

PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

JUDGES

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INTRODUCTION:

Judges is the seventh book of the Old Testament. It follows Joshua and precedes Ruth. The book introduces the military leaders known as judges whom God raised up to deliver Israel from oppression. They were divinely appointed and empowered and did not rule by heredity (inheritance). While the author is not indicated by the text, Jewish tradition has always ascribed it to Samuel the prophet, and rightly so, since he was the major spiritual figure of the time of the judges.

The recurring theme of the book of Judges is spiritual apostasy. Several cycles of compromise-apostasy-oppression-repentance-deliverance occur throughout the book. In many ways judges is the opposite of Joshua. Under Joshua's leadership, Israel strictly obeyed the commands of the Law and won constant victories. By contrast, during the time of the judges, Israel forsook the Law and compromised with her enemies and toleration of and coexistence with the enemy replaced their desire for total victory. They reaped the painful consequences of their disobedience.

¹The two books of Joshua and Judges begin with two very symbolic pictures in the death of two very symbolic characters. Firstly we read that the events in the book of Joshua occur 'after the death of Moses'. Moses is forever associated with the law of God, and as such is a picture here showing that entry into the Promised Land can only occur after his death. So who could take them in to the Promised Land and into their inheritance? Joshua! whose name means 'Yahweh is Salvation.' As Moses is a picture of the Law, so Joshua is a picture of both Jesus Himself, and of true faith in the grace and salvation of God. By faithfully obeying the Lord, Joshua led the Israelites to victory.

SYNOPSIS:

But here in **Chapter 1 of Judges**, the book starts with the words '**after the death of Joshua**', and in a very real sense, goes on to portray that which happens when the Joshua type of faith has died.

After the death of Joshua, there was still land to be taken from the Canaanites. The nation of Israel went to receive instructions from the Lord. God was with Judah and Simeon and they defeated the city of Bezek and took its king, Adoni-bezek. He was made to suffer the same torture he had inflicted on others (70 kings)—he also loss of his thumbs and big toes (**vv1-6**). According to God's instructions for conquering the Promised Land, he should have been

¹ <http://www.jesusplusnothing.com/studies/online/judges3.htm>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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killed. Judah had conquered Jerusalem and massacred its people, setting the city on fire (**v8**). Jerusalem in the period of the judges was occupied by the Jebusites (**1:1-8**).

The tribe of Judah, under the leadership of Caleb, conquered Hebron, which became the early Judean capital. Caleb promised to give his daughter Achsah to be the wife of the man who would take the city of Kirjath-sepher —city of books or scribes (known now as Debir,) (**1:9-13**).

²Judah was able to conquer the major cities and mountainous region of Philistia, but the people in the valleys proved too formidable because of their iron chariots (**vv16-19**). Although Judah initially took Jerusalem (Jdgs.1:8), it evidently regained its freedom (**v21**) and remained under Jebusite control until the time of David (2 Sam.5:6-9). Ephraim and Manasseh were able to capture Bethel (**vv22-26**), an important city in patriarchal history (Gen.28:10-19). The conquest of Canaan was a long-term endeavor which started under Joshua's leadership. In the time of David, portions of the land remained under enemy control (**1:16-26**).

Six tribes failed to conquer their land. Manasseh, Ephraim, Zebulun, Asher, and Naphtali were unable to conquer important Canaanite cities; even when they grew stronger, they didn't drive out the Canaanites but put them to forced labor instead. If the enemy is allowed to remain in one inch they will ultimately make a slave out of the "Believer." The situation had become so bad in Israel that the Tribe of Dan could not even live in the valley or plant crops therein; they were virtual prisoners in their own land. Dan would later choose to relocate rather than fight to claim its land (Jdgs.18:1-31). The coast of the Amorites is given (**1:27-36**).

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² <http://www.sundayschoolservice.org/files/Bible/JUDGES.pdf>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

SYNOPSIS

Warnings and Weeping at Bokim.

2:1-5 The angel of the Lord (actually a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ—God appearing in a human form) **came up from Gilgal**. Now this is very important! Whenever the Israelites made a binding agreement with God, He kept His promise. This specifically mentions where the angel of the Lord was before He came to where the people were now at this time. He came up from Gilgal. Gilgal means "*the rolling away*." It was the memorial site between Jordan and Jericho; it was where Joshua was last seen. And He came to Bochim, which means "*weeping*", "*lamentation*" and "*wailing*". He declared that they should make no allegiance with the inhabitants of Canaan and throw down their altars, but Israel's inability to drive out all of the Canaanites was a result of its disobedience and compromise with those pagan nations. And now instead of celebrating with victory, they are now in a state of weeping and wailing. The people responded with a public display of sorrow after the angel of the Lord had spoken. It seems that the people repented; however, it was obvious that their repentance was shallow.

2:6-10 Joshua's Victories. Now we go back to the days of Joshua. After the land was divided among the tribes in the time of Joshua, it was necessary for them to occupy the territory assigned to them in order to maintain it. The people are reminded of the faithfulness that characterized Israel as long as Joshua was alive. The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders which clearly indicates the success of his leadership. Joshua died and was buried in the border of his inheritance, Timnath-heres, in the Mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash, at the age of 110 years. There was a new generation that knew not the Lord or His works that He had done for Israel.

Israel's Apostasy

2:11 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim:— Extending from verse 10 "*And*" is a continuation about the generation that knew not God. This generation of Israelites abandoned the faith of their parents, and began worshiping the gods of their neighbors. Many things can tempt us to abandon what we know is right. The desire to be accepted by our neighbors can pressure us into behavior that is unacceptable to God. They forsook God; His worship; neglected His tabernacle, and did evil in the sight of the Lord serving Baalim.

2:12 And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger. God was the one that brought them out of the land of Egypt. God led them through the wilderness, and provided for them there, and brought them into the Land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey; but all these mercies were forgotten by them. Their apostasy—their complete forsaking and falling away from God provoked God to anger. Four things that provoked God to anger:

1. Doing evil (**2:11**).
2. Forsaking Him (**2:12-13**).
3. Following other gods (**2:11-13**).
4. Bowing down to other gods (**2:12**).

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2:13 And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroeth. Two images they served: Baal and Ashtoreth. ³What was the attraction of "Baal" worship? Baal was the god over the weather and nature for the Canaanites; he was essentially the agricultural god. In an agricultural society, people served Baal because they wanted good weather for abundant crops and flocks; the bottom line with Baal - personal wealth. What was the attraction of "Ashtoreth" worship? Ashtoreth was the Canaanite goddess of love, sex, and fertility; she was usually "worshipped" by having sex with a "priestess" who was a prostitute. The bottom line with Ashtoreth was sex, love, and romance. You will forsake that that you're not close to, to get to something temporary. They were not close to the Lord anymore.

GOD'S ANGER AND HIS LOVE

2:14 And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. From verse 12 to verse 14, the Lord's anger grew "hot!" Nothing is more provoking to God than idolatry. Since idolatry was regarded as a breach of covenant with the God of Israel, His anger was expressed against them by allowing them to be delivered into the hands of "spoilers" (invaders who plundered them; band of raiders). They could no longer stand before their enemies. After being plundered, God allowed them to be "sold" (to fall into the power of; to be surrendered or given over to; as to sell a daughter in marriage or slavery) into the hands of the enemy.

2:15 Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil, as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed. God kept the pressure on them, for their wickedness which kept them distressed. Their neglect of the covenant which bound them to the Lord also bound them together and caused them to present a divided front to their enemy invaders. No matter where they went, the battle went against them because the Lord's hand was against them.

2:16 Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. However, the Lord chose and raised up judges that were sent to help and deliver Israel out of the hand of their enemies who plundered them. God will always send the right people to turn us from our destructive ways. He sent judges to deliver these same Israelites out of the hands of their enemies that invaded them with power.

2:17 And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the Lord; but they did not so. God's compassion by sending the judges was dismissed by the Israelites. The people still would not adhere. God went out on a limb for them, and they wouldn't even listen to the judges He had sent.

The Word says "**they went a whoring**"; *they disrespected and dishonored God; went astray; loving other gods; prostituted themselves to other gods; bowing down before them and committing spiritual adultery and infidelity.* Why would the people of Israel turn so quickly from their faith in God? Simply put, the Canaanite religion appeared more attractive, and offered more short-range benefits. One of its most attractive features was that the people could remain selfish and yet fulfill their religious requirements. • Sex outside of marriage • Selfishness • Oppression of the helpless. These were not only allowed, but were encouraged as forms of worship by the other gods. They could do almost anything they wished and still be obeying at least one of the many Canaanite gods. The apostasy into Baal worship also tended to decentralize the strength of the nation.

³ http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=2&contentID=7530&commInfo=31&topic=Judges&ar=Jdg_2_13
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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But we have to realize that **Faith** is in the "**One True God.**" The essence of sin is selfishness. The essence of faith in God is selflessness. The Israelites broke their faith with Jehovah; left the path of their ancestors; and abandoned the path of obedience Their deliverance was short lived. They did not follow their fathers' example.

2:18 Then And when the Lord raised them up judges, then the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the Lord because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them. These judges were empowered by God, in that God was with them to lead the Israelites against their oppressors. ...**for it repented the Lord** does not mean that God changed His mind about the need for allowing the oppression, but rather that He felt "*sorrow*" or "*grief*" or "*compassion*" for their agony (for their pain and anguish). In other words, the author is merely indicating that God was not pleased, but it was necessary lest they continued in greater sinfulness. Since God's covenant with Israel was conceived of in the terms of a marriage, spiritual adultery was all the more serious. It was like an attempt on the part of Israel to break her vows to Yahweh, her spiritual husband. Without proper spiritual leadership, the church would go into a downward spiral which would lead to apostasy. Although God appoints a man over a congregation, our main leader should be God!

2:19 It came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way. The cycle continues: judges are raised up and the Israelites repent, and because of their cry of sorrow, God delivered them, as long as that judge lived. But when the judge died, the people turned, and they behaved worse than their ancestors. We tend to follow the same cycle—remaining loyal to God as long as we are near those who are devoted to Him, but when we are on our own, the pressure to be drawn away from God increases.

2:20 And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He said, Because that these people had transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and had not hearkened unto my voice. Israel had not obeyed the Lord, and He was very angry with them. They had even transgressed; disobeyed God's Covenant; God's agreement which He had made with their fathers before them.

2:21 I henceforth will not drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died. And these other nations that were still in the land remained when Joshua died, but God says He will not force them out.

2:22 That through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not. Well, God had decided to use those nations that were left in the land to test Israel's people. So, now God will see whether they will obey Him as their ancestors obeyed, or they will not.

2:23 Therefore the lord left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered them out of the hand of Joshua. The Lord had allowed these nations to remain. He didn't even force them out hastily, nor allow Joshua to defeat them.

SUMMARY:

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2:11-13 Extending from verse 10-"*And*" is a continuation about the generation that knew not God. This generation of Israelites abandoned the faith of their parents and began worshipping the gods of their neighbors. Many things can tempt us to abandon what we know is right. The desire to be accepted by our neighbors can pressure us into behavior that is unacceptable to God. They forsook God, His worship, neglected His tabernacle, and did evil in the sight of the Lord serving Baalim. God was the one that brought them out of the land of Egypt. God led them through the wilderness, and provided for them there, and brought them into the land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey; but all these mercies were forgotten by them. Their apostasy—their complete forsaking and falling away from God provoked God to anger. Four things that provoked God to anger:

5. Doing evil (2:11).
6. Forsaking Him (2:12-13).
7. Following other gods (2:11-13).
8. Bowing down to other gods (2:12).

Two images they served: Baal and Ashtoreth. What was the attraction of "Baal" worship? Baal was the god over the weather and nature for the Canaanites; he was essentially the agricultural god. In an agricultural society, people served Baal because they wanted good weather for abundant crops and flocks; the bottom line with Baal - personal wealth. What was the attraction of "Ashtoreth" worship? Ashtoreth was the Canaanite goddess of love, sex, and fertility; she was usually "worshipped" by having sex with a "priestess" who was a prostitute. The bottom line with Ashtoreth was sex, love, and romance. You will forsake that that you're not close to, to get to something temporary. They were not close to the Lord anymore.

