

Judges 08-07-11a

This is Friday, July the 11th. We're in the book of Judges, chapter 13, moving into chapter 14 tonight. We'll take a moment as we begin to go to the Lord in prayer.

It gives us a chance to focus our concentration and remind ourselves that there is an eternal component to every day of our lives. It is there potentially, and it's our job to redeem the time, to turn that which is earthly into that which has eternal significance and eternal value. Shall we pray? Father, we're grateful for this opportunity to spend time in fellowship together, to receive the blessings that come from our association, to receive blessing from those who are enthusiastic about your word and who are filled with your spirit.

We thank you for the opportunity to spend this time in the study of your word and to share our insights and our thoughts and to participate in the process whereby the members of the body of Christ are edified and built up in love. We thank you for the passage that is before us tonight and we ask your blessing on us as we study it together. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, Judges chapter 13 has introduced us to Samson. This is the seventh great cycle, if you recall, in the book of Judges.

We had the southern campaign with Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar. We had the northern campaign with Deborah and Beric. We had the central campaign with Gideon and then his son Abimelech doesn't quite count as a judge, but there's some history for him.

And then Tola and Jair. Then we had the eastern side with Jephthah, which we studied in chapters 10 and 11. Chapter 12 gave us some more happenings up in the north with Ibzon, Elon, and Abdon.

And now in this great section, chapter 13-16, we have the western story. Not western like a movie western, although it has just about as much action and about as much Peyton Place type drama and suspense. But it is the plains that begin in the foothills of Judea, extending all the way over to Jerusalem, and then west over to the Mediterranean Sea.

This is the area where the Philistines originally established their five cities, but they have encroached, they have moved eastward. Because they were not subdued, they were not destroyed, they were not defeated, and they were not eliminated according to God's command. This is the thing that happens in our lives.

You've heard me say many times that contrary to the belief of many Christians that the Old Testament is just kind of nice to have and tells you sort of where the Jews came from, but the main thing is the New Testament. The Old Testament is critically important for our understanding because everything you see in the Old Testament, particularly related to the nation of Israel, relates to the individual believer in the Church Age. As goes the nation in the Old Testament, so goes the individual in the New Testament.

We have been delivered from bondage to sin, just as they were delivered from bondage in Egypt. We have a sojourn, and those two generations, the first generation that dropped in the wilderness, and the second generation that crosses the Jordan and goes into the land, represent the two basic paths that our life can take. We never stand still.

We either advance, we move upward, or we descend and we move backward. As the Baptists say, we backslide, we slip downward. But if you've been to Dillard's or Sears or anything lately, and you've got those escalators, you'd have to work really hard to stay in one place.

You're either on the up escalator or the down escalator. And we pretty much choose whether we're in that first generation or second generation. So God gives us both of those pictures.

The entire book of Exodus, along with great portions of Numbers and Deuteronomy and Leviticus, teach us about that sojourn, what we ought to be doing, and what happens if we succeed or if we fail. Then Joshua and the conquest, as you come forward, how do you take possession of inheritance? For the nation in the Old Testament, it was the inheritance of the land. The picture for us as believers is seizing, laying hold of eternal inheritance.

It is the most wonderful thing. Think about it. We did our study of world religions a couple of years ago, and you remember in all of the different holy books, all of the different philosophies and faiths and religious systems, there is no power to convert time into eternity.

People can talk about karma, they can talk about yin and yang, they can talk about coming back as something bad if you're a bad person, coming back as something good if you're a good person, but it's all time-bound and it's all human-powered. One of the many unique things about the truth of our relationship with God is that God, through Christ, has given us the means of turning time into eternity. This is why Paul talks about redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Left to themselves, all of the days are a down escalator. You get to the end of a day, you have nothing to show for it. But Jesus Christ has given us the ability to take possession, and it's an eternal possession.

We're going to see some clues to that as we go forward in chapter 14, 13 and 14 tonight. But everything in the Old Testament is a picture. We've gone through Genesis, all 50 chapters together, and seen the archetypes and the origins of so many things, and the pictures of Jesus Christ from beginning to end, from Abel to Joseph, from the creative, let there be light and let there be life in the first chapter, to the bones of Joseph in a coffin in Egypt of the last chapter in Genesis.

