss for the word, the root of this word, which is sarar, T-S-A-R-A-R, it means to have a cramp. They got cramps.

They were charley-horsed. They were doubled over with pain. It says they were distressed, but this is a word that's used for physical pain like a cramp.

They were cramped. And these peoples were a cramp to them. You talk about a thorn in the side, but it kind of gives you a flavor for the level of pain.

If you've ever had a really severe cramp, that's the situation they ended up in. And God caused this. So they got cramps in the land.

It's kind of the opposite of peace and relaxation and safety. You're tense. You don't know when the next spasm is going to hit.

If you've ever had a lower back muscle really cramp up hard, this verse will speak to you in a particular way. Nevertheless. It says nevertheless.

How many letters are in that? What's 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11? The word nevertheless is real long. In Hebrew, this is the while. This is and, or now, or but, or for, or nevertheless, or therefore.

It's a multi-purpose little stroke. Nevertheless, God raised up leaders. Shoftim.

This is from the verb shabbat, which means to judge. And the shofet is the one judging. And the plural, shoftim.

And they delivered them from the hand of their plunderers. So you would think, okay, bad things have happened because we've not learned about God. We've allowed ourselves to be taken in by this deceptive, idolatrous, perverse culture around us.

Now we're suffering for it. We cry out to the Lord. He sends a deliverer.

Okay, now we get it. We've learned our lesson. Boy, we're going to stick with that Bible study now.

We're going to remember the God of our fathers now. We're going to go back and dust off those commandments and those books of Moses and get into that Exodus and that Leviticus 1-7 and get those offerings cranked up, make these Levites do their job. We'll get this thing squared away.

We'll see what happened. But what happened? They did not listen to the deliverers that God raised up. They played the harlot.

They continued. All they wanted was relief from pain. They got a cramp.

They got relief from the cramp because of the judge. And they just continued their ways. Now, have you ever observed this in the people in your periphery? Have you ever known someone who makes poor choices and bad decisions, has lousy priorities, only lives in the moment, suffers horrible consequences as a result, cries out and is in all kinds of distress because of those consequences.

As soon as the consequences are lifted, the person just resumes Plan A. No connection of the cause and effect. No ability to convert and change and do something different and avoid getting into that very same bind again. Well, this is the picture of Israel.

Unrelenting stupidity. You would think after a couple of chastisements they would learn, but they don't. There are children this way.

There are children that are just hard-headed. You can beat them senseless, and they just don't learn. They do not respond.

And this is the expression of free will. And we're grateful when God gives us responsive souls that kind of wake up and smell the coffee. They would not listen to their judges.

They played the harlot with other gods. They bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked.

Notice they were in it, and they turned from it. It doesn't say they never knew the way that their fathers walked. They knew it, but they turned away from it, and they very quickly forgot it.

In obeying the commandments of the Lord, they did not do so. And when the Lord raised up judges for them, the Lord was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. This is sort of blessing by association.

They kind of cruise along and get some relief because God is blessing the judge. This is the classic biblical expression of the doctrine of blessing by association. You can be the only God-fearing, Bible-studying believer in your household, and God will protect, and God will bless, and God will suspend discipline for everybody in the house.

Now, they may shoot themselves in the foot, but God is not actively coming after them in all the days. I could go into great detail in the New Testament. Paul talks about this.

God will bless a household for the sake of the believing spouse. God will suspend judgment and discipline for the sake of one. It's kind of like Sodom.

If there had been ten believers in Sodom that were faithful, that city would have still stood. The fire and brimstone would have never come down. God told Abraham, I will deliver the entire city for the sake of ten people.

Unfortunately for the city, there weren't even ten. In fact, there weren't even five. There weren't even three.

There was only one, and that was Lot. Lot's daughters were trollops, and his wife couldn't keep her eyes pointed in the right direction, and it was only Lot that actually, and he wasn't exactly a paragon of virtue, but for the sake of Lot, who was associated with Abraham, God at least got them out before he sunk that whole thing under the Dead Sea. So, it came to pass, when the judge was dead, they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers by following other gods.