2:14-16 From verse 12 to verse 14, the Lord's anger grew "**hot!**" Nothing is more provoking to God than idolatry. Since idolatry was regarded as a breach of covenant with the God of Israel, His anger was expressed against them by allowing them to be delivered into the hands of "**spoilers**" (invaders who plundered them; band of raiders). They could no longer stand before their enemies. After being plundered, God allowed them to be "**sold**" (to fall into the power of; to be surrendered or given over to; as to sell a daughter in marriage or slavery) into the hands of the enemy. God kept the pressure on them, for their wickedness which kept them distressed. Their neglect of the covenant which bound them to the Lord also bound them together and caused them to present a divided front to their enemy invaders. No matter where they went, the battle went against them because the Lord's hand was against them. When the people repented and turned again to the Lord, He raised up judges; He sent help, who delivered them out of the hand of their enemies. These judges were empowered by God to lead the Israelites against their oppressors. Some judges are only mentioned briefly. "Mercy" has been defined as not giving a person what he deserves. This is exactly what God did for Israel and what he does for us. When we pray we are asking for what we do not deserve. God shows both sides of Himself by showing what He does—when we turn from Him and when we repent unto Him—when we're disobedient and when we're obedient. He shows His anger toward us and His love for us. He knows how to let us see ourselves and He knows how to let us see Him. He will send the right person to turn us from our destructive ways. 16 The Lord chose and raised up judges that were sent to help and deliver Israel out of the hand of their enemies who plundered them.

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spiritual adultery and infidelity. Why would the people of Israel turn so quickly from their faith in God? Simply put, the Canaanite religion appeared more attractive, and offered more short-range benefits. One of its most attractive features is that the people could remain selfish and yet fulfill their religious requirements. • Sex outside of marriage • Selfishness • Oppression of the helpless. These were not only allowed, but were encouraged as forms of worship by the other gods. They could do almost anything they wished and still be obeying at least one of the many Canaanite gods. The apostasy into Baal worship also tended to decentralize the strength of the nation. Faith in the "One True God" however, does not offer short-range benefits that appeal to our sinful human nature. The essence of sin is selfishness. The essence of faith in God is selflessness. 18 These judges were empowered by God, in that God was with them to lead the Israelites against their oppressors. God's repentance is not like our repentance, but He felt "*sorrow*" or "*grief*" or "*compassion*" for their agony (for their pain and anguish). **Verse 18 says, for it repented the Lord because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them.** It does not mean that God changed His mind about the need for allowing the oppression, but rather that He felt "*sorrow*" or "*grief*" or "*compassion*" for their agony (for their pain and anguish). In other words, the author is merely indicating that God was not pleased, but it was necessary lest they continued in greater sinfulness. Since God's covenant with Israel was conceived of in the terms of a marriage, spiritual adultery was all the more serious. It was like an attempt on the part of Israel to break her vows to Yahweh, her spiritual husband. 19 The cycle continues: judges are raised up and the Israelites repent, and because of their cry of sorrow, God delivered them, as long as that judge lived. But when the judge died, the people turned, and they behaved worse than their ancestors. We tend to follow the same cycle—remaining loyal to God as long as we are near those who are devoted to Him, but when we are on our own, the pressure to be drawn away from God increases.

2:20-23 20 Israel had not obeyed the Lord, and He was very angry with them. They had even transgressed; disobeyed God's Covenant; God's agreement which He had made with their fathers before them. 21 And these other nations that were still in the land remained when Joshua died, but God says He will not force them out. 22 Well, God had decided to use those nations that were left in the land to test Israel's people. So, now God will see whether they will obey Him as their ancestors obeyed, or they will not. 23 The Lord had allowed these nations to remain. He didn't even force them out hastily, nor allow Joshua to defeat them.

APPLICATION:

Turning to another source will never yield the best source. God is always our best source! Hadn't He been there many times to revive you from trouble? His help is always available to us during good and bad times.

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SYNOPSIS:

At the beginning of **Chapter 3:1-4 of Judges**, we learn that because of the Israelites' disobedience, there were enemies that remained among them. God used it to test the youth of Israel so they could exercise faith and obedience. There was a new generation that had not experienced the wars of Canaan. The nations that God permitted to stay had a twofold purpose: **First**, to chasten the Jews, **Second**, that through these nations, Israel might learn how to fight. By now the younger generation which had not fought in the great battles of conquest was coming of age. It was their job to complete the conquest of the land. There were many obstacles yet to be overcome. Perhaps God has left obstacles in your life—hostile people, difficult situations, baffling problems—for the purpose of allowing you to develop faith and obedience. The **five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites that dwelt in Mount Lebanon, from mount Baalhermon unto the entering in of Hamath.**

- The five lords of the Philistines refers to the leaders of the five city pentapolis of Askelon, Ashdod, Ekron, Gath, and Gaza which formed the centralized Philistine government.
- The reference to all the Canaanites refers to the various tribes which were especially strong in the Valley of Esdraelon
- Sidonians refers to the inhabitants of the Phoenician city-state of Sidon, to the north on the Mediterranean coast.
- The Hivites that dwelt in Mount Lebanon refers to the Horites, or Hurrians who established the kingdom of Mitanni in upper Mesopotamia in about 1500 B.C.
- Mount Baal-hermon was later known simply as Mount Hermon and is the more easterly range parallel to Lebanon, running from Damascus.
- Hamath was on the Orontes River, about 150 miles north of Dan.

Following Christ leads to possessing the promise. And to possess the promise you will have to get rid of the enemies; you will have to fight!

3:5-8 The Israelites discovered that relationships affect faith. The men and women of the surrounding nations were attractive to the Israelites. Soon they intermarried and the Israelites accepted their pagan gods. This was prohibited by God. Their cycle always began with **the children of Israel doing evil in the sight of the Lord**, serving Baal and Asheroth idols. ⁵God sold them into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia. Now this was the first nation that would take charge over Israel. God gave Israel just what they wanted. They didn't want to serve God, so He allowed them to be in bondage to a pagan king. Israel reaped exactly what they sowed for 8 years. After the eight years of bondage Israel finally cried out in dependence on God.

3:9-11 When they cried out to the Lord, He raised up for them a deliverer. **Othniel** (*Caleb's nephew*) (1:13), was **Israel's first judge**. He was to lead the nation back to God. The name Othniel means the "power of God."

The Spirit of the Lord took control of Othniel and the Lord delivered Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand. The land had **rest forty years**, but then Othniel died.

⁵ http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=2&contentID=7531&commInfo=31&topic=Judges
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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3:12 And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord: and the Lord strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord. Now once again, Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and God raised up Eglon, king of the Moabites, an enemy of Israel and allowed Israel to be conquered because of their evil done in His presence.

3:13 And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek, and went and smote Israel, and possessed the city of palm trees. As the Lord strengthened Eglon king of Moab, there were allied armies with him (the Ammonites and the Amalekites). These three tribes (Moabites, Ammonites, and the Amalekites) were nomadic tribes that lived near each other. This was the first time nations outside of Canaan attacked the Israelites in their own land. As they gathered forces together, they defeated Israel and took possession of Jericho which is called "*The City Of Palm Trees*" because of the many springs surrounding the city provide irrigation to the land producing lush vegetation.

3:14 So the children of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years. And for the next 18 years the Israelites were required to pay crushing taxes to King Eglon of Moab, because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord. It went from eight years to eighteen years. Their bondage became much longer. Do you think God has gotten their attention yet?

3:15 But when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised them up a deliverer, Ehud, the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man lefthanded:— This is the second time in this chapter that the children of Israel has cried unto the Lord (also in verse 9). ⁶When Israel had forgotten their need of God, the Lord does two things; **First**, He allows them to be defeated by that which their own hearts were being drawn to – prideful independence. **Second**, God raises up another Deliverer who will remind them again of the power of God and their constant need to looking and relying upon God for His power in their life. Yes, they cried out again to God, to counteract the eighteen year oppression under king Eglon.

God raised up **Ehud, the second judge**, a left-handed Benjamite. The name Benjamin means the "*son of my right hand*". ⁷Ehud's being himself left-handed reminds us of Christ's willingness to take the place of weakness and servitude, doing all in the power of the Holy Spirit, and in complete submission to the Father. God uses a left-handed judge that probably grew up thinking his left-hand was a curse, and turns it into an advantage.

His being described as "**the son of Gera**" continues to direct our attention to attributes of Christ, for "*Gera*" means the "*cud*"; "*a grain*"; "*sojourning*." The cud always speaks of rumination (*reflections; ponderings*) or meditation on the Word, particularly of strength derived from such meditation. The Lord's whole life was not only governed by God's Word, it was the fulfillment of that Word.

"**Ehud's**" name means "**I will give praise**", or "**I will give thanks**." When you fail to praise God, God has to send praise back to His people. They had not been thankful nor giving God praise because they failed to remember that there is power in praise and there is power in thankfulness.

3:15b ...By Ehud, the children of Israel sent a present or tribute unto Eglon, king of Moab:— This means they paid their yearly tribute to the king of Moab because they were under his domination. And according to Eastern custom, it was presented with great ceremony so as to impress both the oppressed and the oppressor

⁶ <http://www.jesusplusnothing.com/studies/online/judges5.htm>

⁷ http://www.greenmeadows-stillwaters.com/types_ehud_the_benjamite.htm
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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regarding their respective positions and relationship to each other. In this move, it was a clever way for Ehud to gain entrance to see the Moabite king.

3:16 But Ehud made him a dagger which had two edges, of a cubit length: and he didn't gird it under his garment upon his right thigh. Bound to Ehud's right thigh under his garment is a dagger he made. This dagger had two edges; was of a cubit length. It refers to a short cubit, i.e., the distance between the elbow and knuckles of a closed fist; therefore, it was about twelve to fourteen inches long. **The purpose:** assassination of the Moabite king! The right-handed warriors would bind their short swords on their left thighs, to draw them across their body for battle. The bodyguards of the day had gotten used to only patting down the left sides of visitors. God was using his "*handicap*" as an advantage.

3:17 And he brought the present unto Eglon king of Moab: and Eglon was a very fat man. Ehud carried the present; the tribute in his right hand. The people let him go where the king was. They did not think that he was dangerous. Eglon was described as a very fat man, indicating the need for the length of the dagger(about 12-14 inches long).

3:18 And when he made an end to offer the present, he sent away the people that bare the present. It is serious business to be used by God to bring deliverance and blessing. Those who are most used of God have paid a price to do so. After the official presentation of the tribute, Ehud dismissed the entourage that bare the present so they would not be blamed for what he was about to do. This gave chance for the unexpected.

3:19 But he himself turned again from the quarries that were by Gilgal, and said, I have a secret errand unto thee, O king: who said, Keep silence. And all that stood by him went out from him. They had gone as far as the quarries and **Ehud turned again from the quarries** (graven images, or idols) giving indication that when he had passed them, he was safe from the Moabites. Thus, it has been suggested that they marked the limits of the Moabite territory that was near Gilgal. Ehud was outside the city at the quarries sending his companions on and he turning back to seek and request a private audience with the king himself. Nobody expected anything different. Eglon probably thought Ehud had brought a special bribe to him in addition to the tribute. The king responded with the statement **keep silence** meaning "*hush*," and all of the king's attendants withdrew.

3:20 And Ehud came unto him; and he was sitting in a summer parlour which he had for himself alone. And Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee. And he rose put of his seat. The Moabites had evidently built a summer pace for their king between old Jericho and Gilgal. The king went into his summer room. This was on the roof of the house. It was cool there and he was alone. Ehud told the king that he had a message from God. The message was for the king only. This message was actually his dagger, which he was carrying on his right thigh. Eglon stood up to hear God's message.

3:21 And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly:— Ehud reached with his left hand, took the double-edged dagger from his right thigh and plunged it deep into the belly of king Eglon. Ehud killed him when he stood up.

3:22 And the haft also went in after the blade; and the fat closed upon the blade, so that he could not draw the dagger out of his belly; and the dirt came out. The blow to the abdomen was so quick and powerful that the blade and "*haft*" (handle) went in entirely into the abdomen, so that the fat closed upon the blade. There was no way to

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pull the dagger out. The "dirt", spoken of here, was the "excrement" that came out of his stomach, or "bowel." The thrusting of the blade was enough to kill Eglon immediately before he could warn any of his servants.

3:23 Then Ehud went forth through the porch, and shut the doors of the parlour upon him, and locked them. Ehud escaped through the porch, shutting the door, and locking it. The writer gives us his escape route after killing him!

3:24 When he was gone out, his servants came; and when they saw that, behold, the doors of the parlour were locked, they said, Surely he covereth his feet in his summer chamber. ⁸When Ehud was discreetly gone through the porch, and out of the palace, the servants of Eglon, who had been put out, came to the parlour door to reassume their former place, and finish their business with the king, or in order to wait upon him as usual. They saw that the door was locked from the inside and thought that the king had locked it. Having no suspicion, they thought the king was just relaxing or the phrase: "Surely he covereth his feet in his summer chamber" meaning "to go to the bathroom."

3:25 And they tarried till they were ashamed: and, behold, he opened not the doors of the parlour; therefore they took a key, and opened them: and, behold, their lord was fallen down dead on the earth. Thinking he had gone to the toilet, the king's servants were slow to find him, until they were "ashamed", meaning, "they waited until the point of confusion". Then they discovered what had happened after finally opening the door with a key. The king was lying dead on the floor. By then, Ehud had gotten away with a clean escape.