We've been through Exodus, we've been through the Levitical offerings, we've visited great portions of Numbers and Deuteronomy, we've been through Joshua, and now we're in Judges. What does this tell us? Well, if you remember, and we're kind of taking a big forest view here for just a moment, but we know what Genesis represents, we know what Exodus represents, we

know what the choice is in the wilderness. Are you going to be victorious? Are you going to go with Yeshua and cross the river and take possession? Or are you going to drop in the wilderness through lack of faith? This is what the whole first three or four chapters of Hebrews is all about.

Let us not grow weary on that path, that narrow road through the straight gate that leads to life. It's easy to get discouraged, it's easy to get distracted. Wide is the gate, broad is the way that leads to destruction.

That's where most people are. We know better. We shouldn't be caught up in that great crowd heading to the wrong exit.

So, we know what those books represent. We know what Joshua represents. We're back to the successful people who have crossed and who need to take possession.

We've seen a secondary place of failure. I did a study one time years and years ago. This is before the advent of recordings, before the printing press, before chisels and stone, way, way back.

I did a study on the different decision points in our life. We make a decision when God the Holy Spirit faces us with the truth of the Gospel. We make a decision when God the Holy Spirit faces us with the truth of God's Word.

It's one thing to accept conviction of sin and recognize that we need a Savior and get the essentials of the Gospel and be saved. But the next decision point is, what are you going to do with the Bible? Do you recognize it as unique, as authoritative, as the Word of God, as God breathed, as the mind of Christ, as the essential food for the human soul, without which the soul and spirit cannot live, and cannot grow, and cannot transform and be acceptable in God's sight. We cannot be cleansed without the washing of water.

And the washing of water comes by the Word. We have an unwashed soul without the truth of Scripture. There is a lot of truth in the world.

A lot of people say, well, all truth is God's truth. They try to teach me that in seminary. All truth is God's truth.

So geometry and physics are just as good as Scripture. No, they're not. Geometry and physics do not cleanse the soul.

Geometry and physics are not God breathed. Men who wrote geometry and physics textbooks were not carried along by the Holy Spirit so that the content reaches into the eternal. Geometry is going to fade out.

The physics of this universe is going to be out of date. It's going to be defunct. It's going to be, what's the word for software that becomes passe? I can't think of it.

Obsolete. Obsolete. Physics, geometry, this universe, this is a little construct.

This is like when you first learn to play a video game like Pong or Tetris, and then you move on to something vastly more complex. Well, the rules and the controls for something simple just fade away. You may have brought a few lessons forward from it, but that's no longer pertinent.

That's what this world is like, and a lot of the truth related to this universe and even this life in terms of cause and effect in the human realm is going to pass away. This entire universe will be rolled up like a scroll. The elements are going to melt with a fervent heat.

This heaven and earth will pass, and everything associated with them is going to fade into memory. What will we take forward? People say, well, if I could be a missionary, if I could do something great, all we have to do is redeem the time day by day by day. That's what these Israelites are supposed to be doing.

In the book of Joshua, the first part is the story of that conquest, of going in and taking possession, qualifying to be assigned an inheritance. But we begin to see signs of problems toward the end of the book of Joshua, and now that we're in the book of Judges, we see that it's not enough to get there. You've got to stay there.

I think one of the most haunting sights that I have ever seen was going down the Bataan Peninsula to the island of Corregidor. If you know the story of the defense of Corregidor, General MacArthur was there, a lot of troops were there, the Japanese assaulted it through everything they had at it. There was this heroic defense of that island under General Wainwright, and they were slaughtered, they were decimated.

They yanked MacArthur out on a submarine with his wife and his son. I've been there. I had the privilege of taking about a three-hour trip down the Bataan Peninsula, got in a little bunga boat, a little tiny water level at the Gunnels canoe thing with a little motor in one end and a little Filipino guy.

If that guy had weighed ten more pounds, we would not have made it across. I guess they're used to taking little Filipinos across, and you put an American in there. I honestly thought we were going to swamp, and they could only take one guy.

