

Let's resume our study here in the book of Judges. We're looking at these annotations at the beginning of chapter 10, and I would like to continue to suggest that there is significance in the history of Israel between the time of Moses and Joshua and the time of David. Moses brings the law. Joshua sort of fulfills the covenant promises that God made Israel through Moses in bringing them into the land and achieving victory and so on.

Then there is this period of time. The Exodus takes place in circa 1440–1445 BC, 40 years of wandering. You come down to the time of Joshua right around 1400 BC in the standard chronology, and then David is down real close to 1000. And so you've got this 300- to 400-year period that is covered in the book of Judges, and this is the interval between the Yeshua who fulfills and implements God's covenant promises to Israel in bringing them out of bondage, delivering them through the leadership of Moses, and ultimately carried on and fulfilled in Yeshua. Then you have David, and if you just think in terms of the large design in human history, you have the age of Israel and the law of Moses, you have the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it, and then there is an interval of time, and then ultimately we arrive at the Millennial Kingdom.

Why is there a gap between Joshua and David? I ask myself, after the people are in the land and they've conquered and have been assigned their territory, and they go in and they occupy and possess and they're removing the Canaanites and so on, why isn't it time for a king? Why does God have this intervening time where it just seems like Israel gets themselves in trouble, and it seems to be through a lack of leadership, through a lack of cohesion, a lack of—you get the idea that as long as they had strong leadership like Joshua, they did well, and the elders that served with Joshua, they did well.

Othniel, they did well. Ehud, they did not quite so good, and it's a smaller group, but they seem to tail off, and there's a vacuum of leadership. And God waits until they fail and then raises up this temporary leader, and then the cycle repeats. And we are coming up now to where we are having, as we look at Tola, the son of Pua, the son of Dodo, and as we look at Jair, the Gileadite, this brings us now to a total of seven judges.

I had a good question on the break. You know, do we consider Abimelech to be a judge? He is counted, although there's no mention made of God raising him up. He seems to have sort of taken the kingdom by force, as it were, by murdering his brothers and declaring himself the fulfillment of his name. "My father was the Melech, and so I'm going to be the Melech, and I'm going to rule." And he does for a period of time. He rules for three years before God raises up that ill spirit.

But there are so many echoes, and in Old Testament days this would have been opaque. It would have not carried the significance that, from our standpoint, we are able to observe. But think about it now: there is an intentional delay between entering into the land and establishing the kingship that we know God is ultimately going to establish. If God remains the theocratic ruler of Israel, how is there a David? How is there a son of David? How is there a throne promised to David and his descendants that will be *la-olam*, unto the ages, if the monarchy never comes into being? Moses himself in the law says there will come a time when you will have a king, and he needs to write down the words of this law, and you've got to watch out because he's going to multiply horses and things to himself and so on.

But why the gap? Why this interval? Well, the book of Judges details what goes on in that gap. And one of the things that we see is that the people of Israel are tested. What do you do when you're not being led? You are great followers. If I give you a strong leader like Moses or Joshua, but if I take the leadership away, what do you do? Can you dedicate yourself to the ordinances and the statutes and the judgments of the law of God without being dragged like an ox with a ring in its nose? They have demonstrated that they can follow when they are led, but can they sustain their identity and their relationship with God as His people without being driven or led or otherwise made to do so? And we see that they can't.

And God has to put in a temporary ruler just to try to bring them back. And as soon as that ruler dies, then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. He chastises them. They don't respond. God raises up a deliverer, and they will respond to the leadership of that deliverer for a while. But as soon as the deliverer loses his sway or goes astray or something else happens, away they go.

So what? What is this a picture of? What does it represent? If we try to, as I said at the end of the first lesson, if we try to finish our interpretational triangle here, we've observed: what is the interpretation and the application? What is the problem in Israel? What do they lack that we have? It's kind of a loaded question. The Holy Spirit

was not yet given because Christ was not yet glorified. What is being demonstrated here? The carnal mind does not understand the things of the Spirit. They are spiritually discerned.