3:26 And Ehud escaped while they tarried, and passed beyond the quarries, and escaped unto Seirath. ⁹The hours that the king's door was locked, gave Ehud ample time to get away. He escaped to Seirath. In the mountain of Ephraim.

3:27 And it came to pass, when he was come, that he blew a trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mount, and he before them. Ehud blew the trumpet of war in the mountain of Ephraim because the Lord through him would deliver Israel. Again, the Lord had sent them a leader who would go with them into battle.

3:28 And he said unto them, Follow after me: for the Lord hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand. And they went down after him, and took the fords of Jordan toward Moab, and suffered not a man to pass over. Ehud led, but he had to have followers. He said unto them, "Follow after me: for the Lord hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand. And they went down after him, and took the fords of Jordan toward Moab, and suffered not a man to pass over." The Israelites immediately took the fords of Jordan, meaning they cut off the shallow water fords across the Jordan which would be used as an escape route by the fleeing Moabites. Ehud stationed his men at the river crossing and didn't allow anyone to cross the river. Notice that not one of the Israelites lost their life when God was the one to do battle.

3:29 And they slew of Moab at that time about ten thousand men, all lusty, and all men of valour; and there escaped not a man. Trapping the Moabites on the west bank of Jordan, the Israelites killed ten thousand men; a

⁸ <http://www.searchgodsword.org/com/geb/view.cgi?book=jud&chapter=003&verse=024>

⁹ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/judges/03.html>

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serious loss for the Moabites, thus ending their oppression of Israel. It says they were all "*lusty*" meaning "*healthy and vigorous*"; "*all men of valour*" meaning "*skillful and valiant*" men. And they were the best and choicest of all the king of Moab's forces. And not one escaped!

3:30 So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest fourscore years. Moab was subdued by the Israelites. The country was cleared of these oppressors, and the land had rest for eighty years.

3:31 And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad: and he also delivered Israel. Then the Philistines threatened Israel from the other direction. This time God sent Shamgar, the third judge, to deliver His people. He did it single-handedly by killing 600 Philistines with an ox goad. And he became Israel's champion.

SUMMARY:

So once again, Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and God rose up Eglon, king of the Moabites, an enemy of Israel and allowed Israel to be conquered because of their evil done in His presence. As the Lord strengthened Eglon king of Moab there were allied armies with him, the Ammorites and the Amalekites. These three tribes (Moabites, Ammorites and the Amalekites) were nomadic tribes that lived near each other. This was the first time nations outside of Canaan attacked the Israelites in their own land. With their gathered forces together they defeated Israel and took possession of Jericho which is called "*The City Of Palm Trees.*" And for the next 18 years the Israelites were required to pay crushing taxes to King Eglon of Moab, because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord. It went from eight years to eighteen years. Their bondage became much longer. Has God gotten their attention yet? (**3:12-14**).

The children of Israel cried unto the Lord. To counteract the eighteen year oppression brought on by Eglon, God raised up a deliverer by the name of Ehud, who would be the second judge. "*Deliverer*" can also mean Saviour. Ehud, a Benjamite, means "*son of the right hand*", however, Ehud was a left-handed man. It seemed that the Benjamites had many warriors who were left-handed. Ehud was chosen to take Israel's tribute before king Eglon. He had carefully planned the assassination of the king by sneaking in a 14 inch dagger. It was hidden underneath his garment upon his right thigh. They had gone as far as the quarries and Ehud turned again from the quarries. Pretending to have a secret message from God for the king, he aroused the king's curiosity and secured a private audience with him. Ehud approached the king as if to reveal the message. Eglon stood up to hear God's message (**3:15-20**).

Ehud reached with his left hand, took the double-edged dagger from his right thigh and plunged it deep into the belly of king Eglon. Ehud killed him when he stood up. ^{v22} The blow to the abdomen was so quick and powerful that the blade and "*haff*" (handle) went in entirely into the abdomen, so that the fat closed upon the blade. There was no way to pull the dagger out. The "*dirt*", spoken of here, was the "*excrement*" that came out of his stomach, or "*bowel*." The thrusting of the blade was sufficient to kill Eglon immediately, before he could warn any of his

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servants. ^{v23} Ehud escaped through the porch, shutting the door, and locking it. The writer tells us everything about how he killed him! (3:21-23).

¹⁰When Ehud escaped through the porch, and out of the palace, the servants of Eglon, who had been put out, came to the parlour door to reassume their former place, and finish their business with the king, or in order to wait upon him as usual. They saw that the door was locked from the inside and thought that the king had locked it. Having no suspicion they thought the king was just relaxing or **Surely he covereth his feet in his summer chamber** meaning "*to go to the bathroom*" ^{v25} Thinking he had gone to the toilet, the king's servants were slow to find him, until they were "*ashamed*", meaning, "*they waited until the point of confusion*". Then they discovered what had happened after finally opening the door with a key. The king was lying dead on the floor. By then, Ehud had escaped (3:24-25).

¹¹The hours that the king's door was locked, gave Ehud ample time to get away. He escaped to Seirath. In the mountain of Ephraim, he blew the trumpet of war because the Lord through him would deliver Israel. Again, the Lord had sent them a leader who would go with them into battle. Ehud led, but he had to have followers. **He said unto them, Follow after me: for the Lord hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand. And they went down after him, and took the fords of Jordan toward Moab, and suffered not a man to pass over.** The Israelites immediately took the fords of Jordan, meaning they cut off the shallow water fords across the Jordan which would be used as an escape route by the fleeing Moabites. Ehud stationed his men at the river crossing and didn't allow anyone to cross the river. Notice that not one of the Israelites lost their life when God was the one to do battle (3:26-28).

Trapping the Moabites on the west bank of Jordan, the Israelites killed ten thousand men; a serious loss for the Moabites, thus ending their oppression of Israel. It says they were **all lusty** meaning "*healthy and vigorous*"; **all men of valour** meaning "*skillful and valiant*" men. And not one escaped! And they were the best and choicest of all the king of Moab's forces. ^{v30} Moab was subdued by the Israelites. The country was cleared of these oppressors, and the land had rest for eighty years (3:29-30).

APPLICATION:

God knows what we need. The how sometimes come from Him in unexpected sources that always work for our good

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¹⁰ <http://www.searchgodsword.org/com/geb/view.cgi?book=jud&chapter=003&verse=024>

¹¹ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/judges/03.html>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

4:1 And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, when Ehud was dead. After the death of Ehud, the eighty year period of rest came to an end. The cause of Israel's crisis was apostasy (*the falling away from the truth*). It returned to Israel, and the Israelites old evil ways and habits resumed in the presence of God.

4:2 And the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host was Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles. There were consequences for Israel's apostasy. It says that the Israelites were sold into the hand of king Jabin of Canaan whose headquarters was in Hazor by God. You can say the Lord permitted His people to be subjected to Jabin, a Canaanite king—their enemy. There were two kings of Hazor named Jabin (*a king of Hazor in Galilee* defeated by Joshua—Josh.11:1-14 and *the Canaanite king of Hazor*--Jdgs.4:2. Jabin might be known as the official title name of the king of Hazor, and not a personal name. His commander of the Canaanite army was Sisera dwelling in Harosheth of the Gentiles.

4:3 And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel. For 20 years Israel was oppressed as Jabin's 900 chariots were too much for them. The alliances with idolatrous nations drug Israel into grievous sin. And because of Israel's sin that led to this crisis, they cried to the Lord. Why did Israel wait until times of emergency to call on the Lord? And why do we neglect the things of God until the hour of crisis?

4:4 And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time. At this particular time, their fourth judge, Deborah was also both Israel's prophetess and Israel's first and only woman judge; and the wife of Lapidoth. She was a well-respected leader. The wayward Jews were like her children, and she welcomed and counseled them. Some other prophetesses in the bible were: • Miriam (Ex.15:20) • Huddah (2 Kgs.22:14) • Noadiah (Neh.6:14) • Anna (Lk.2:36) • The four daughters of Philip (Acts 21:9).

4:5 And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. Prophetess Deborah lived in Mount Ephraim traveling between Ramah and Bethel to sit under the palm tree to whom the children of Israel would come up to her for judgment. She held court deciding arguments, legal matters, and matters of justice for the children of Israel. God placed her in the position to pronounce judgment, something only men were always appointed in leadership role to do. But, we see that God was in charge of this appointment. The "*palm tree*" symbolized grace and elegance and became known as "*the tree of Deborah*." We know that Palm Branches were used to symbolize praise as Jesus entered Jerusalem on his way to the cross.

4:6 And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedeshnaphtali, and said unto him, Hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded, saying, Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun?— Barak, a military commander whose name means "*lighting*", the son of Abinoam was summoned by Prophetess Deborah where she questions him: "*Hasn't the Lord God of Israel commanded you to go to Mount Tabor with an army of 10,000 men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun?*" Undoubtedly, God had spoken this to Barak and she is reminding him.

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4:7 And I will draw unto thee to the river Kishon Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his charlots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand. Continuing from verse 6, God's Word to Barak was that God would be the One to draw Sisera to the Kishon River. And God would lead and deliver Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army along with his chariots and his multitude into Barak's hand, which would be a win; a triumph for Barak.

4:8 And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go. But, Barak was not willing to go into battle alone, unless Prophetess Deborah was willing to go with him. And if she was not willing to go with him, then he wouldn't go.

4:9 And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour; for the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh. Therefore, Prophetess Deborah agreed to go into battle with him, but she didn't deceive him about the journey. She prophesied that the final glory and honor of this mission would not go to him (a man), but the Lord would bring down Sisera selling him into the hand of a woman who would thereby get the honor. Sisera would fall into God's trap. The verse does not tell why Barak, a military commander would not go into battle at the Word of God, but needed the Prophetess to accompany him. But we do know that Prophetess Deborah was a well-respected leader and counselor who encouraged the people to obey God, and also showed that she did not waver in her obedience to God. At their coming together, both Prophetess Deborah and commander Barak together arose and went to Kadesh.

4:10 And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and he went up with ten thousand men at his feet: and Deborah went up with him. Barak summoned the 10,000 men out of Zebulun and Naphtali tribes and they went up to Kedesh and Prophetess Deborah went up with him.

4:11 Now Heber the Kenite, which was of the children of Hobab the father in law of Moses, had severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, which is by Kedesh. Heber, the Kenite was a descendant of Jethro, the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law. He had separated himself and his wife, Jael from the other Kenites, and pitched his tent in the plain of Zaanaim which is near Kedesh in the territory of the Tribe of Naphtali.

4:12 And they shewed Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to mount Tabor. Sisera heard that Abinoam's son, Barak had gone to Mount Tabor.

4:13 And Sisera gathered together all his charlots, even nine hundred charlots of iron, and all the people that were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles unto the river of Kishon. Sisera gathered his army and his nine hundred chariots, and all the people that were with him, and came from Harosheth to the Bank of the Kishon River.

4:14 And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which the LORD hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: Is not the LORD gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him. Deborah told Barak that *Today God will give Sisera into his hands, Is not the LORD gone ahead of you?* So Barak led his 10,000 men down Mount Tabor.

4:15 And the LORD discomfited Sisera, and all his charlots, and all his host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; so that Sisera lighted down off his chariot, and fled away on his feet. With the edge of 10,000 swords of Barak's men, the Lord completely struck terror in Sisera, defeating all his chariots and his army. However, Sisera got out of his chariot and fled away on foot.

4:16 But Barak pursued after the charlots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles: and all the host of

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Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword; and there was not a man left. Barak then chased the chariots and army as far as Harosheth-Haggoyim of the Gentiles. Israel's army killed all the armies of Sisera, and nobody remained alive; none escaped.

SUMMARY:

After the death of Ehud, the eighty year period of rest came to an end and the Israelites did evil in His sight. God sold the children of Israel into the hand of king Jabin of Canaan, who mightily oppressed them for 20yrs., that they then began to cry out to God (**4:1-3**).

Deborah, the wife of Lapidoth was both Israel's prophetess and its first and only woman judge. She was the fourth judge to give judgment and counsel. She lived in Mount Ephraim traveling between Ramah and Bethel to sit under the palm tree and hold court deciding arguments, legal matters, and matters of justice as the children of Israel came up for her judgment. Prophetess Deborah sent for Barak, Israel's military commander to go toward Mount Tabor, where God would draw Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army including his chariots and his multitude to the river Kishon where God would deliver them into his hand (**4:4-7**).

However, Barak answered that as long as Prophetess Deborah would go into battle with him, he would go. But, if she didn't go, he would not go. Prophetess Deborah assured him that she would go, but that the honor of Sisera's capture would not go to him, but fall into God's trap, thereby, selling Sisera into the hand of a woman. The honor would go to a woman instead of a man. Both Prophetess Deborah and commander Barak together arose and went to Kadesh. Barak summoned the 10,000 men out of Zebulun and Naphtali tribes to accompany them (**4:8-10**).