My buddy Bob Brown went in one bunga boat and I went in another. We got totally soaking wet, but it was a nice day. We went all the way across to Corregidor.

There was nobody there, no tour guides. It's just the fact of the island. It's just the remnants and the relics of what happened there.

We hiked up the hill, and we went to where the base had been. It's overgrown with jungle trees. You can stand there where there once was a street and look to your left, and here's what was a movie theater.

Very obviously, the marquee and the shape of it, and the windows where people took tickets. This had been a base. Before everything got all embattled, it was a place where people lived.

They had a movie theater there. You could look right through the door into where the seats were. The seats were still there, but there's all of this jungle growth growing up.

Where the screen had been was a giant hole. The entire top of the building had been bombed away. On your right, there's a barracks.

You go in, it's got that same government lime green paint halfway up, light switches on the wall, iron bunks with springs. It's just eerie. I was there 40-something years after World War II.

Everything is there, but it's abandoned. You think of all the people that died in the defense of that. You think of the vast strategic struggle that was going on at the time, and how important it was to hold that ground.

You think about the men who were captured under General Rainwright, who were forced to surrender, and who went through the Bataan Death March, and the hundreds and hundreds that died, and those who died later in imprisonment, and the very few who survived that whole ordeal. It's just haunting. You go to Battery Geary and Battery Crockett, these emplacements, vast guns bent and twisted, and blown off of their foundations, and laying there all of this time.

They're there to this day. Some of the ammunition is still sitting there. The stuff is alive.

Maybe it's not there now. It was there when I went. There's been no American cleanup.

It's not a national park. It's not like Gettysburg. It's just sitting there.

You think about the passing of time, and how a great struggle can go on, but what is it for? Is it meaningless if now that the war is over, and the strategic value has passed, the blood that was shed, the effort that was put in, the lives that were lost, it's a vastly deserted island now. It once had such importance. Things in this life are so transient.

How can we make our lives count for something? The great thing that we learn from looking at the Old Testament, and that is explained in great detail in the New Testament, is that Jesus Christ has given us a way so that every one of the days of our lives can count. We don't have to wait for a great conflict. We don't have to wait for a World War II.

We don't have to wait for a defense of Corregidor. Every single day, with small decisions, with expressing faith in the promises, and the principles, and the doctrines of the Word of God, tests of our patience, tests of our judgment, tests of our perception, tests of our willingness to seize opportunities. We are like the people in the days of Joshua, and in the days of the judges.

We are in the land. The battle has been won. We can lay claim to the things that Jesus Christ won for us on the cross.

And by faith, we maintain possession. By faith, we seize and hold. Philistines don't come in and drive us off the land.

Midianites don't come in and drive us out of our cities. We don't have Sisera and Jabin coming in from the north. We don't have incursions from the south.

We don't get surrounded and pried off of this territory. We seize it and we advance and lay claim to something. And it's not just sort of a happy thing to have in this life.

If we could even glimpse for ten seconds what eternity is going to be like and how valuable it will be to possess the inheritance that is described in the New Testament, eye has not seen, ear has not heard, it has not entered into the heart of man. The things that God has prepared for those who love Him. Love is a thing that has duration.

It's a relationship that has persistence over time. And love for God that persists over time and reflects itself in faith and daily obedience and recovery when we fail, that's what makes us partakers of an eternal inheritance. This is what's going on in the book of Judges.

Why is the book of Judges in here? It's a bunch of interesting stories. You've got the left-handed guy with the sword. You've got the guy over here with the lamps and the pitchers.

It's all interesting. It makes a great children's Bible story book. But why are we looking at it? It is to remind us all these things were written for our instruction, the New Testament says.

What are we supposed to be instructed about with Samson, with Gideon, with Jephthah, with Deborah and Barak and all of these other stories in the book of Judges? Don't lose your inheritance. Jesus Christ is Yeshua. Yeshua has led the faithful into victorious possession of inheritance.

But you can lose it. Those of us who are long-time students of the Word of God, we say, well, you know, I'm not too worried about the eternal future because I've been doing this stuff a long time. Complacency, a sort of creeping indifference, assuming that everything is okay when maybe it isn't.