We walk. We keep in step with the Spirit. He empowers us. He enables us. He leads us into all truth. With the presence of God's Spirit, we no longer need the formal sort of leadership that the nation of Israel, lacking the universal outpouring of the Spirit, required. We have to have leadership. And if the Spirit is not there, then it has to be of the monarchy or of the prophets or of the priests or someone. And that really is sort of a stand-in. It is a representation. The priesthood, the rulership function—this tells us the elements of the actual leadership that is going to come through the Lord Jesus Christ and through the Spirit of God, ultimately.

Jesus said, “Walk while you have the light. I am the light. I show you how to walk. You can see clearly how to walk because I am here.” Walk while you have the light, in John. Jesus is going to tell His disciples very soon, “I am going away, but I will send you another Comforter.” He will do what? Lead you into all truth. We need leadership. We have to be subordinate to the authority that God establishes. And without it, you have the book of Judges: temporary, dismal, half-hearted responses followed by even more grievous failures.

And we see this documented. And what we are going to see as we both review and move forward in this book is that the kinds of failure and the kinds—the nature of leadership, the aspects of leadership—that are shown in these judges are significant. But the timing is also significant.

Now think about it. You have the law with Moses brought to fulfillment, the promises of, “I will take you to the land of your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” That's done. Yeshua gets it done. There is a reason why Moses doesn't go across, and it goes beyond striking the rock. God worked that together, but I suspect under no circumstance would Moses have led the people in, because you do not inherit the promises through the works of the law. And that's what Moses represents.

People understand this. That's why Moses' face still is the face you see on the cover of the Experiencing God materials, because they have messed that up. That Experiencing God thing, as we have seen in detail, is spirituality by works. By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. Moses is not going to lead the people into the land. He can't. Symbolically speaking, it just doesn't work. You need Yeshua to take you into the land.

So, you have a picture there, sort of, of the first advent. This is what Yeshua does. “I have not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it.” Now, we want to get to the monarchy. We want to get to the days of David and the days of Solomon. There are two types of kingship represented. I'll talk about Saul in a moment. He's the first king of Israel, obviously. But we are looking for David. Jesus Christ is not the son of Saul. He's not from the tribe of Benjamin. The tribe of Benjamin was never intended to be the rulership tribe. It was never intended to be the source of kings. Nor was the tribe of Manasseh, nor was the tribe of Issachar, nor were any of these other tribes. So, we're trying to get from Joshua to David. That's what we're looking forward to. But there is this interval, and that's what we're studying here.

Now, the Tola episode, how Benjamin and Issachar, how brief it is, nevertheless, sums up for us, from our perspective, many of the key signature elements of the first advent. Worm, son of breath, son of my love, my beloved son, living in the town of thorns. Then you come to the second short episode, Jair, the Gileadite. We already looked up Issachar. What does Jacob say about the tribes that live on the far side in the land of Gilead? It's Issachar who goes in there, and his son Jair takes those towns. The son of Jacob associated with bearing burdens, with being the donkey, which is sort of the light tractor of the ancient world, the minivan of the ancient world. You put all your goods, you hang them on the donkey. That was their little SUV, their little hauling-of-stuff deal. You use a donkey.

But like the modern—if you try to go down and buy a new SUV or a new minivan, you've got to be relatively well off. Donkeys were also a sign of being wealthy. You get the idea that this Jair was moneyed. He was not a poor man. Just to feed 30 sons and whoever was the mother or mothers—I don't think one lady would have generated all those—so he must have had sort of a harem thing going on there. Multiple wives, 30 sons, all of them are old enough to rule a city, apparently.

But there is a picture here, and Jair, in a way, is perhaps foreshadowing this time of rulership. Abimelech is the false ruler. We are told in chapter 9 that Abimelech reigned over Israel in verse 22. “Abimelech reigned over Israel three years, and then God sent a spirit of ill will.” This is what's going to happen to the false ruler of this world in the tribulation period.