Sisera heard that Abinoam's son, Barak had gone to Mount Tabor, so he gathered his army and his nine hundred chariots, and all the people that were with him, and came from Harosheth to the Bank of the Kishon River. Deborah told Barak that *Today God will give Sisera into his hands, Is not the LORD gone ahead of you?* So Barak led his 10,000 men down Mount Tabor, and with the edge of their swords, the Lord completely struck terror in Sisera and defeated all his chariots and his army. However, Sisera got out of his chariot and fled away on foot. Barak then chased the chariots and army as far as Harosheth-Haggoyim of the Gentiles. Israel's army killed all the armies of Sisera, and nobody remained alive; none escaped (**4:12-16**).

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SYNOPSIS:

According to Judges 5¹² Deborah and Barak sang a song that day. The song appears to have been written by Deborah. It was common for the Israelites to commemorate special occasions with songs. While there were no books in those days, songs would be sung for generations and the events described in the songs would long be remembered. It was a way to tell stories. The writing style of the Bible switches here from historical narrative to poetry with the following song:

**5:1-2 When leaders lead in Israel,
When the people willingly offer themselves,
Bless the Lord!**

Here Deborah is praising God because the leaders of Israel were able to lead a voluntarily united army of Israelites into battle and the glory belongs to God.

**5:3 Hear, O kings! Give ear, O princes!
I, even I, will sing to the Lord;
I will sing praise to the Lord God of Israel.**

Deborah is telling all the great and powerful people of the earth, the kings and princes to take notice and listen to the praise that she gives to God, for no matter how great men are on earth, they must take notice of God as the Most High.

5:4-5 Lord, when You went from Seir, when You marched from the field of Edom, the earth trembled and the heavens poured, the clouds poured water; the mountains gushed before the Lord, this Sinai, before the Lord God of Israel.

It is hard to know exactly what reference Deborah is talking about, whether when the Israelites defeated Sihon and Og or other times. But the Lord, God is the true God who made the earth tremble at Sinai when He gave the law to Israel. God is a God who controls all the powers of nature, he makes the earth tremble (Psalm 18:7, Isaiah 64:1, Exodus 19:18), the heavens pour water, and the mountains melt (Psalm 97:5).

5:6-7 In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were deserted and the travelers walked along the byways. Village life ceased, it ceased in Israel, until I, Deborah, arose, arose a mother in Israel.

From the time of Shamgar (who killed 600 Philistines with an ox-goad in Judges 3:31) to Jael (who just killed Sisera with a tent peg Judges 4:20) God had abandoned Israel. No one traveled on the highways because civilization had broken down and trade was not safe. Anyone carting goods for sale along the highways was placing themselves in danger of thieves and other trouble makers. God was not with Israel and Israel lived trapped in captivity. The captivity of Israel was so bad that Israel cried out and God made Deborah a prophet in Israel and she viewed herself as a mother to Israel.

5:8-9 They chose new gods; then there was war in the gates; not a shield or spear was seen among 40,000 in Israel. My heart is with the rulers of Israel who offered themselves willingly with the people Bless the Lord!

¹² Taken from www.bibleoftheday.com
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Deborah clearly states that the cause for Israel's problems was that they chose to follow new gods as one would choose a new outfit and when they went whoring after other gods. God abandoned them and there was war. Even though there were no weapons of war in Israel, there were leaders who rose up with all willingness to fight against their oppressors and the people followed those leaders. Deborah said her heart is with those leaders and she expresses her appreciation to God for them.

5:10-11 *Speak, you who ride on white donkeys, who sit in judges attire, and who walk along the road. Far from the noise of archers, among the watering places, there they shall recount the righteous acts of the Lord, the righteous acts for His villagers in Israel; then the people of the Lord shall go down to the gates.*

Deborah here addresses herself to those people whose lives have markedly changed since their victory over Canaan:

- a. The people of distinction who as a mark of their wealth or position ride on the rarer breed of white donkey; and
- b. Those who judge; and
- c. Those who are now free to walk along the roads.

The Israelites were now safe to resume their normal daily business without interference from thieves. They were able again to use their wells without harassment and for all of this; Deborah urged them to give thanks to God, as God was the one who delivered Israel from her misery.

5:12-14a *Awake, awake, Deborah! Awake, awake, sing a song! Arise, Barak, and lead your captives away, O son of Abinoam! Then the survivors came down, the people against the nobles; the Lord came down for me against the mighty.*

Deborah is stirring herself and Barak to sing a song of praise to God who gave them victory against the Canaanites who were stronger and better armed than Israel.

5:14b-18 *From Ephraim were those whose roots were in Amalek. After you, Benjamin, with your peoples, from Machir rulers came down and from Zebulun those who bear the recruiters staff. And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah; as Issachar, so was Barak sent into the valley under his command; among the divisions of Reuben there were great resolves of heart. Why did you sit among the sheepfolds, to hear the pipings for the flocks? The divisions of Reuben have great searchings of heart. Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan, and why did Dan remain on ships? Asher continued at the seashore and stayed by his inlets. Zebulun is a people who jeopardized their lives to the point of death, Naphtali also, on the heights of the battlefield.*

Deborah praises those who fought risking their own lives against the mighty which included the giants of Amalek, who seemed to constantly be fighting against Israel. Deborah praises Ephraim, Benjamin, Machir (son of Manasseh), Zebulun, and Issachar.

But Deborah mentions the tribes that did not fight. Deborah sang that the men of the tribe of Reuben must search their hearts as to why they did not fight for Israel. The trans-Jordan tribes (those that settled on the east side of the Jordan River) did not fight, they remained in Gilead. The tribe of Dan remained on their ships and did not fight, neither did Asher.

Deborah makes special mention of the valiant efforts of Zebulun and Naphtali who risked their lives in battle.

5:19-21 *The kings came and fought, then the kings of Canaan fought in Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo; they*

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took no spoils of silver. They fought from the heavens; the stars from their courses fought against Sisera. The torrent of Kishon swept them away. That ancient torrent, the torrent of Kishon.

The kings of Canaan came to fight against Israel, but they did not win and take away spoils of war, like silver. God fought for Israel from heaven and He used the stars and heavens as His weapons to wage war against Sisera. God caused the Kishon River to overflow and sweep the Canaanites away in defeat, tumbling their chariots and rendering their great advantage useless.

5:22-23 O my soul, march on in strength! Then the horses hooves pounded, the galloping, galloping of his steeds. Curse Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, Curse its inhabitants bitterly, because they did not come to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

Deborah expressed that her own very soul fought with all its might through prayer and the encouragement and even prodding of others. Deborah cursed Meroz, which is a village in Issachar/Naphtali who did not come and fight with Israel against the Canaanites.

5:24-27 Most blessed among women is Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite; Blessed is she among women in tents. He asked for water, she gave milk; she brought out cream in a lordly bowl. She stretched her hand to the tent peg, her right hand to the workmen's hammer; she pounded Sisera , she pierced his head, she split and struck through his temple. At her feet he sank, he fell, he lay still; at her feet he sank, he fell; where he sank, there he fell dead.

Deborah blessed Jael greatly for murder of Sisera, the great Canaanite general. Deborah clearly and in plain language describes exactly how Jael killed Sisera and Deborah blesses her bravery and guile in making Sisera feel safe in her tent before she killed him.

5:28-30 The mother of Sisera looked through the window, and cried out through the lattice, Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why tarries the clatter of his chariots? Her wisest ladies answered her, Yes she answered herself, Are they not finding and dividing the spoil; to every man a girl or two; for Sisera, plunder of dyed garments, plunder of garments embroidered and dyed, two pieces of dyed embroidery for the neck of the looter?

Sisera's mother was so confident of his victory that she imagined he was taking so long in coming home because he was enjoying the bountiful plunder of his victory. She imagined that he was enjoying young girls and plenty of beautifully dyed and embroidered garments. But that was not the case.

5:31 Thus let all Your enemies perish, O Lord! But let those who love Him be like the sun when it comes out in full strength.

Deborah here prayed and prophesied that all of God's enemies would be defeated the way that Sisera was defeated. This chapter ends with the statement that, following this decisive victory over the Canaanites, the land had rest for forty years.

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SYNOPSIS

Chapter 6:1-6 After Israel's victory over the Canaanites and the land resting for forty years, the cycle of apostasy – punishment- deliverance is repeated because the children of Israel did evil in the eyes of God. They worshipped idols and forgot God's commandments. Perhaps after God had given them victory over the Canaanites, they were faithful in their worship to God, but that faithfulness did not last. The consequence of Israel's sin was that God handed them over to the Midianites for seven years. Each year for seven years the Midianites, the Amalekites, and people from the east would come upon the Israelites land like a plague infecting and destroying the land. These people would come each year at harvest time in so great a number that they were like locusts descending upon the land. They would come with their camels and their tents and there were so many of them they were beyond counting. They would destroy the produce of the earth, leave the land desolate as far as Gaza, take the sheep and the ox, and threaten the very lives of the Israelites. So, when the Midianites descended upon the land, the Israelites would retreat to the caves and hide themselves in dens in the mountains. This invasion happened every year for seven years, leaving the Israelites starving in utter poverty.

Chapter 6:7-10 Time had passed before God answered the cries of the Israelites. He sent a prophet whose name was not revealed to preach the following message to the Israelites: *"Thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'I brought you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of bondage.'"* **First**, the prophet begins to convey the mercy and blessings of God; what He's done for the Israelites; all the way back to bringing them out of Egyptian bondage. God is sending a message to Israel through the mouth of this prophet. Now, God's prophet really gets real with them! **Second**, the prophet quotes what God had already said to them: *"I am the Lord your God"* meaning *"I brought you up and brought you out!"* God already said: *"don't fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell!"* But the thing is: *"you haven't obeyed My voice!"* This was to bring the Israelites into total recognition of what happens to them when they turn from God to false gods. It all comes down to obedience. They needed to recognize their sinful behavior, repent, and turn back to God in worship.

6:11 **And there came an angel of the Lord, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites.** While the Israelites awaited further answer from God, the angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth (oak) tree which belonged to a man named Joash the Abiezrite of the tribe of Manasseh watching Gideon as he hid from the Midianites threshing wheat! The angel of the Lord is none other than Christ Himself—the appearance of God in human form as the angel of the Yahweh. The location of Ophrah is uncertain, but here Gideon was literally hiding in the winepress where he was threshing wheat; beating out the grain secretly to keep it hidden from the enemy.

Normally, wheat was threshed (grain separated from the wheat stalks from the useless outer shell called chaff) in an open area on a threshing floor by oxen pulling threshing sledges over the stalks where the wind could blow away the lighter chaff when the farmer tossed the beaten wheat into the air.

He feared that they would steal it if he was caught.

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6:12 And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, **The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.** The name "Gideon" (he who cuts down) means "Destroyer," "Mighty warrior" or "Feller (of trees)." God chose Gideon, a young man from an otherwise unremarkable clan from the tribe of Manasseh, to free the people of Israel from Midian, and to condemn their worship of idols. When the Angel of the Lord said that the Lord was with Gideon, what he meant, and what Gideon understood him to be saying, confused him. So, when the Angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon and said, "The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor" meaning that Gideon would be the man against whom no one would be able to stand against, because the Lord would be with him wherever he went. And that he (mighty man of valour) would have success wherever he went.

6:13 And Gideon said unto him, **Oh my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? but now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.** Gideon questions the angel, for he failed to see how God was going to work through him. Gideon begins to remind the Angel of his present and past circumstances, that if the Lord is with them, why has all this happened to them? This was a new generation who had not seen the miracles of the past. They didn't see the miracles which their fathers told them about: bringing them up from Egypt. Gideon had only seen the Lord forsaking them and delivering them into the hands of the Midianites. So, Gideon's questions began with, "...if the Lord..., ...why then...?, ...and where be all the miracles...? ...and Did not the Lord...? Gideon can't even see the positive.

6:14 And the Lord looked upon him, and said, **Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?**— The angel of the Lord was God Himself speaking, telling Gideon, "Go in this might." What might? Well, He called him mighty man of valour (6:13). God saw his potential!

- Gideon had the might of the humble, threshing wheat on the winepress floor.
- Gideon had the might of the caring, because he cared about the low place of Israel.
- Gideon had the might of knowledge, because he heard of God doing great things in the past.
- Gideon had the might of the spiritually hungry because he wanted to see God do those great works he's heard about.
- Gideon had the might of the teachable, because he listened to what the Angel of the Lord said.
- Gideon had the might when weak, for God's strength is perfected in weakness (**2 Corinthians 12:9**).

Going in the strength that God has given him, he was to save Israel from the hands of the Midianites. The angel's assurance points to: "Have not I sent thee?" Now, Gideon has to recognize this message from God and receive that he is a mighty man of valor. It is important to know that God sends us, but it's even greater to know that He's with us and going before us.