Now this is talking about successive generations, because these are not the fathers that were alive in Joshua's time, the fathers that came out of Egypt. This is a survey now of the period of the judges, where each generation, as we see this Gilgal rolling cycle of oppression and divine discipline and crying out on a judge and deliverance, they come back, but they never come back as far as the preceding generation did. It's a stone rolling downhill, not gathering moss, but gathering discipline, an ever greater discipline.

And each time, when the judge dies, they revert, and they are worse than last time. Each cycle is downward. It is a downward spiral.

They never come back to even the level of morality the preceding evil generation had. You can look in our country and suspect that the same thing is going on. We have the occasional revival, we have the occasional sort of superficial return to conservative Christian values.

Somebody blows up a building or two, and everybody starts flying a flag and being patriotic and praying to God and respecting others who pray to God even if they don't believe in God. And then it kind of quickly fades, and you find that post 9-11 we are even less God-oriented or God-tolerating in the biblical sense than we were before 9-11. There was kind of this brief, oh my, we're under duress.

Boy, everybody was united to tear in the eye for the Star-Spangled Banner. When's the last time you drove down the highway and saw anybody with one of those clip-on flags? When's the last time anybody tolerated public prayer like they did in the days right after 9-11 where people were standing on the steps of the Capitol building praying to God and it was on national television? Distress, deliverance. We've got a president who takes action and puts stuff in place, but very quickly, you know, once the judge is dead, watch out.

They reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers by following other gods to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way." So the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he said, "...because this nation has transgressed my covenant, which I commanded their fathers, and has not heeded my voice, I also will no longer drive out from before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died, so that through them I may test Israel, whether they will keep the ways of the Lord to walk in them as their fathers kept them or not." And this is really a summary. We ask,

why does God allow wickedness? Why does God allow crime? Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people? Well, it is a test.

It spreads the field. It sorts believers into categories, into levels of faith. That's why you can have an afterlife in which there are greatest and there are least that seem to be inverse to the way things were in this life.

The last shall be first. The first shall be last. If politically correct people were writing the afterlife, do you think there would be any first and last? Is it politically correct for there to be better people and worse people in the sense of blessing and reward? That there would be greatest in the kingdom and least in the kingdom? Do you think any politically correct people would write that? No, it's horrifying.

It's horrifying. Every human is equally valuable. I can't be blamed for my decisions.

I'm the sum total of all of the influences and the this, that, and the other that goes in. I'm just a victim. I'm a cork floating on the sea of time and circumstance and slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, etc.

So, how could God possibly be just and fair to elevate some and denigrate others in the perfection of the afterlife? And guess what? In the perfection of the eternal future, there are great and there are un-great. In-great. In-greats.

There are those who are city dwellers with access to the tree of life and there are those who are outside that need the healing that comes from those leaves. And it is not equal and it is not level and everyone is not all the same. I will leave these nations and I will test Israel to see if they will keep the ways of the Lord.

I will leave this as an option. Who will choose? Who will serve the Lord and who will not? So the Lord left those nations without driving them out immediately, nor did he deliver them into the hand of Joshua. Very interesting.

God seems to have been looking ahead as he is apparently able to do. God is apparently able to see into the future. And he did not, himself, wipe out the enemies and leave a virgin territory for Israel to simply walk into.

He left opposition there for the purpose of testing. God purposely. Can you imagine Joshua going in there and saying, I wonder why I can't completely stamp these people out and I've got to charge them to go in and wipe out these enemies and I'm leaving with my task unfinished.

I wonder why that is. I wonder why God didn't give me a complete and total victory. Well, God has his reasons.

God has reasons and the secular mind cannot understand why God would allow starvation. How can there possibly be a God? And look at these children on the commercials for the

charities. Look at these little fly-bespecked, one-shoe-off, pot-bellied little kids over in far off lands that don't get enough to eat.