Tribulation period—if you look at the Israel clock, take out the church age—Yeshua comes, accomplishes and fulfills everything necessary to bring people into the kingdom, but the kingdom doesn't take place. There is a delay. And of course 2,000 years of that delay, from our perspective, is the church age. But even on an Israel calendar, subtracting the church age out, you've got that seven-year period between Jesus' 33rd birthday and His 40th birthday. And in that period, somebody else usurps rulership. Having slain the 70 sons of Gideon, Abimelech usurps rulership. That lasts for three years and some change, and then God sows this seed of destruction in the midst of that.

Then you have this recap. You have Tola and Jair. Tola speaks of everything that is subservient, that is worm-like, but yet is from God, associated with love, associated with breath, associated with thorns. He judges Israel 23 years, and he dies and is buried. Then you have Jair, a Gileadite, and he judges 22 years. The total of these two, obviously they are sequential, and that gives you 45 years. And he exercises rulership in Gilead. Gilead is a small portion of the land of Israel, just as Shamgar delivered a small portion, Jair is ruling over a small portion. And in his portion, everything is great. In Gilead, there are 30 towns with 30 rulers riding 30 donkeys, and they are all associated with Jair, Mr. Light. He dies and is buried in Kamon, which once again is height or rising.

What did Jesus teach during His earthly ministry prior to the cross as He traveled Galilee, as He traveled some of these very same areas? What did He teach? If you are faithful in a few things, you will be a ruler over many things. If you come to the light, if you walk while you have the light, if you recognize that this life is the light of men—we've seen this in the Gospel of John—if there is response, in other words, the plan and purpose of God, there is reward, there is rulership. So in these two judges, you have sort of the beginning and the end. You have the service under the burden of the law, the weight of the ordinances and so on, which is fulfilled in Christ. And then you have this other side where it's light and everything is rising. Kamon is upstanding, standing up like grain in the field.

Then there is a problem, though. We don't have David next, do we? But those are the sixth and seventh judge. The sixth judge: burden, thorns. Seventh judge: light and upstanding. And I think that's significant.

Then we have the story of Jephthah. In Jephthah, we're going to look at as just sort of a bookmark right now. He's there. Now look, there's a chapter and a half on Jephthah, so how long do you figure his influence over Israel is going to last? We've had 40 years, we've had 80 years, we've had 23 years, 22 years. How long do you think Jephthah, with all of this space devoted to him, is going to be judging in Israel? You have to go all the way over to the middle of chapter 12, verse 7. It says, "Jephthah judged Israel" how long? Six years. All of that sweat and labor in chapter and a half, it's six years. These other guys were 23 and 22 years. Jephthah's only six years, and yet look at the disproportionate amount of space that is dedicated to him, and there's a reason for that.

Then after Jephthah, we look at Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon. Now, Ibzan, his name means great fatigue. I'm tired. Six days, shalt thou labor and do all thy work, and then you get tired. So on the seventh day, you rest. Ibzan of Bethlehem—you know the origin of this name, and you know what it means, right? Beit is house, lechem is bread. It's a house of bread.

Six days, you labor and do all your work. You get tired and you get tired, and you do this because way back in the Garden of Eden, when God pronounced judgment on the episodes that took place with the eating of the fruit, what did He say to Adam? You're no longer going to be able to walk around and freely eat of every tree in the garden except the one. Now you have to do what? You will earn your bread by the sweat of your brow. And 6,000 years of human history are characterized by our labor and doing our assigned work, waiting for that seventh-day rest, the seventh millennium.

Ibzan, tired boy of Bethlehem, tired boy from the house of bread, judged Israel. He had 30 sons. He gave away 30 daughters in marriage and brought in 30 daughters from elsewhere for his sons. He judged Israel seven years. How long was Jephthah? Six years. And Ibzan judged Israel seven years. How long is Ibzan? Seven years. And you get the idea that there's something significant about the number seven, something significant about the number 30. Thirty sons, 30 daughters.

How many sons and daughters did Job have, by the way, when he first started out? How many did the house fall on? Seven sons, three daughters. After he goes through five chapters of dialogue, and the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning, and in his double portion where he has twice as many camels and twice as many yoke of oxen and twice as many she-donkeys, how many sons and daughters does he have? Seven more sons, three more daughters. These numbers are significant, aren't they?