6:15 And he said unto him, **Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.** He continues to sell himself short; even his family. He made excuses for himself to the Lord. He interjected that his family in Manasseh was poor, and that he was the least in his father's house. He was the youngest son of his family and they were an insignificant family from a militarily impoverished tribe. In essence, he was saying that he was not qualified for this task; neither was his family, nor his tribe. Wow!

6:16 And the Lord said unto him, **Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.** Nevertheless, God is still assuring Gideon by telling him that He would be with him as Gideon strikes down the Midianites, with a force as if he and God were one man. Gideon will soon become the fifth judge over Israel.

6:17 And he said unto him, **If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me.**

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Well, the nerve of Gideon, he asks for a sign; some kind of visual proof that comes from the presence of God. He can't believe that he's truly found grace in the sight of God; that God would be with him, or that God is sending him to strike down the Midianites.

6:18 Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again. Gideon didn't want the angel of the Lord to leave until he brought forth an offering. And the angel of the Lord agreed to tarry there until Gideon comes back again.

6:19 And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out unto him under the oak, and presented it. While the Angel of the Lord waits on Gideon to return, Gideon hurries home to prepare a young goat (kid); roasting it, baking some unleavened bread (cakes) with a bushel of flour. He brings it all back by putting the meat in a basket and the broth in a pot placing both under the oak, presenting it as an offering.

6:20 And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so. The Angel of the Lord then tells Gideon to take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock that served as an improvised altar. They were placed according to the direction of the Angel of the Lord. Gideon then was to pour out the broth meaning over the flesh and cakes as the Angel of the Lord instructed him. And Gideon does so.

6:21 Then the angel of the Lord put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the Lord departed out of his sight. The Angel of the Lord used the end of His staff that was in His hand and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes. And a fire arose out of the rock and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. And suddenly the Angel of the Lord was gone; vanished.

6:22 And when Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the Lord, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord God! for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face. Finally, Gideon is seeing everything clearly and he believes this was the Angel of the Lord for no one else could have brought fire up from a wet rock with a staff. He couldn't help but cry out "*Alas, O Lord God*" because this wasn't something he could keep in, for he knew he had seen the Angel of the Lord face to face.

6:23 And the Lord said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die. Seeing the Angel of the Lord face to face, Gideon thought he was going to die, because no one has seen God's face and lived. But, the Lord said Peace to him, fear not (don't be afraid) Why? He wasn't going to die.

6:24 Then Gideon built an altar there unto the Lord, and called it Jehovahshalom: unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. Gideon builds an altar unto the Lord calling it Jehovah-shalom which means "*The Lord of Peace*." This day it's still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

6:25 And it came to pass the same night, that the Lord said unto him, Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it:— After God called Gideon to be Israel's Deliver, he immediately asked him to tear down the altar of the god Baal. Mind you, this is at night. God instructed Gideon to sacrifice his father's young bullock and even a second bullock of seven years old unto the Lord. This refers to the fact that the bullock has

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been fattened for seven years. In addition to that, he was to tear down the altar of Baal in which his father had, and cut down the grove that's by it. Baal is "*the sun god,*" and Asherah is the "*nature goddess.*"

Once Gideon was called, that also meant the family would have to come in line also. There was to be no other god before Gideon. There was no straddling with the cultic god and the true and living God. You can't worship God and turn around and worship Baal. Now, Gideon's father's name was Joash which meant "*Yahweh has given*", yet he was apparently a priest of Baal since he maintained a Baal altar as well as the grove.¹³ For a son to destroy a father's altar would be a serious offence. *Grove worship* was associated with the worship of Baal and Asherah. This situation gives us a glimpse into the terrible spiritual condition of the people of Israel just one century after entering into the Promised Land. They were not only willing to compromise with pagan religion, but now they had become totally confused with their own religion.

6:26 And build an altar unto the Lord thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down. So, before Gideon could change the nation, he had to change things in his home. This is God preparing Gideon for the big things. This victory will lead to bigger victories! Matthew 25:21b says "*...thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things.*" So, before going to the bigger trial, he had to start with the small thing, like tearing down Baal! It was at night when the Lord spoke to Gideon about building an altar unto the Lord his God upon the top of the rock in this ordered prepared place. And with the second bullock, he was to offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove that was torn down, meaning everything had to be torn down and burnt up in that place before the altar of the Lord was to be built and placed there. This completed the instruction of Gideon's assignment!

6:27 Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the Lord had said unto him: and so it was, because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day, that he did it by night. This took great faith and great faith led to action in Gideon, yet he's still fearful to do this. He started on this right away. This had to be an enormous task for him, that might have been small for others—to go get 10 men of his servants to help him, for he was afraid of his family and of the men of the city which prevented him from doing this by day. So, he and the 10 men of his servants did what the Lord had instructed during the night.

6:28 And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that was by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built. Well, early in the morning when the men of the city rose up, they looked and saw that the altar of Baal was torn down, and the grove that was by it was also cut down as well. They also see that the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built.

6:29 And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing? And when they enquired and asked, they said, Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing. It was out in the open now, and the men of the city began saying to one another, who could have done this? Now, these men of the city were there to worship this Baal idol, and not finding it there has upset them. The idol had to be big, and the area had to be large that would accommodate all those people. So this Baal idol was too large just for Gideon to destroy. That's why he also needed so many men to help him destroy the idols and grove. Well, the cat's is out of the bag. They know who has done this, and called out the name of Gideon, son of Joash.

6:30 Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he hath cast

¹³ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/judges/07.html>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that was by it. Well this is Gideon's deepest fear. The men of the city came for Gideon, and wanted to kill him. They go to Gideon's father Joash, and they say "...Bring out your son, that he may die." They even tell the reason because he cast down the altar of Baal and the grove by it, but they are the ones that are in the wrong by worshiping idols instead of the true and living God. But they cannot see this yet!

6:31 And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning: if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar. These are some powerful words coming from Gideon's father: Joash replied, *'Are you trying to support Baal? Are you trying to save him? He that pleads for him, we will kill whoever does this. We will kill them by morning. Is Baal really a god? Then he can defend himself when someone destroys his altar.* God used Gideon's father to speak up for him. The father saw what Gideon had done, and that it took an act of bravery. The fact that Baal had been unable to stop Gideon's actions, implies that his father no longer believed that Baal was a god. The father was stunned by such action on the part of his son (who had been previously known for his cowardice) was truly turned around!

6:32 Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar. So that day they named Gideon *"Jerubbaal."* This means *'Let Baal fight him'* because he cut down Baal's altar.

SUMMARY:

Gideon, the son of Joash the Abiezrite was hiding from the Midianites as he threshed wheat by the winepress, when the angel of the Lord appeared to him. The angel of the Lord sat under an oak tree speaking to him, saying that the Lord is with him— mighty man of valour. Gideon's question was that if the Lord was with them, why had the Midianites come upon them, and where are all the miracles their fathers told them of? Gideon confesses the Lord has forsaken them and delivered them into the hands of the Midianites. The angel of the Lord was God Himself speaking, telling Gibeon, *"Go in this might"* meaning go in the strength God has given him to save Israel from the hands of the Midianites. God affirms to him— *"Have not I sent thee?"* In short, God recognizes in Gideon something that Gideon does not see himself (**6:11-14**).

Gideon thought so little of himself, and was so filled with doubt and unbelief. He interjected that his family in Manasseh was poor, and that he was the least in his father's house. But, God was patient with Gideon, telling him that He would be with him. Gideon's name meant *"Mighty man of Valour"*; however, he was very fearful. God sees our potential for what we can become, as He works in our lives. Gideon is a great encouragement to people who have a hard time accepting themselves and believing that God can make anything out of them or do anything with them as an unexpected leader. Gideon now wants to see a sign if he's found grace in the sight of the Lord, and asks the angel not to depart, but stay until he brings an offering. And the angel said He would stay (**6:15-18**).

Gideon hurries home to prepare a young goat (kid); roasting it, baking some unleavened bread (cakes) with a bushel of flour. He brings it all back to the Angel of the Lord by putting the meat in a basket and the broth in a pot presenting it as an offering under the oak. The Angel of the Lord then tells Gideon to take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock that served as an improvised altar and poured out the broth. And Gideon does so as instructed. The Angel of the Lord used the end of His staff that was in His hand and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes. And a fire arose out of the rock and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. And suddenly the Angel of the Lord was gone; vanished (**6:19-21**).

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Finally, Gideon realized this was the Angel of the Lord for no one else could have brought fire up from a wet rock with a staff. He couldn't help but cry out because this wasn't something he could keep in. Seeing the Angel of the Lord face to face, he thought he was going to die because no one has seen God's face and lived. But, the Lord said Peace to him, fear not (don't be afraid) Why? He wasn't going to die. Gideon builds an altar unto the Lord calling it Jehovah-shalom which means "The Lord of Peace." This day it's still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites (**6:22-24**).

After God called Gideon to be Israel's Deliver, he immediately asked him to tear down the altar of the god Baal and cut down the grove that's by it—Baal *"the sun god"* and Asherah the *"nature goddess."* He was to sacrifice his father's young bullock and even a second bullock of seven years old unto the Lord. Israel had willingly compromised with pagan religion. It was at night when the Lord spoke to Gideon about building an altar unto the Lord his God upon the top of the rock in this ordered prepared place. And with the second bullock, he was to offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove that was torn down, meaning everything had to be torn down and burnt up in that place before the altar of the Lord was to be built and placed there (**6:25-26**).

This took great faith and great faith led to action in Gideon, yet he's still fearful to do this. He took 10 men of his servants to help, for he was afraid of his family and of the men of the city which prevented him from doing this by day. So, he and the 10 men of his servants did what the Lord had instructed during the night (**6:27**).

The men of the city rose early in the morning, looked and saw that the altar of Baal was torn down and the grove that was by it was also cut down as well. They also saw that the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built. They're saying to one another who could have done this, for they were there to worship this Baal idol, and not finding it there, has upset them. There were those who knew who had done this, and called out the name, Gideon, son of Joash. Well this is Gideon's deepest fear. The men of the city came for Gideon, and wanted to kill him. They go to Gideon's father, Joash, and they say *"...Bring out your son, that he may die"* because he cast down the altar of Baal and the grove by it. But really they are the ones who are in the wrong by worshiping idols instead of the true and living God. Gideon's father, Joash replied, *'Are you trying to support Baal? Are you trying to save him? He that pleads for him, we will kill whoever does this. We will kill them by morning. Is Baal really a god? Then he can defend himself when someone destroys his altar.* God used Gideon's father to speak up for him. The father saw what Gideon had done and that it took an act of bravery. The fact that Baal had been unable to stop Gideon's action, implies that his father no longer believed that Baal was a god. The father was stunned by such an action on the part of his son (who had been previously known for his cowardice) was turned around. So, that day they named Gideon *"Jerubbaal."* This means *'Let Baal fight him'* because he cut down Baal's altar (**6:28-32**).

APPLICATION:

Don't sell yourself short for what God can or will do in and through your life if you are willing to submit to the Refiner's purifying fire and the Master's touch! Remember that God does not save us and use us for what we are but for what by His great mercy and grace we may become. He is in the business of taking "nobodies" and transforming them by His presence. He begins with us where we are, be it in the winepress or on some mundane job, etc. He knows our weaknesses, our faults, our shortcomings but He does not say "If you get those things out of your life, then I'll be able to use you." He takes our inadequacy and transforms them into His adequacy. He takes our shortcomings and develops them into over comings. God has a way of seeing beyond our fears and frailty. Allow Him! Don't spend time making excuses, instead spend it doing what God wants! [TOP](#)

HISTORY:

Shamgar was the third judge who killed 600 Philistines with an ox goad (Judges 3:31). Forty years rest followed the work of Deborah (**Chapter 4-5**), the fourth judge. **Chapter 6** Then the people fell again into evil ways, and for seven years suffered the cruelest oppression at the hands of Midian. They were stripped to abject poverty. God sent the prophet to tell them where the real problem lied. It wasn't that the Midianites were so strong; it was that Israel was so disobedient and Israel thought the problem was the Midianites. God sent a prophet to tell them to turn away from their sin and turn back to God. It is human nature to blame others for problems that we cause. Their cry to God for help did not mean that they recognized or repented of their sin.