This is how Israel lost their land. Do you know where the Philistines are? The Philistines started out over in Gath and now they're at the foothills of Jerusalem. They have encroached.

They have crept all the way across. This area that we see at the end of Judges 13 and the beginning of 14, this used to belong to Dan. It used to belong to... It's right on the border between Dan and Judah.

But the Philistines hold it. How did that happen? They've crossed an entire tribal territory and they're nibbling away at the borders of Judah where the ruling tribe of Israel is supposed to be. So all of this is in view.

Because of that, every detail in these stories is really important. And we've slowed down and

spent a great deal of time. You wouldn't think that we could spend so many weeks just on Samson's parents.

We don't even know his mother's name and we've been here for two or three weeks. But we're going to move out of 13 and into 14 tonight. But I want to point out one more thing before we go.

Actually, two or three things. You remember the story. She gets the message.

There's all of this interchange. She tells her husband. The husband prays.

God sends the messenger back. He comes to her again. She goes and gets him.

Brings him there. Reiteration of the message. The guy is basically kind of slighted.

He's sort of insulted. He is belittled in a sense by the messenger because he is so useless to the equation. He can't be used for anything.

God can't work through ignorant people. And he is so ignorant, he can't be used for anything. His wife has a little bit more on the ball.

She's got her problems. But she at least recognizes a messenger from God when she sees him. She can remember enough of the message to get the job done.

But even she is very emblematic of the poor spiritual status in Israel at this time. But it doesn't mean that God can't work. God can always work.

And this is another point of application. We tend to look maybe at churches or denominations and really see their flaws and their failures. Don't count them out.

God can work. If God waited for us to have everything figured out, He couldn't work anywhere. And if He can work in our lives, and we've got things screwed up, He can work in anybody's life where there is even a spark, even a hint, even the ghost of faith.

God can work. A grain of mustard seed faith, God can move mountains with it. And that's what He's going to do here.

So, we left off last time, Manoah says, What is your name, so that when your words come to pass, we may honor you? The angel of the Lord said to him, Why do you ask my name, seeing that it is wonderful? And we looked at that term, which is something incomprehensible. It's pili. We saw it over in Psalm 139.6, the knowledge of God.

It's incomprehensible. It's unattainable. And it certainly is when you have no foundation.

Even the simplest truths are unattainable if you've got nothing to build on. That's why the author of Hebrews in chapter 6 talks about, we shouldn't have to lay again a foundation. Now, the Lord's messenger says, Don't fix me a meal.

I'm not going to eat it. But you can make an offering to God. So, this is where we pick up now in verse 19.

Manoah took a young goat and a grain offering and offered them on a rock to the Lord. The Lord's messenger did an amazing thing as Manoah and his wife watched. As the flame went up from the altar toward the sky, the Lord's messenger went up with it, went up in it, while Manoah and his wife watched.

Well, there's a lot of information here, believe it or not. Let's start with the instruction to offer an olah. Now, we just had the word olah in the previous story of Jephthah, where he promised that he would make an olah out of the first thing that met him.

Well, now, the next instance of olah that we have in the Bible, in the very same book, is very clearly an offering by fire. Of course, you can see why people might just simplistically say, well, an olah is always made by fire. But, the angel says, Though you detain me, I will not eat your food.

But if you offer an olah, you must offer it to the Lord. Offer an olah to the Lord. Well, this pretty much forces anybody going through the story to think about the offerings.

You remember Levitical offerings, and all we have to remember at this point is Leviticus chapter 1 and Leviticus chapter 2. Leviticus chapter 1 is the olah, the whole burnt offering. Some of the salient points that you may remember about that offering, what is the purpose of the olah in Leviticus chapter 1? What is its purpose? It is to be accepted. To be accepted.

To express thanks. To express the desire for and the status of acceptability before God. It is an offering of oneself.

The issue here is, where do I myself stand before God? It is a voluntary offering. It's not a mandatory offering. It doesn't say any time you sin, offer the olah.

The olah is a voluntary, it is a free will offering. So when would an Israelite offer the olah? When he wants to express his wholehearted dedication to God. I want to be acceptable in your sight.