In the same way that I told you last week, I'm going to save the names for this week. Well, I'm going to save the numbers for next week, but be thinking about it. You can puzzle this out. Think about these numbers. We've talked about the symbolic meaning of numbers, the biblical significance of numbers, in some of our previous studies. You know what seven typifies. You know what four typifies. You know what three represents. And multiples of three, like ten—ten is significant. You know what your hands represent. You know what three is associated with in terms of divine things. You know that four is the number of the earth. You know that seven is the number of perfection. Six is the number of almost there. That's the number of human, can't quite get there. God has to perfect it and make it seven. You take the three of God and you take the four of man and you put it together in Christ and you get the perfect seven. Things of this sort.

So Ibzan of Bethlehem, tired boy of Bethlehem, judges Israel. Thirty sons, 30 daughters. Gives away one set of daughters, gets back another set of daughters. Gives away 30, gets back 30. Gives away daughters, gets back daughters-in-law. What does he get for this trade? What does every parent of children get when they marry off their kids, generally? Grandkids. You can't marry your sisters and brothers together and get offspring. If you want your 30 sons to have any posterity, you've got to get rid of the sisters and bring in the wives. That's the idea.

So there's a plan here. We get these 30 sisters out, get them married off outside the house, bring 30 other gals in. Now it's very interesting because it says, "from elsewhere." He brought in 30 from elsewhere for his sons. Now where is elsewhere? Well, not from Bethlehem. What tribe are we talking about here? Who lives in Bethlehem? What tribe? If you've ever heard the Christmas story, you know that Bethlehem is smack in the area assigned to Judah. It's no accident that when you come to Ibzan with his 30 sons, he has sent women out, he has got women in, and they are brides for his sons.

If you start quoting Romans 8:28 and keep going, what happens? "All things work together for good to those who love God, who are the called according to His purpose, for whom He foreknew, them He predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be"—what? The Calvinists seem to get lost before they get to the end of that verse. Why did God predestine? Why did God foreknow conformity to the image of His Son? Why couldn't He just be happy with one son? He looked ahead and He made provision so that many, many could be conformed to the image of His Son. Why? What does it say at the end of that verse? "That He might be the firstborn among many brethren."

Do the sons of Ibzan here have many brethren? He gave away 30 daughters in marriage. He brought in 30 daughters from elsewhere for his sons. He judged Israel seven years. Then Ibzan died and was buried at Bethlehem. It's not hard to guess that if he's living in Bethlehem, he's from the tribe of Judah.

But what's missing in this scenario? What did we have with our previous guy, Jair? What did Jair's sons do? Jair had 30 sons also, right? What's the difference in Jair's sons and Ibzan's sons? Jair's sons ride donkeys and rule towns, right? Ibzan's sons do what? Get married, right? Now, you've got 30 sons in the former case, right before Jephthah, and the aspect that is being depicted there is rulership and prosperity. You're prosperous if you have a donkey to ride. You are a princely individual, and you rule a town when you're riding on this donkey.

So, looking at the prophetic value of this, what is going to happen to those who are associated with Christ in the days of the kingdom? They will prosper, and those who are faithful will rule. This is a promise to the Old Testament saints. Jesus says, "You've been faithful in a few things, I will make you ruler over many things," in His parable. And who's the audience? It's the Jews. He's talking about the kingdom. You may be least now, but you'll be greatest later. What does it mean to be greater in the kingdom? Rulership.

How about the church? How about the letters to the seven churches? "To him who overcomes, I will grant to sit with Me on My throne." Rulership. The one who is faithful here, I will make him ruler over ten cities, five cities, three cities. Rulership over cities is specifically spoken of by Jesus, both in the parables that He tells to His Israelite Jewish audience: "And you will walk with Me in white. You will sit with Me on My throne." Paul says, "Why do you contend with each other and try to take each other to court instead of settling your own differences? Do you not know that you will judge angels?" That's a rulership function. That's a leadership function. Paul says, "Look, some of you are going to be in a position to pass sentence, to render decisions where even angels are concerned."