After the prophet, God sends an angel to assure Gideon that the Lord was with him. The Lord speaking directly to him commissions him to go save Israel! God would make him strong with might! After hearing Gideon's complaints and questions, the angel proves to Gideon He is the Lord God speaking. Gideon's first task was to destroy the idols (Baal; Asherah) and replace it with the altar for the Lord God, calling it **Jehovah-shalom** (*The Altar of Peace*). He followed God's instructions. However, he was found out to be the one that had destroyed the idols, even though it was done at night. Soon the armies of Midian, Amalek, and others are uniting against Israel. However, the Spirit of the Lord comes upon Gideon and he blows the trumpet of war. Now Gideon plays his trump card by asking God for a fleece; proof. He is still not sure God will use him to save Israel. He is still not sure God would deliver the victory. He asks God twice for proof. And God still gives the proof that Gideon needs to be reassured with. God answered his request twice and really gives him the compassion he needs. **Gideon will be Israel's the fifth Judge.**

7:1 Then Jerubbai, who is Gideon, and all the people that were with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well of Harod: so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley. Jerubbaal is Gideon's other name. In Judges 6:32, he was given the name after destroying the idols of Baal, meaning "*let Baal plead*." The idea is that Baal ought to be able to plead for himself if he were really a god. And the fact that Baal was unable to stop Gideon's action implies that he didn't portray himself as a god. The Midianites kept terrorizing Israel and stealing their harvest. Now, **Gideon and the people that were with him rose up early**, and camped **beside the well of Harod**, known as "*spring of trembling*." And **the Midianites were across the valley to the north, by the hill of Moreh**, some four miles away. Thus the scene is set and the time for battle finally is near. Gideon's hastily assembled volunteer army (chosen and then sorted out).

7:2 And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people who are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying Mine own hand hath saved me. Fearful and trembling Gideon, who must obey at night under the cover of darkness and be constantly reassured by signs and fleeces, now arrives at the well of trembling with his men and the Lord tells him there are **too many men for Him to give the Midianites into Gideon's hands**. Why did God say this? He didn't want Israel to say or think they had won the victory through their own strength; or even to say, they **had saved** themselves. Self-sufficiency is an enemy when it causes us to believe we can always do what needs to be done in our own strength.

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7:3 Now, therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand: and there remained ten thousand. Now there is a process of elimination. And it may seem strange until one understands what was actually happening. **First**, he asked **whosoever was fearful and afraid to return home**. Out of thirty-two thousand men, **22,000 people returned home and 10,000 remained**. This is the number of men Deborah and Barak had in Judges 4:8-10 going into Kedesh and from Tabor (Judges 4:14) to pursue Sisera. The men who returned home were honest, but it's still a test for Gideon.

7:4 And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. Gideon still has to be in it with the Lord's leading, for the Lord is saying of the 10,000 that remained again, there are still too many. The men are brought to the water where God would sifts and separates them. It is not Gideon who is separating them out, it is the Lord. The Lord will choose His army. Hasn't the Lord chosen the body of Christ for His army here on earth? But our obedience will have to be fulfilled (II Cor. 10:6). God said that He will show Gideon which ones will go with Gideon and which ones will not go.

7:5 So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. The 10,000 men were brought down to the water. God told Gideon that every man that lapped the water like a dog with his tongue is to be set aside by himself. And those that bowed down to the water on his knees to drink are to be set by himself. So there are two groups God will choose from: the ones who lapped and the ones who bowed.

7:6 And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. In the first group there were 300 men that lapped like a dog, putting his hand to his mouth to drink the water. But the rest of the men (7,000) bowed down on their knees to drink the water.

7:7 And the LORD said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place. Now, the Lord is really about to say something that Gideon may not be ready to hear. Well, the men that lapped up the water by putting their hands to their mouths to drink are the ones that the Lord will save Gideon and deliver the Midianites into his hand. Undoubtedly, the men that lapped water from their hands were the smaller group. They were the ones who were crouched and looking and not on their knees. And they were able to arise quicker as they watched around them. They seemed more alert than the others. And the Lord tells Gideon to send the others home. There were too many people going out to war against the Midianites. God's process of elimination dwindles them down from 32,000 to 10,000, then to 300. There were a total of 29,000 to go home. This is the only way God would give the enemy into the Israelites' hand. He wanted them to know that the victory comes from the Lord and not in their own strength.

7:8 So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all the rest of Israel every man unto his tent, and retained those three hundred men: and the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley. So, the people brought provisions and their trumpets and sent all the Israelites to their own dwelling places. The 300 men were retained; keeping alert to do battle with the host of Midianites beneath in the valley.

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7:9 And it came to pass the same night, that the Lord said unto him. Arise, get thee down unto the host: for I have delivered it into thine hand. God waited until that night and spoke to Gideon, telling him to get up and go down to the host of Midianites (their camp), meaning it was time to attack now with the 300 men, for God Himself would deliver the Midianites into Gideon's hand!

7:10 But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host: — But, God says, however, if you are fearful, God tells Gideon to take his servant "Phurah" whose name means "beauty or bears fruit" with him down to the host into the valley. Those who follow God must have faith. The opposite of faith is fear. There, they would spy upon the Midianites. This would help Gideon overcome any fear or doubt.

7:11 And thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host. Then went he down with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the armed men that were in the host. Gideon and his trusted servant/armor-bearer, Phurah went together at night to the outpost of the Midianite camp to hear what they're saying or ease drop on their conversation. It took courage to do that. And God was sure that Gideon would be strengthened after hearing what the enemy had to say,

7:12 And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude. The Midianites and the Amalekites and other nations of the Mideast are camped just below the Israelites along in the valley like grasshoppers, and their camels were without number as the sand by the sea side.

7:13 And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along. Those who follow God must have faith. The opposite of faith is fear. The Midianites are camped just below the Israelites. Gideon and his trusted servant/armor-bearer, Phurah, go at night to the outpost of the Midianite camp (V11). The fact that he went down with Phurah indicates that he was afraid to go alone. Even Phurah's name means "foliage", indicating that Gideon was hiding behind his armor-bearer. As they come near the camp, a man was telling a dream to his friend. The first said that he had dreamed about a cake of barley bread tumbling into the host of Midian camp knocking and striking his tent, turning it over, and turning it over laying it flat on the ground.

7:14 And his fellow answered and said, This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host. Unable to understand the meaning of the dream, his friend gives the interpretation, to which his friend replied, This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon...for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host. Nothing will encourage a coward more than discovering that his enemy is afraid of him. The significance of the dream was to convince and reassure Gideon (the barley thresher) that the Midianites were all afraid of him, than him being afraid of them. In this case, both dreamer and interpreter are not Israelites, they are the enemy! It reassures Gideon that God is in control of everything: of the battle, the enemies, and Israel. Like Rahab and the inhabitants of Jericho, the enemy was afraid and knew that Israel's powerful God would give the victory to Israel. God not only provided Gideon with encouragement; He did it through the mouths of his enemies.

7:15 And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, and returned into the host of Israel, and said, Arise; for the Lord hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian. All Gideon could do was just stand outside the enemy's camp worshiping God. He is so

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encouraged and strengthened with excitement that he returns back to his men telling them to **Arise for the Lord** has given them the victory; God **hath delivered into their hand the host of Midian**. On the basis of that encouragement it was as good as done! The enemy doesn't seem so big now. Whatever you're going through, your confidence is strengthened by one Word! And that Word can only be brought up in your Spirit by God. We can worship anywhere by changing our focus from life's struggles to a God who cares. His worship comes up by His Spirit flowing in your heart.

7:16 And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers. Then the 300 men were divided into three groups and were given each man a trumpet and pitchers (clay jars) with a torch in it. This is a very unusual tactic. Mind you, they were going up against 135,000 soldiers.

7:17 And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall ye do. Gideon says "Look on me"; He's saying "Watch me! Now, do as I do!" When he reaches the outside or edge of the camp, the men were to follow and do whatever he did.

7:18 When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon. They would all be dispersed out in their three groups on every side of the camp. This means the camp would be surrounded! When Gideon blows his trumpet, they and all that were with him would also blow their trumpets on every side of the camp. As they did all this they were to shout this one line: *"The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon."* And they didn't even have swords.

7:19 So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch; and they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that were in their hands. At the beginning of the middle watch (just as the midnight watch began) and the sentry of guards were posted in the Midian camp, Gideon and the 100 men had come to the outside or edge of the camp. The rest of the camp was asleep and suddenly Gideon and the 100 men began to blow the trumpets and brake the pitchers that were in with their hands. I believed that Gideon and his men didn't have to run, but just stood there blowing the trumpets and breaking the pitchers (clay jars). You see the enemy couldn't see the lamps for they were hid inside the pitchers until the pitcher was broken. And suddenly they were circumference about the camp with light!

7:20 And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow withal: and they cried, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon. The three groups did all of this at the same time. They blew the trumpets with their right hand, and broke the pitchers while holding the lamps in their left hands crying and shouting aloud: *"The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon."*

7:21 And they stood every man in his place round about the camp; and all the host ran, and cried, and fled. Yes, they were bold in their stance! The camp was surrounded by Gideon and the men covering the entire circumference of the camp. All the host of the Midianites ran, crying as they fled the camp because of the fear of the Lord and His power. The two men could bear witness to the dream: *"This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host."* And Gideon could plainly see that God keep His promises. Gideon had never led an army and a vast majority of the soldiers were untrained and inexperienced. It wasn't about their skill; it was about the number of men God would keep or let go. God lets them see that it was Him who had won this victory for them. Could you imagine trumpets, pitchers, and lamps in their hands, and the enemy runs away like that? Nobody but God!

There were too many people going out to war against the Midianites. God's process of elimination dwindles them down from 32,000 to 10,000, then to 300. This is the only way God would give the enemy into the Israelites' hand. He wanted them to know that the victory comes from the Lord and not in their own strength. Gideon had never led an army and a vast majority of the soldiers were untrained and inexperienced. It wasn't about their skill; it was about the number of men God would keep or let go (**7:1-4**).

The 10,000 men were brought down to the water. God told Gideon that every man that lapped the water like a dog with his tongue is to be set aside by himself. And those that bowed down to the water on his knees to drink are to be set by himself. So there are two groups God will choose from: the ones who lapped and the ones who bowed. In the first group there were 300 men that lapped like a dog, putting his hand to his mouth to drink the water. But the rest of the men (7,000) bowed down on their knees to drink the water. The 300 are the ones that the Lord will save Gideon and deliver the Midianites into his hand. The people brought provisions and their trumpets and sent all the Israelites to their own dwelling places (**7:5-8**).

God was determined to build Gideon's confidence because God says *"Arise, get thee down unto the host: for I have delivered it into thine hand."* If he wasn't sure about what God would do in this war, it had to be cleared up, so God allows Gideon to take his armor-bearer/servant with him and spy out the enemy's camp. And the two went at the outskirts of the enemy's camp. The Midianites and the Amalekites and other nations of the Mideast are camped just below the Israelites along in the valley like grasshoppers, having camels without number as the sand by the sea side (**7:9-12**).

Gideon overhears one of the soldiers tell another of a dream he had dreamed. The dream he overhears shows that God has given Gideon the victory over the Midianites and they know it. This causes Gideon to worship the Lord and he goes back to the men in his camp and encourages them to Arise, Why? - Because God has given the enemy into their hands. To know that God has your back is enough to let Him rule; to know that the enemy knows that God has your back is enough to let God rule! Gideon divided the 300 men God allowed to come into 3 groups. Each man carried a trumpet and an empty pitcher and a lamp to put within the pitcher. Whatever Gideon did, the men were to do the same, and chant the words: "The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon." At the beginning of the middle watch (just as the midnight watch began) and the sentry of guards were posted in the Midian camp, Gideon and the 100 men had come to the outside or edge of the camp. The rest of the camp was asleep and suddenly Gideon and the 100 men blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers that were in their hands. Then they began to blow the trumpets and break the pitchers. The three groups did all of this at the same time, crying and shouting aloud: *"The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon."* The camp was surrounded by Gideon and his men and all the host of Midianites ran crying and fleeing (**7:13-21**).

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SYNOPSIS:

8:22 And Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also: for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian. All that Gideon set out to do was accomplished. Gideon is weary and tired and the men of Israel ask him to be their ruler; rule over them—he, his sons, and even passing it down to generations. The men of Israel are full of gratitude for Gideon delivering them from the Midianites. As you remember, for seven years, the Midianites were the ones that greatly oppressed the Israelites with raids, leaving them in poverty. Even Gideon was one that was found hiding from them in the winepress threshing wheat. They were so grateful that they thought Gideon had delivered them and they desired him to rule over them. They want this strong leader over them. However, something has gone entirely wrong! They had forgotten about God!

8:23 And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the Lord shall rule over you. The people wanted to make Gideon their ruler, but Gideon stressed that God was their true King and Ruler. He understood that it was not his place to take the throne over Israel. Gideon refused for himself and his sons to hold such a position.¹⁴ Though Gideon said he didn't want to be a king, in the rest of the chapter he acted like one. His words were humble but his actions were not. It is easier to talk about humility and service to God than it is to actually live it.

8:24 24 And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you, that ye would give me every man the earrings of his prey. (For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.) Having refused, Gideon requested instead that they give him the earrings of his prey, which they had taken from the fallen Ishmaelites (used interchangeably here for Midianites). Both Ishmael, by Hagar, and Midian, by Keturah, were sons of Abraham; and their descendants became closely allied.¹⁵ They were fleshly people. The descendents of Isaac were the spiritual people. The flesh and the spirit have been fighting ever since. They adorned themselves {both men and women} with gold jewelry, such as necklaces and earrings. The earrings of so many dead would be worth a tremendous amount of money.