Read Psalm 51 where David talks about against thee and thee only have I sinned. Purge me with hyssop that I may be clean. Wash me that I may be whiter than snow.

This is what Paul refers to. Paul had in mind the Leviticus chapter 1 olah when he wrote Romans 12, 1 and 2. Present your bodies a living olah. Holy, acceptable unto God.

Holy and acceptable. That's the concept of the olah. It's voluntary.

Offer yourself. The bull, the goat, whatever took the form of the offering, that was the substitute because obviously you can't send yourself up on the altar literally. So it's done symbolically.

In the same way that in the sin offering the animal is going to figuratively bear sin, here the animal figuratively is wholly dedicated to God. Sent to God in the smoke. This animal belongs wholly to God.

You don't eat a part of it. You don't keep a part of it. The head, the entrails, everything.

Up it goes. It's a whole burnt offering. Now that's important to this story because what is the problem in Israel? Nobody's got this attitude.

That's why they're losing their inheritance. The concept of the olah has been lost. This guy, Manoah, his thought isn't praise be to God for ending my wife's barrenness and bringing deliverance to Israel.

Manoah's thought is feed the messenger. And that's what we've got in the church today. Lots of enthusiasm in making much over the messenger.

Feed the messenger. Pay the messenger. Put a big house and a nice car underneath the messenger.

We want him to look nice. We want him to be famous. We want him to publish books.

We want him on the dust jacket. We want him on the radio. We want him to be interviewed on TV.

We want him to be the go-to guy. It's all about the messenger. And I bet right now that you can name twelve prominent Christian voices in this country because we're all about the messenger.

Can you as quickly name twelve principles from God's Word that guide our lives each and every day? Can you sit down in five minutes and name twelve principles that should have guided the way we lived our life this morning? We can name messengers. Can we remember the message? That's the question. When Noah wants to feed the messenger, the true messenger of God says, No, don't do that.

You can keep me around here as long as you want. I'm not going to eat your food. If you want to offer something, get your eyes back on the source.

Get your eyes on God. Offer God an olah. There ought to be whole national dedication to God.

There ought to be whole individual dedication to God. And there's not. But Noah doesn't know how to offer an olah.

And this is sort of a field expedient olah, as we used to say. This is kind of your poor substitute for an olah. You don't have Levites.

You don't have the tabernacle. Remember the olah was supposed to be brought to the door of the tabernacle, the offerer. There are things that the priests are supposed to do.

There are additives that are supposed to go along with this sacrifice. There's a ritual that is supposed to accompany it. All of that's gone.

This olah, all we've basically got is the animal and the offerer. God accepts it anyway. Why? We'll see that in a minute.

So this is the first thing. Offer an olah. So Manoah gets a young goat that he was going to make goat burger or breaded goat or goat and gravy or something for the messenger.

Well, instead, the whole goat now goes on the rock. He doesn't have an altar, so it's a flat rock. So he's got the goat there and it says with the grain offering.

With the grain offering. Well, this brings us to Leviticus 2. What's the story on Leviticus 2? And the minka. Olah is chapter 1. Minka is chapter 2. What do you remember about the minka? Both of these, by the way, are sweet savor offerings.

Remember the concept of the sweet savor? The sweet smell? What is that a reference to? God communicates to man through prophets, through angels, through verbal communication, through dreams and visions. God communicates. What is man's communication back to God? It is the sweet savor coming back to God.

It is obedience. The only way you can send a sweet savor to God is to follow God's instructions. God just doesn't say, hmm, something good on the stove tonight down there in Manoah's house.

It's when it is an offering. It's when it is offered in the right way according to God's instructions. For example, this minka, this grain offering that is mentioned next, Manoah takes the young goat with the grain offering.

He's got his olah and now he's got his minka. The minka is always offered as an adjunct. It is always offered accompanying the burnt offering.

Always. There is never a grain offering by itself. Never.

You can't offer a grain offering unless you are also offering a burnt offering. Now, why is that? Well, what does the grain offering represent? The grain offering is a representation of works. Everything about the grain offering is works.