I ask myself, where are the parents of these children? How do these children come into the world and who's supposed to be looking after them? Why is it that they've got to be on television with some white-bearded guy telling me to give a dime a day to take care of this child? Where are the adults that are responsible for that child? Where is the country that is responsible for that child? Where is the government and the taxes? Is there some guy that has draped himself with medals and military honors and stuff that's sitting up in some government high seat like Gaddafi and his people are starving and all he's doing is enriching himself and living off the fat of the land? Why do you have to come halfway around the world to me and say give a dime a day for this child? Where are the people who brought that child into the world? Where are the people who should be feeding and clothing and educating and nurturing and evangelizing that child? Where are these people? Why is that country suffering that fate? Why are they plagued with starvation and poverty and warfare and strife and all of these horrible things? Well, to what extent does their culture and their civilization their embrace and seek after God? If they are benighted godless countries well it's no wonder. God, look at what God does to his own people when they turn away from him. What's he going to do to the pagans who have no interest in the message the Holy Spirit brings into their soul? Slings and arrows.

You're on your own. You don't want to avail yourself of God's grace? Make your own grace. And of course they can't.

And so they starve and their children suffer and innocents die like flies. And it is a part of God's working in the human race. So that through them I may test my people.

So that through them I may test Israel. If you reject God your only reason for continuing to breathe God's air is to serve sort of a secondary purpose of testing. There are people who are alive on this earth solely to be a challenge to God's people.

Otherwise, God would just suspend the energy that holds their molecules together and they would disappear. The Lord left those nations and he didn't even give them into the hand of Joshua. This brings us to chapter 3. These are the nations which the Lord left that he might test Israel by them.

Israel's obligation to God under the covenant was very simple. It was easy. It wasn't burdensome.

God didn't say you will bring a 35% tax into my storehouse every month or every year. He didn't say you will climb mountains. You will make pilgrimages back to Ur or Haran or Bethel or Gilgal.

You will do this. God's obligation laid upon his people was basically be faithful. Love the Lord your God.

Serve him. Make your requests to him. Remember him.

Teach him to your children. It wasn't burdensome and God said if you will do these things I will bless you. If you are worried about the animals you sacrifice I will give you tenfold.

You will never hunger. You will never lack. You will never be defeated.

One of you will put to flight a thousand. And God did that for the generations of faithful, but they weren't interested. These are the nations which the Lord left that he might test Israel by them.

Notice the emphasis and the repetition here. We are supposed to pay attention when we read this book. What we do not conquer by faith is going to keep coming back.

It's going to keep coming back. Did you ever wonder why are there besetting sins? Why are there things that just seem to continually entangle? If you don't defeat it, if you don't conquer it, if you don't wipe it out by faith, it's just going to keep rearing its ugly head. You say, if I could get a certain kind of therapy, if I could take a certain pill, if I could get a certain kind of counseling, if I could get into a certain kind of support group, if I could just part my hair on the other side, and if I could change the color of my socks, why would this thing just go away? I have a problem with worry, so I'll take the anti-worry therapy.

I've got a problem with gossip, so I'll put a band on one... They've got this thing for complaining now. Have you seen this? It's one of these little rubber wristband things. You're supposed to carry it around in your pocket, and every time you complain, you've got to take it out of your pocket and put it in your other pocket.

Every time you catch yourself complaining, you switch that thing from one pocket to the other, or from one wrist to the other if you're a woman and you don't have pockets, which I think is very impractical. It's not like you can put it from one side of your purse to the other. You'd never find it in the first place.

But you move it from one pocket to the other, or one wrist to the other, every time you complain. Now, where is the power of God in a rubber band? They say, oh, but you can become more aware. So the power is in raising awareness.

If we just raise awareness, we can get over this complaining thing. Listen, you can get tired of shifting that rubber band and stop your verbal complaining. Does it change your attitude? Does it change your point of view? You just learn to bite your lip, and you don't say anything.

If you look at a woman to lust after her in your heart, it's no less guilt than if you had done the deed, because it starts in the mind, and you're still guilty of complaining whether or not the words escape your lips. And a rubber band is not going to change our heart attitude, and a rubber band is not going to change our perspective. It has to be a transformation on the inside.