So that rulership function, how does that come to us? Do we earn it or deserve it, or does it come to us through the Lord Jesus Christ? It's a rhetorical question. You know the answer. It's through Him. These sons of Jair ride donkeys in rural cities because of their father Jair, who is a reflection of virtual reincarnation of the first Jair

who conquered those cities in Moses' day. And there is a strong suggestion of the resurrection there. Jesus Christ is coming back. He serves the first time. He rules and reigns the second time. And these passages are just dripping with Christology, if I haven't already made that clear.

And so now when you get to Ibzan from Bethlehem, from Jesus' hometown, what does it say on Jesus' birth certificate for hometown? Where was He born? Bethlehem. Family is from Galilee, but God worked the circumstances out so that He would be born in Bethlehem, the city of David. And that's Ibzan's hometown. And Ibzan, Jair's function is to reflect that aspect of inheritance and association with the ruling Christ that speaks of sharing ruling authority, sharing prosperity, sharing that service and influence. If you think about it, ruling a town is not all it's cracked up to be, necessarily. It's a service. There are certainly probably perks to being the mayor of Dallas, but I wouldn't want that job. It's a grinding, demanding service-type of job. You have to love the city and want to try to do things for the city. They don't just hand you a Cadillac and a big gold hat and say, "Go ride around and wave in parades." It's a lot of work. And these 30 sons are serving to administrate that area in Gilead.

Now, Ibzan also has 30 sons, but now we're reflecting a different aspect. Nothing is said of donkeys. Nothing is said of cities. Here, this is the marriage, the wedding together of the sons with wives who are, some commentators believe, actually foreigners, perhaps Canaanites, Gentiles, because when it says they are from elsewhere, well, what does elsewhere mean? It means elsewhere than Israel, most likely. And these appear to be Gentile brides, which is fascinating in the light of the fact that Jesus is a Jew and He has a Gentile bride, doesn't He? Essentially. The church is neither male nor female, neither slave nor free, neither Jew nor Greek, but the vast majority of the church is not of Jewish extraction or Jewish heritage. And Jesus essentially has a Gentile bride, and He's son of Abraham, son of David, tribe of Judah.

So, isn't it interesting that we have the same number of sons, but here we have a different aspect. And what does marriage do? "For this reason shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." Paul goes to great lengths talking in Corinthians and other places about how those things that were disparate and separate and separated and estranged have been brought near and made one in Christ. And so these 30 sons reflect ultimately what the Lord Jesus Christ does, what God uses Him to accomplish, and what He fulfills in the Father's plan, both for Israel and ultimately for the church. We are brought to a place of prosperity. We are brought to a place of authority. We are brought to a place of fruitfulness, service, unity. "All of you be of one mind," the same mind that is in Christ Jesus. And that's what you see reflected here.

After him, Elon, the Zebulonite. Well, Elon is the word that means oak tree, the mighty oak. You know, the acorn doesn't fall far from the tree and that sort of thing. Elon, he is a Zebulonite. Now what do we know about the Zebulonites? Well, the Zebulonites—well, the name Zebulon, when you go back, means habitation. He gets his blessing from Jacob back at the end of Genesis along with the other brothers. You turn back to Genesis chapter 49. What does Jacob say about Zebulon? In verse 13, right after Judah, you get Zebulon. "Zebulon shall dwell by the haven of the sea. He shall become a haven for ships, and his border shall adjoin Sidon."

You think, "Oh, well, that's illuminating. What does that tell us?" Well, the thing that comes to my mind—and of course you can get hung up on salt water—but Elon reminds me of the tree being planted by the rivers of water. But this is salt water, isn't it? He's going to be by the sea, and ships are going to come in. Ships don't travel on the river, so I don't really think that pertains. I don't think we can say he's a Psalm 1 kind of a guy. Elon means oak, and he's from the tribe of Zebulon. Every word in these descriptions is significant. So what are we supposed to conclude? We suddenly have the tribe of Zebulon sort of appearing out of the traffic here, and what we know of Zebulon from Genesis is that he dwells by the haven of the sea, and ships come in.