There are four components to the grain offering. We don't have time to review Leviticus 2, but you may remember there are four parts in a grain offering. What's the first part? Flour.

Not grain. It's called a grain offering, but it's not grain, it's flour. What do you have to do to grain to turn it into flour? You have to manipulate it.

They did this kind of thing by hand. They had rollers. They had mills.

They had a mortar and pestle kind of thing. You could beat grain into flour. You could grind it into flour, but unless you were in a commercial thing and had a millstone, people in small portions did this by hand.

So it has been worked. It is grain that has been worked by the sweat of your brow. It's work.

The second component besides the flour is oil. What does oil represent universally throughout Scripture? What is olive oil all the way through the Scripture? It's the Holy Spirit. This is God's enablement.

This is God's grace. This is God's support. You wouldn't have the grain.

You wouldn't have the ability to offer it if it were not for God and His grace. Oil is the oil of the Holy Spirit. What's the third component? Frankincense.

What does frankincense represent? Always, always, always, whether you go to the tabernacle in Exodus and Leviticus, whether you go all the way to Revelation, what does incense represent? It explicitly tells you in Revelation. It's the prayers of the saints. This is prayer.

Everything about this is something that you take hold of. You get the olive oil. You mix it with the flour, which you have gotten from the grain and made into flour with your hands.

It's all about works. But our works are useless if they are not enabled by God's Holy Spirit, if they are not done in prayer. And what's the fourth ingredient? Flour, oil, frankincense.

Anybody remember the fourth? No offering goes up without salt. Salt. What does salt represent? This takes a little bit of thought, but it's fun to think about.

You think about all the different things we eat. We eat vegetable. We eat meat, most of us.

We eat honey. We eat a lot of things. But everything we eat has a common denominator.

It's organic. The food we eat is organic. The spices that we eat are organic with one exception.

What's the one thing we eat that's not organic? You can find it in the tomb of the pharaohs and it's just as good as if you go down and get it out of a can of Morton's at the store. Salt. Salt is unchanging.

It's eternal. Salt is forever. In the mind of the ancient world, anything else, organic, is going to deteriorate.

It's going to disintegrate. It's going to go away. It's going to spoil.

It won't keep. But salt, because it is inorganic, it's permanent. And it imparts permanence.

You salt meat, you salt things, and they are preserved. It imparts permanence. And so salt comes to represent eternity, permanence.

Why is it called the salt of the covenant? Because God's covenant with Israel is an eternal covenant. It's permanent. It's unchanging.

It partakes of something that does not change, that is not perishable. Flour, oil, frankincense, salt. That's the minkah.

And you know what it tells us? Remember even in the New Testament, it tells us over in Colossians, I think, let your conversation be seasoned with salt. What does that mean? Well, just put a little spice in it or tell a little zinger every once in a while. What does it mean? Conversation seasoned with salt.

And notice it's a seasoning. To me, it's a great concept because we spend a lot of time talking. We talk about all kinds of things.

We talk about politics. We talk about current events. You know, there's a saying, I've heard it attributed to Eleanor Roosevelt and also to the father of the nuclear navy, Admiral Hyman G. Rickover.

But it's really just an old saying. And it says that there's different kinds of conversations. Small minds talk about people.

Average minds talk about events. And great minds talk about ideas. I'm sure you've heard that.

Well, what kind of conversation do we have? It's fun. It's great. Conversation is a great art.

We converse. We talk. Now you email or blog or text or whatever you do.

And it's great. You can talk about all kinds of things. But if your conversation is seasoned with salt, there is an eternal aspect.

At some point, something will come up that reflects your Christian perspective, your spiritual understanding, your scriptural viewpoint will be reflected at some point. It just takes a dash of salt to make a whole conversation worthwhile and to give it some lasting value and some permanence. Because it has come from a soul that is sensitive to eternal things.

That's what it means to have your conversation seasoned with salt. When you offer the minkah and it has salt, this means that the works that you have done had an eternal component. You might have just mowed the lawn.

Maybe you just made a pot of food. Maybe you washed the car. Maybe you did an errand.