8:25-29 The men willingly responded and spread a garment upon which each man cast the earrings of his prey. The weight of the gold was tremendous along with the ornaments, pendants, and purple garments. It says that Israel went a whoring after it: which became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house. Instead of giving glory to God for His miraculous deliverance, the people began worshiping the prey of that deliverance. In regards to the security of the nation, which was in quietness for forty years, Gideon's rule as the fifth judge over Israel was a

¹⁴ <http://www.enduringword.com/commentaries/0708.htm>

¹⁵ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/judges/09.html>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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success. Yet in many ways he was a spiritual failure. He had made a golden ephod from the gold earrings he had gathered from the people. Unfortunately, the people began to worship the ephod as an idol

8:30-35 Sadly, some decisions that stemmed from good motives had negative results. He had many wives and one concubine, who fathered 70 children. The relationship between Gideon and a concubine produced a son who tore apart Gideon's family and caused tragedy for the nation. Gideon illustrates the fact that heroes in battle are not always heroic in day-to-day living. The people began to worship Baal gods after Gideon died. They forgot all about the Lord; even the family of Jerubbaal (that is Gideon).

SUMMARY:

The grateful Israelites then asks Gideon to be their ruler, because they're looking at Gideon as the deliverer who has won the battle for them instead of God. And this is the one thing that God was trying to divert them from. Only God can receive the honor for anything we come through! Gideon knows this and he refuses the rulership, because God could only be Israel's one and only king.

APPLICATION:

Do you think your leader is wise enough for you to follow? What have you gained from their leadership? Have you put them in the place of God? Wise does not always mean knowing it all, it means being obedient to the only wise God!

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SYNOPSIS

Judges 9 As soon as Gideon dies, they don't even consider God for idol worship begins again. Abimelech, a disinherited son of Jerubbaal (Gideon), managed to seize the leadership that Gideon had refused by eliminating all seventy of Jerubbaal's sons—his half-brothers, with the help of his mother's family in Shechem. Only the youngest, Jotham, escaped the slaughter by hiding (9:1-6). He is the first self-declared king of Israel. God did not put him there.

Jotham standing on Mount Gerizim and shouts a "*parable of the trees*" (the olive tree, the fig tree, and the grape vine) to the people of Shechem to help the people set good priorities. Jotham's point was that if the person chosen as king was a fruitful tree, then good fruit would come from his reign, however, all the fruitful trees refused. But the thorn bush was chosen, who was a worthless and selfish thing to begin with and could offer no real security to the men of Shechem and therefore, ultimately became their destruction. Abimelech is portrayed as the thorn bush used tree boughs as battering rams to knock down the stronghold of the tower of Shechem and setting it on fire, killing 1,000 men and women; and then Abimelech and his men then attacked Thebez (another city) and trapped some of the people in the height of the tower and tried to do the same as was done to Shechem. However, a woman drops a millstone upon Abimelech's head and crushes his skull. She saves her people! He begs his armor-bearer to kill him with his sword, so he does not die at the hand of a woman, because death at the hands of a woman was considered to be an utter disgrace for a warrior. This stopped the battle, and everyone went home because Abimelech was dead, thus God repaid the wickedness which Abimelech committed towards his father (Gideon), in slaying his 70 half brothers except one (Jotham). Chapter 9 concludes with the destruction of the men of Shechem. This was in answer to the curse Jotham had spoken three years ago upon them for following Abimelech. It took three years for God to answer!

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10:1-5 And after Abimilech there arose to defend Israel Tola the son of Puah the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar, and he dwelt in Shamir in mount Ephraim. Tola, the seventh judge, was not an important judge. He did not do any great work. He probably only decided the results of legal arguments for **twenty-three years**. **When he died, he was buried in Shamir and succeeded by Jair, a man from Gilead, who judged Israel for twenty-two years. His 30 sons rode 30 donkeys and owned 30 towns throughout Gilead which are still called The Cities of Jair. And Jair died, and was buried in Camon** being Israel's eighth judge.

10:6 And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the Lord, and served not him. The Israelites did not obey God. They served the *Baal and the Ashtoreth and the many gods of the people of Syria, Zidon, Moab, Ammon, and Philistine. They turned away from the Lord and they did not serve Him anymore.

10:7 And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of the children of Ammon. God's angry with them was hot, and He allowed the Philistines and the people from Ammon to conquer them.

10:8 And that year they vexed and oppressed the children of Israel: eighteen years, all the children of Israel that were on the other side Jordan in the land of the Amorites, which is in Gilead. The people of Philistine and Ammon (Ammonites) were very cruel and unkind, crushing them; and for 18 years oppressed the Israelites on the east side of the Jordan in Gilead, the country where the Amorites lived. Note: Ammonites and Amorites are not the same; different people.

10:9 Moreover the children of Ammon passed over Jordan to fight also against Judah, and against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim; so that Israel was sore distressed. The people from Ammon went over the Jordan river, also fighting against Judah's tribe, Benjamin's tribe, and also Ephraim's tribe. At this time Israel's people were very unhappy.

10:10 And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim. We're looking at double sins: one, forsaking God, and two, serving Baalim. The Israelites finally confessed again that they messed up with God and they cried out for help, acknowledging their sins. Notice that when the Israelites were at the end of their rope, they did not look to their heathen gods for help, but to the only True God who was really able to help them and save them. ¹⁶Israel was not just aware that she was sinning against God, but she realized why, and in what way she had sinned against God. Most believers, when put under severe discipline, usually have a clue as to why they are under discipline. They might blame others to start with, but God will always find a way to shine the light on the

¹⁶ <http://kukis.org/Judges/Judges10.pdf>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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circumstance—the sin of turning away from God! It gets more and more difficult as a society moves further and further from divine viewpoint. ¹⁷It's true of all of us - we have been created with a "God shaped vacuum" and if we will not worship the One True God, we will worship the god of self, of money, of power, etc. These latter gods make no moral demands "per se" on us and thus we can do as we please, doing whatever seems right in our own eyes. The Israelites were blind or simply stupid to ignore God's Law, but we do the same when we put God outside our daily events instead of at the center of them. But Israel acknowledged that they had abandoned God.

10:11 And the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Did not I deliver you from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines?— The Lord answered them by bringing them to remembrance of what He had already done for them. Egypt's people, the Amorites, and the people of Ammon were cruel to you, 'Did I not deliver you?' And the Philistines were cruel to you. 'Did I not deliver you?'

10:12 The Zidonians also, and the Amalekites, and the Maonites, did oppress you; and ye cried to me, and I delivered you out of their hand,— God continued to remind Israel of her past history. The glory had been theirs because God Himself had delivered them from their many oppressors.

- ¹⁸The first here was **Egypt**. Egypt eventually enslaved Israel to the point where it was completely unbearable. Thus this became the Exodus (when they went out of Egypt).
- When on the east side of the Jordan, God had not ordered Israel to engage in any aggressive behavior. They implored the semi-hostile nations to allow them to pass through. Israel sent messages to Sihon, who was the king of the Amorites, asking for a peaceful and temporary passage through his country in Num.21:21–22. God had helped them to defeat the **Amorites**. (Look at the story about Sihon and Og).
- The **Ammonites** had oppressed Israel along with the Moabites in the time of Ehud (Jdgs.3:12) but God delivered through Ehud. He had also helped them to defeat the people from Ammon through Jephthah. (*Read the entire chapter 11 of Judges, with such moving scriptures*).
- The fourth hostile group mentioned here are the **Philistines**. Only one direct altercation with the Philistines has been mentioned previously in Judges, was when Shamgar struck down 600 Philistines with an ox-goad (Jdgs.3:31).
- The Canaanites' border was from Sidon unto Gaza (Gen.10:15). When Joshua was taking the northern portion of Israel, he chased the enemies all the way to **Zidon**, indicating that he did not go into Sidon and take it (Josh.11:8). **The point is:** the Lord delivered them into their hands; they had yet to be subdued (Jdgs.1:31).
- The **Amalekites** went against Israel after they came out of Egypt, coming to the land of Canaan. Joshua and his men went to fight the army of Amalek. As long as Moses held the rod up they were winning. He became tired and Aaron and Hur rolled a stone for him to sit on and they stood on each side holding up his hands. As a result, Joshua and his troops crushed the army of Amalek (Ex. 17:10-13). And when the Amalekites sided with the Moabites and Ammon (Jdgs. 3:13), God delivered them.
- Israel's people had also defeated the **Maonites**, meaning either the old inhabitants of Maon, a city in the mountains of Judah, near to which was a wilderness of this name, (Josh.15:55) or probably those same people from Midian. Not too much is known about the Maonites.

God reminded them how much He had helped them to escape from their oppressors when they cried out. He delivered the Israelites from seven different tribes. That's completion!

¹⁷ http://www.preceptaustin.org/judges_10_commentary.htm

¹⁸ <http://kukis.org/Judges/Judges10.pdf>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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10:13 Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more,— We see God takes a different position with the Israelites after they had cried out to Him in their sin this time. God says this is a no, no, you left me and you have served other gods, so I will not save you anymore. What made it so different this time; because they had repeated this scenario so many times? You know a parent keeps giving a child chance after chance because they are hoping they would turn from doing wrong. Eventually, the parent finally gives over to tough love and turns them over to God. Well, God now quits the deliverance phase, telling them what they didn't want to hear. They literally took God for granted! He usually comes through is what they probably said to themselves. Well at this point, God is showing His tough love on them. As I said three weeks ago in another lesson, (one way to put it is): *'if you like sin so much or idolatry so much, I'll let you be with them as slaves, because that's what sin is—slavery!'*

10:14 Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation. When God saw that the people of Israel had turned their backs on Him, He reprimanded them for serving other gods. In sarcasm He told them to, *"Go and cry unto the gods which they had chosen; and let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation."* WoW! This kind of ruling put Israel in the kind of perspective which they could understand. They knew that when they stopped and thought about it, no other god could deliver them, for He's the only One, true to His holy Word. If they looked back at the last seven tribes He had delivered them from, they would believe, and truly repent instead of continually going back to repeatedly sin. They had forsaken God, and God was forsaking them! So, for them to hear "**no**" from God, had to have hit a nerve; tested their seriousness to change; hit them so hard to the core.

10:15 And the children of Israel said unto the Lord, We have sinned: do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good. When you're in this position, you'll do anything to get it right! And the children of Israel realized the desperate plight into which they had fallen...

- They made a confession of their sin in the simplest terms they understood it by saying only, "**We have sinned.**"
- At the same time, they threw themselves completely upon the mercy of God. **They asked Him to "do unto them whatever seemed good unto Him."** Also, God would deliver them from the oppressors who were besieging them.
- Also, **Deliver us only, we pray thee, this day.**

10:16 And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the Lord: and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel. The people of Israel were really ready for change when they tore down the idols which they had erected. They changed their ways and began to worship God in the manner which He had prescribed. Israel finally discovered that serving God is better than serving idols. When God saw this kind of complete about-face on the part of His people, it is said, *"His soul is grieved for the misery of Israel"* meaning he couldn't bear Israel's misery any longer. ¹⁹God looked upon disobedient Israel with compassion, not hatred. It was "difficult" for God to allow Israel to stay in their misery, though it was best for them. He longed to rescue them but would not do it until it was good for them. Like the perfect loving parent, God hated to see Israel suffer, even when it was good for them. Their misery was not only the oppression brought on them by the Philistines and the Ammonites, but it was a misery of soul which had brought about their repentance.

10:17 Then the children of Ammon were gathered together, and encamped in Gilead. And the children of

¹⁹ <http://www.enduringword.com/commentaries/0710.htm>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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Israel assembled themselves together, and encamped in Mizpeh. Remember there is still war raging against Israel (10:8-9). In preparation for the ensuing encounter of the Ammonites' threat against Israel, the Ammonites assembled in that part of Gilead which they had possessed, while the Israelites got ready to defend themselves by assembling and encamping at Mizpeh. "*Mizpeh*" means "*watchtower*" and may be identical with the Mizpeh where Jacob and Laban piled the stones of witness between them. It may also be identified with Ramath-Mizpeh and Ramoth-Gilead (Deut.4:43; Josh.13:26; 1Kgs.4:13). When you get ready for war, you have to have the banner of God going before you.

10:18 And the people and princes of Gilead said one to another, What man is he that will begin to fight against the children of Ammon? he shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead. And at this same time, the Israelites were not prepared for battle because they did not have a recognized leader, so they thought. Therefore, **the people and princes of Gilead** began to ask **What man is to fight against the children of Ammon?** It was necessary for them as a people through their recognized leaders, their princes, to select one to be their captain or head because they always worked well with a judge over them; they were obedient when the judge was leading them. Until they had such a recognized leader, it was impossible for them to make a united effort against their oppressors. This would become their seventh judge. You notice all these sevens—completion! God is always bringing us to completion, unity, and of one accord. We've got to remember to always have a repentant heart. God will always show us how to get there to be delivered!