Some of the greatest cities in the world are built around good harbors: San Francisco, New York, etc. What is the purpose of these places? What do they provide for ships? Why would you need a harbor? Why can't you just kind of pull up to the shore and send in your boats? What does the sea do that is unhappy for ships? The troubled sea. You want to get into a port, you want to get into a harbor to be sheltered from the vagaries of wind and waves, sea and storm, right? It's a haven. You've got the song, "The Haven of Rest." "I've anchored my soul in the haven of rest. I'll sail the wild seas no more."

So if Zebulon is going to dwell by the haven of the sea and become a haven for ships, what does the sea represent universally in Scripture? Chaotic forces of darkness. Zebulon is going to be that place where people come in from the storm, come in from the vagaries and the chaotic influences and the destructive winds and waves of the troubled sea. You come into the haven, and when you get to the shore, it's not a barren, inhospitable place. Zebulon is there, and Zebulon means habitation. There is a dwelling place. You can come in

from the sea and find rest. It's a haven of rest. It's a haven of habitation. That's what Zebulon is going to be: haven for those who have been wearily traveling the seas. You come in and rest.

So back to chapter 12 of Judges. Elon, the Zebulonite, and it's a tree. What are the booths made of for the Feast of Tabernacles? It's branches. It's tree branches. He's the tree. Now, what's interesting about this is, and we were talking about this earlier in the week when this came up in one of the sermons we were working on, but you remember the parable of the mustard seed? What does Jesus say? It's a real quick parable. Mustard, smallest of all seeds, when you put it in the ground, it grows to become a tall tree, and what? Birds come and roost in the branches. What do birds represent in Scripture? Well, just think about the parable of the sower. What happens to the good seed that hits the hard ground? Birds come and carry it away. Most of the birds are unclean. You know, the ravens that brought food to Elijah by the brook Cherith are unclean animals, and these unclean birds roost in the branches of the tree.

Zebulon, the mighty oak, the oak tree, standing there as a haven and a shelter from those who are in the vagaries of the storm when they come in. But who's out there constantly sailing the seas and associating themselves with the sea? It pains me to think about this, being an erstwhile naval service member, but if you make the sea your business, if you're just a sailor by trade, you're just out there mixing it up with the troubled sea all the time. So, yes, there is shelter for those who want to come in and escape that destructive force and the stormy conditions, but there are also those who are going to come in like the birds who roost in the branches of the tree. And you get kind of warning music playing under that scene, because in the kingdom, the birds who roost in the branches of the tree, they enjoy the shelter, but they are not fruit, they are not productive, they are not useful, they are not even clean. They just take for themselves benefits from the tree that stands there. And ultimately there's going to be so many that when Satan is released at the end of the Millennial Kingdom, that you have the Gog-Magog rebellion, and there are as numerous as the sands of the sea, and they surround the camp of the saints, and it's looking pretty dismal until God sends fire down and consumes them. But you have this tares amongst the wheat idea, and you have these that have come in. They seemingly have come in from the sea, and they're in the haven, but they are not a part of the tree, they are not fruit of the tree. It's kind of a little bit of ambivalence there. You're not real sure quite what the relationship is.

Elon the Zebulonite judged Israel ten years. Then he died and was buried at Aijalon in the country of Zebulon. Now, what's Aijalon famous for? Immediately, you can't help but think about Joshua. I believe it's chapter 19, if my memory serves. "Sun, stand thou still, and moon over the valley of Aijalon." This is the place where the good guys and the bad guys are hacking and slashing. Hail is coming down and destroying the bad guys. Joshua's army is destroying the bad guys, and they are given a supernatural extension of time to accomplish God's work.

Buried—died and was buried at—who died at Aijalon last time we were looking at this town? Did Joshua die and get buried at Aijalon? Did the Israelites die and get buried? Did we have any account of casualties in that battle? Who died at Aijalon and got buried? The Canaanites, who did not take the road that the Gibeonites took, that Rahab the harlot took, and many others took in joining with Israel and becoming a part of the people of God, died at Aijalon.