Maybe you took care of somebody or somebody took care of you. But whatever is done, if it is done with an eye on eternity, if it is done out of a heart that is motivated by hope, that is operating in faith, that is manifesting love, the triad of Christian virtues, that is a minkah seasoned with salt. If it's done prayerfully, there's your frankincense.

If it is a faithful and obedient work of your hands, you've got that flower. That grain is ground. It reminds me of my mother.

I always wanted my brother Matt to mash the potatoes because he did such a thorough job. No lumps. Things came out just like whipped cream.

I could never do that. And so poor Matt always got stuck with mashing the potatoes because he did it so well. By the way, sometimes you'll see the phrase in Scripture, fine flour.

Fine flour was flour that they had taken extra time to make sure the grain had been carefully washed, that it had been sifted, and that it had been carefully ground, and ground so that there weren't any large particles in it whatsoever. Fine flour. So this is diligence and dedication and attention to detail in doing a thing in an obedient and thorough way.

Oil. Making sure that in our case, the Holy Spirit is a part of everything that we do. That's the minka.

And what does it mean now that the minka is never offered without the ola, without the burnt offering? Why can you not just offer the minka by itself? Who's the first guy that ever tried that? And what did God think of it? Cain brought a minka without an ola. That was his mistake. The ola represents dedication of self.

The minka represents dedication of what you do. You cannot offer what you do to God if you yourself are not squared away, if you yourself are not wholly dedicated, if you are not fulfilling the first and greatest commandment to love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. Your works are useless.

Your sacrifices become a stench in God's nostrils. Ola has to come first. That's why it's in Leviticus chapter 1. It's even before the sin offering.

It's a voluntary offering. It's something we choose. It's something we decide.

It's part of our volition, as is the minka. But the minka is never offered apart from the ola. Never.

That's what's going on here. In this one verse, looking at Manoah, does Manoah do these right? Is there salt in these? Is there frankincense? Has oil been mixed with the grain offering? Probably not. Things are in such a decrepit spiritual state that this offering cannot be acceptable to God.

There's no Levite. There's no tabernacle. There's no proper altar.

But you know what happens? Because God is at work, the messenger enters into the smoke of that offering and carries it to God and makes it acceptable. He is the one who overcomes all of the human shortfalls because at least Manoah brought it. He didn't have to.

The angel said, if you're going to make an offering, offer it to the Lord. Manoah did. It's that mustard seed of obedience, that tiny particle of faith, one of the last vestiges in all of Israel.

God is going to use this to bring Samson into the picture. This tiniest shred of doing it right. It's all wrong.

It's all messed up. You think about churches that you can look at and think, that's all messed up. There are boxes of Kleenex, bands and cymbals and drums.

This is all screwed up. God can't be here. Listen, if there is one person with a particle of faith anywhere in that church, God can work.

And our messenger, our intermediary, is the Lord Jesus Christ. And His proxy for us now is God the Holy Spirit. And He enters in.

Remember what Paul says again in Romans about we don't know how to pray as we ought? We can't get our frankincense up into the third heaven. But God the Holy Spirit translates our prayers with groanings that cannot be honored. God the Holy Spirit is God's messenger to us.

He goes up in the smoke of our poor and imperfect offerings. And He makes it acceptable to God. God is painting a picture here for Israel.

If you would just try, if you would just have the smallest amount of obedience, I will graciously fill in all of the gaps, all of the shortfalls. God will make it work anywhere that there is faith, anywhere that there is obedience. Now should we linger and stay in an infantile and immature mode like that and have God constantly send His messenger up in the smoke? No.

It's an earnest. Because look again at Hebrews 6. Not laying again the foundation. We don't want to be the end of Hebrews 5. Babes who can subsist on only milk.

We want to grow out of that and reach the standard of a mature man like Ephesians 4. But God is willing to start wherever we are. The smallest amount He will work and He will graciously provide and we can start that momentum and start that forward progress. We can begin to partake.

We can begin to claim and reclaim our inheritance. Well, this is a good place for us to pause and take our break. When we come back, we'll move on into the results of this, the conversation Manoah and his wife have and then on into chapter 14 where we get into the career of Samson itself.