And if we do not conquer those enemies, however long it takes, because think about this. Remember I told you about that string of cities that was on the northern edge of Judah and

Benjamin that they never conquered, and it just bisected the land between the north and the south? And then there was that other southern region, and there was a series of cities, and in the plain they couldn't conquer them, and it made another big indentation. It was like a big... It almost completely cut off the south.

Guess what happened 300 years later in the days of David? David went up and conquered those cities. David went down into the plain and destroyed them. Remember what it said in the last chapter? It said, why could they not conquer the areas in the plain? What was the problem? Something made out of iron.

Couldn't conquer the chariots. Had we ever seen chariots before in the account? Had the Israelites ever seen chariots before? Remember Jabin? Jabin had chariots. Didn't stop them from conquering Jabin.

Why did it stop them in the land? It wasn't a lack of military might or military ability. It was a lack of God's support. It was a lack of divine enablement because they were disobedient and they were faithless.

We become anemic. We become pathetic through that kind of attitude. So the nations which the Lord left that he might test Israel by them, all who had not known any of the wars in Canaan.

Notice this digression. This was so that the generations of the children of Israel might be taught to know war, at least those who had not formerly known it. Isn't that fascinating? God left them in the land so that every succeeding generation could fight, whether it is militarily or culturally, come up against that influence, come up against that presence, and deal with it.

Now, why do we stay on the planet after we accept Christ as our Savior? I would think, based on what I learned in church growing up, that the goal is to get saved. And once you're saved, you're done. Once you accept Jesus as your Savior, you're done.

So why do I have to stick around? Why do I not enter into the realms of perfection? Why do I not ascend to be with Jesus? What's the point of sticking around in a lost and dying world surrounded by the influences of principalities and powers and rulers of the darkness of this age? Why? God wants us to learn to resist. God wants us to learn to fight. Now, there are diseases in the world.

There are two ways that you can prevent your children from getting diseases. You can make them a bubble boy. You can put them in a germ-free environment and never let them be exposed.

Or, you can say, you need to be exposed to this. You need to get some antibodies for this so that you won't ever get this disease. Remember, kids used to get measles or chicken pox.

Some people would bring their kids over and say, get next to him, get exposed. I want you to

have it now while you're young and you've got a resilient system so that you won't get it later when it can really knock you down. We inoculate.

We take our children on purpose to get shot full of germs. We take them to the doctor and we say, Doc, shoot my child full of germs. That's what a vaccination is.

That's what a shot does. Why? I want your system to learn to fight this germ so that when you see it later, you won't be taken over by it. You won't succumb to it.

That's what God is doing by leaving us in this life. And we need to remember that. We should not insulate our children.

We should not insulate young believers from the world. We need exposure to those germs. And we need to build up antibodies.

And I'm back to the subject of Allah. It is not enough to say, Well, son, daughter, trust me on this. I'm telling you that people are screwed up, so just stay away from them.

They need the antibodies. They need the spiritual knowledge to make those decisions and those determinations and those perceptions for themselves. They are not going to say, Well, you know what my dad said, my mom said, so that must just be wrong, and I don't really have to think for myself.

Each new generation has to fight those battles. Each new generation has to have the ability to build up a resistance and to learn to fight and to preserve their faith and their spiritual life in the presence of their enemies. We tend to forget.

We love the still waters and the green pastures and His namesake and so on. Thou preparest a table before me, where? In the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil.

You lay out this table and here's my enemies ranged around. I'm not in a place of peace and safety. I'm in a place of challenge and you still anoint me.

You still lay out a great feast for me. We cannot escape the world and we need to be able ourselves and we need to pass on to the next generation of believers the knowledge of God to fight this battle successfully and to not go in this endless downward cycle that so much of Christianity is exhibiting today that is reflected in these chapters in the book of Judges. Well, we're on the threshold of chapter 3 and that's where we will pick up next time with the five lords of the Philistines but we'll close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the graphic way that it challenges us and brings us up to face our opportunities as well as our responsibilities as believers in this life and in this age. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress your truth on our hearts that we may be right dividers of your word and can accurately apply it in these perilous times.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