There is a choice all during the Millennial Kingdom, isn't there? Now we're in the Kingdom of the Maeve, we've passed that symbolic marker of the sons. We had sons before Jephthah, we had sons after Jephthah, we've seen these different aspects of inheritance and prosperity and rulership and blessing and peace in the land. It doesn't say they had to fight anybody, does it? Did Jair fight anybody in Gilead? He's living off the fruit of a victory that was won in Moses' day. Does Ibzan have to fight anybody for his sons to get married? No. He's at peace with the outsiders. He brings in their daughters and they get married because everybody's on good terms.

So when we get to Elon, and he ought to be perhaps a tree planted by the rivers of water, instead he's a tree planted by the sea. And he's a haven for ships. Well, is that a good thing or not? Kind of hard to know. You could play that either way. You could say, "Well, isn't it wonderful to rescue the perishing, care for the dying, let the lower lights be burning, some poor fainting seaman you may rescue, you may save?" All these hymns draw on this imagery. Maybe it's good, maybe it's not. And that's exactly what it's like in the Millennial Kingdom. There are wheat amongst the tares. Are these people genuinely coming to God through faith in Jesus Christ? Are they learning and growing through association with God's people and God's word and God's will? Or are they just playing the game? You don't find out until the end. A lot of them are playing really good poker. They look just like wheat until it comes time to count the production. Where is the grain? Where is the ear? Where is the fruit? And it isn't there.

And that's why the sheep and goats judgment is a works-based judgment, because faith is not an issue. If you're walking by sight, you can see the Lord Jesus, you can see the Davidic King, everything is open and in plain view. It's not a matter of faith, it's a matter of obedience. And obedience is measured in deeds. "I will show you my faith by my works." Deeds.

So, this Zebulonite dies and is buried at Aijalon. You think, "Wow, maybe that's not as good as it first appeared." But then, after him, Abdon, the son of Hillel. Now, the Hebrew word for slave is ebed, E-B-E-D, and it is crunched into the first part of that name. A-B-D, that's ebed. That's servant. Hillel is praise. It's kind of like Hallel. Hallelu-Yah. All of you people praise Yah. Hallelu-Yah. Hillel. And we went into this in some detail in one of our earlier studies about what Hillel actually means.

But Abdon, this is basically servant, the son of praise. Servant, the son of praise. If you look to God and you praise Him, you are motivated to serve. That's kind of the evocation of meaning here. The Parathonite judged Israel, 40 sons, 30 grandsons. I am going to suggest to you in the minute that we have remaining that this is suggestive of the kingdom of the Father. Seventy, as a perfection. You've come full circle. How many people did Jacob go down to Egypt with at the beginning of this whole thing? When it all began and Joseph brought his father down to Egypt, how many persons came down to Egypt? Seventy.

And now you come down to Abdon, to servant, the son of praise, and his sons and his grandsons. Comes full circle from Gideon, whose sons all died because they weren't—it wasn't time and it wasn't place and they evidently weren't ready. Now you've got sons and grandsons, 70 total, and they are all riding donkeys. Well, we'll pick up at this point next time.

But I hope I've at least been able to just lift the hem of the garment a little bit to show how meaty and significant these seemingly insignificant judges really are. And you can think about that in terms of our place in God's plan. Sometimes we think, "Well, I'm just one little American here in the midst of millions of people, and God wouldn't necessarily have anything going on special for me." Don't kid yourself. All of us are important. Everyone is precious in God's sight, and God's plan and purpose for each one of us, it's a lot like these guys. The notice may be small, but the significance can be huge. I think the Lord Jesus Christ in His youth, as He studied the Scriptures, learned an awful lot of what He knew studying this section of the book of Judges.

Well, we'll close here and pick up next time. Let's pray.

Father, thank You for the truth of Your word. Thank You for the wonderful, interesting way that it is presented to us. We pray that we will not only come to an intellectual grasp of what is said and what is recorded, but that God the Holy Spirit will minister it to our hearts in a way that will motivate us and encourage us to fulfill Your plan and purpose for our lives, that we can reflect Your glory, that we can be fruitful as branches connected to the vine. We will be pruned and bear more fruit and ultimately reflect Your glory in the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. We ask it in His name. Amen.