SUMMARY:

10:6-10 The children of Israel turn from the Lord and turned back to evil (practicing idolatry) where they served Baalim and Ashtaroah and many other gods. Israel was attracted to these other gods not because of the beauty of an idol image, but because of what was associated with the pagan deity (weather, fertility, financial and so called blessings). **The anger of the Lord being hot against Israel** was because of Israel's sin—idolatry, therefore, He allows the Philistines and the Ammonites to **oppress them for 18 years**. The Ammonites crossed over Jordan into the land of Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim and vexed them also. Again God allows heathen nations to oppress His people. The Ammonites, whose power had been broken by Ehud, one of the earlier judges (second judge), had again become strong and were plundering Israel. Israel was never blessed when they served these other gods. Instead, God allowed them to be harassed, oppressed and severely distressed - but God gave them what they wanted. 10 The Israelites finally could not put up with the oppression of the other nations and began to cry out to the Lord, saying "*We have not obeyed you, we have sinned against you, and we have left our God and have served Baalim.*"

10:11-14 Just as a parent feels great rejection when a child rebels, so does God when we ignore or neglect Him, especially when we already know better. So, the Lord answered them by bringing them to their remembrance of what He had already done for them. **Did not I deliver you from the Egyptians, from the Amorites, from the children of Ammon, and the Philistines? The Zidonians also, and the Amalekites, and the Maonites, did oppress you; and ye cried to me, and I delivered you out of their hand.** This is a list of people that Israel had been oppressed by and God delivered them: God reminded them how much He had helped them to escape from their oppressors when they cried out. He delivered the Israelites from seven different tribes. That's completion! 13 But God takes a different position with the Israelites after they had cried out to Him in their sin this time. God says this is a no, no, you left me and you have served other gods, so I will not save you anymore. 14 When God saw that the

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people of Israel had turned their backs on Him, He reprimanded them for serving other gods. In sarcasm He told them to, *"Go and cry unto the gods which they had chosen; and let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation."*

10:15-16 15 When you're in this position, you'll do anything to get it right! And the children of Israel realized the desperate plight in which they had fallen into. They said *"We have sinned, do thou unto us whatsoever seems good."* 16 The people of Israel tore down the idols which they had erected. They changed their ways and began to worship God in the manner which He had prescribed. When God saw this kind of complete about-face on the part of His people, it is said, *"His soul is grieved for the misery of Israel"* meaning he couldn't bear Israel's misery any longer. 17 Ammonites assembled in the part of Gilead which they had possessed, and the Israelites assembled and encamped at Mizpeh. 18 The leaders of the people of Gilead said to each other, *"Whoever will take the lead in attacking the Ammonites will be head over all who live in Gilead."* (10:15-18).

APPLICATION:

Take a look at life to see how many times you've been in the same situation. See what the outcome was and what it took to get into the situation and what it took to get out of the situation. Was there any improvement?

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11:1 Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valour, and he was the son of an harlot: and Gilead begat Jephthah. The name "*Jephthah*" means "*God opens the womb.*" He was the son of a Gileadite named Gilead, probably from the ancestor Gilead, the grandson of Manasseh (Numb.26:29). Jephthah was not the blame for his birth, and even though he was the son of a harlot and his father acknowledged him, he was also known as "a mighty man of valour."

11:2 And Gilead's wife bare him sons; and his wife's sons grew up, and they thrust out Jephthah, and said unto him, Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house; for thou art the son of a strange woman. For Gilead had a wife and she bore sons for Gilead and those sons grew up, but didn't want any part of Jephthah, the illegitimate son. They threw him out of his father's house calling him the son of a strange woman. When Gilead died and the other sons divided up the inheritance, Jephthah was not to receive any of it.

11:3 Then Jephthah fled from his brethren, and dwelt in the land of Tob: and there were gathered vain men to Jephthah, and went out with him. Disinherited by his half-brothers, Jephthah moved northeastward into the land of Tob. It was there that he gathered around him a group of vain men, meaning empty and reckless ones. These men allied with Jephthah, thereby, he was able to gather a band of outcasts to follow him.

11:4 And it came to pass in process of time, that the children of Ammon made war against Israel. The time came when Israel was ²⁰attacked by the Ammonites who were trying to take their land. The children of Ammon were the descendants of Abraham's nephew Lot through an incestuous relationship with one of his own daughters. The Ammonites were cousins to the Jews, but they were also there perpetual enemies.

11:5 And it was so, that when the children of Ammon made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob:— So when the Ammonites made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead found themselves needing Jephthah who had been disinherited by his brothers and had fled to the land of Tob. The elders went to Tob, for they needed to have a strong leader and Jephthah was known as a "*mighty man of valour*" (11:1). He has boldness and determination in facing great danger, especially in battle.

11:6 And they said unto Jephthah, Come, and be our captain, that we may fight with the children of Ammon. The elders of Gilead asked Jephthah to come and be the captain of their army and fight against the children of Ammon. I don't think the people went to God first or prayed about it.

²⁰ http://www.sermonnotebook.org/judges/Judges%2013%20-%20Judges%2011_1-11.htm
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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11:7 And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, **Did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my father's house? and why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress?**— But Jephthah answered the elders of Gilead with a question. *"Did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my father's house? and why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress?"* Well, I can see Jephthah's concern and puzzlement. Undoubtedly the elders had gone along with the brothers and expelled him from his father's house, but, at their time of distress they made the decision to bring him back. Probably saying, *"oh he's not so bad!"*

11:8 And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, **Therefore we turn again to thee now, that thou mayest go with us, and fight against the children of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.** WOW! Can you imagine: being kicked out of your house; want to bring you back to fight a war, and then put you the head over all the inhabitants without a "I'M SORRY; FORGIVE US?"

11:9 And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, **If ye bring me home again to fight against the children of Ammon, and the Lord deliver them before me, shall I be your head?**— Jephthah is now asking the elders can I really trust this? Can I really trust what you said? Jephthah is really saying But if that happens: if he comes back with them and fight against the Ammonites, and the Lord puts them at his mercy, shall he be their chief over Gilead?

11:10 And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, **The Lord be witness between us, if we do not so according to thy words.** The elders swore to Jephthah that God was their witness between them and he; that the words they spoke were true and would come to pass.

11:11 Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and captain over them: and Jephthah uttered all his words before the Lord in Mizpeh. At their word Jephthah seemed to be able to get over the things they had done to him. He did not stay bitter. He went with the elders of Gilead, and he was acclaimed captain; their leader. And before the Eternal God in Mizpeh, Jephthah repeated all his conditions in a solemn public meeting as the elders acted as representors of the people invoking God as witness.

11: 12-13 ²¹Jephthah tries a series of diplomatic measures to cool tensions with the Ammonites and avoid all out war. In correspondence with the king of Ammon, Jephthah learns that they are attacking Israel because they want back some of the land that Israel took when it entered Canaan, 11: 13. Displaying an amazing grasp of Hebrew history, Jephthah answers the Ammonites with several convincing arguments that prove they are wrong in attacking the people of Israel.

SYNOPSIS:

²¹[http://www.sermonnotebook.org/judges/judges 14 - judges 11_29-40.htm](http://www.sermonnotebook.org/judges/judges%2014%20-%20judges%2011_29-40.htm)
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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11:14-22 – The Israelites did not take the land from the Ammonites. They took it from the Ammorites who originally took it from the Moabites. The Ammonites had no stake in the land at all.

11: 23-24 – The Lord had given the land to Israel. God was given all the glory and credit for giving them the land. Jephthah tells them to take what their god has given them and be satisfied.

11:25-26 – Israel had lived in the land for hundreds of years. The Ammonites had not tried to claim the land during the three hundred years Israel had possessed, why were they attempting to claim it now?

11:27-28 – The Ammonites are reminded that by attacking Israel, they are in fact attacking God! He will judge who is right and He will give the victory to whom He chooses! The king of Ammon paid no attention to Jephthah's message.

11:29 **Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead, and Manasseh, and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over unto the children of Ammon.** The king of Ammon paid no attention to Jephthah's message (11:28). God graciously empowered Jephthah and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. As Jephthah leads the armies of Gilead to battle, he passed over Gilead, and Manasseh, then he passed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and from there he passed over unto the children of Ammon.

11:30 **And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands,**— Jephthah wanted victory over the Ammonites so badly that he made a foolish vow to God. It was not required. ³The Spirit of God helped him to free his people. However, he did not understand God's plans. He did not trust God's power. He wanted to please God by what he did. But God did not want people to praise him in this way. In God's Law, a vow was a promise to God that should not be broken; carrying as much force as a written contract.

11:31 **Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering.** The vow: the first thing that walked through the door of his house to meet him when he returns home from the battle shall be offered up to the Lord as a burnt offering. We will learn that it would be his only daughter.

11:32-40 - Jephthah then learns that the Ammonites believe that Israel had stolen some land from them. And to avoid battle, Jephthah attempts to explain how the Israelites got the land. That didn't satisfy them. Therefore, the Spirit of the Lord comes upon Jephthah and he leads an army against the Ammonites. Jephthah makes a vow that if the Lord gives him victory over the Ammonites, upon returning, he will sacrifice as a burnt offering the first thing that comes out of his house to greet him. Well they completely defeat the Ammonites and to Jephthah's <http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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surprise, his only daughter is the first one to come out of the house (*his only child*) to greet him. He is in tears, tearing his clothes. She said *"Let this thing be done unto me: leave me alone two months, that I may go up and down on the mountains and weep for my virginity, I and my companions."* And after the two months she returned to her father and the vow was carried out. and it became a custom that the daughters of Israel went year by year to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in the year.

SUMMARY:

God used Jephthah to be Israel's eighth Deliverer and judge. And a time came that the Ammonites began to make war against Israel. The elders of Gilead sought after Jephthah to be their captain and commander to fight against the Ammonites. Jephthah knew that they hated him and drove him from his father's house, so he's wondering why they are coming after him when they're in trouble for this position. The elders still want him and to be head of all the inhabitants of Gilead. Jephthah couldn't believe them and asked again *"I will be your head?"* The elders went so far as to say that the Lord will be their witness between the two of them. Jephthah finally accepted after having some reluctance and began to utter all his words before the Lord in Mizpeh (**11:4-11**).

God graciously empowered Jephthah and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him and he led his army across the land of Gilead and many more. But Jephthah made a foolish vow unto the Lord which was not required, that if God would help him deliver the Ammonites into his hands, that when he returns home in peace, the first person coming out of his house to meet him would be sacrificed as a burnt offering to the Lord. (**11:29-31**).

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SYNOPSIS:

Chapter 12:1-15 Israel had just won a great battle, but instead of joy, in **Judges Chapter 12** there was pettiness and quarreling. The tribe of Ephraim was angry and jealous that they were not invited to join in the fighting, though Jephthah said he had invited them but they wouldn't come. This was the same thing they had pulled on Gideon (Chp.8:1-3). And now, Ephraim begins to insult the people of Gilead. They were so angry that they threatened to burn down Jephthah's house with him in it. So, Jephthah explained to them that they failed to come, so they went without Ephraim's help, and the Lord gave Jephthah and his army victory! Therefore, the proud Ephraimites who didn't like being left out had nothing really to complain about. In contrast, Gideon pacified Ephraim by reminding them of Ephraim's accomplishment in the capture of two of the greatest princes of Midian, however, Jephthah took a more direct approach by attacking them in retaliation.

Jephthah defeats 42,000 of their soldiers and the men of Ephraim became fugitives (renegades). There was a test to identify the fugitives from Ephraim, Jephthah places a checkpoint at the fords of the Jordan River and forces all that tried to pass by to say the password "*Shibboleth*" which means "*stream*" or "*floods*". If the person could not pronounce the word correctly using the "h" consonant, and instead they say "*Sibboleth*", they would be dragged away and killed. It was a simple test, but it worked. This section ends abruptly with the statement that Jephthah judged Israel six years, died, and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead.

After Jephthah dies, **ibzan** of Bethlehem becomes judge and judged Israel for seven years. He had 30 sons and 30 daughters who marry outside their clan. Ibzan, the **tenth judge** dies and is buried at Bethlehem.

After Ibzan dies, **Elon** from Zebulun becomes the **eleventh judge** who judged Israel for ten years. He dies and is buried at Aijalon in Zebulun.

After Elon dies, **Abdon** (son of Hillel) from Pirathon becomes the **twelveth judge** for eight years. He has 40 sons and 30 grandsons who rode on seventy donkeys. He dies and was buried in Pirathon, in Ephraim, in the hill country of the Amalekites.

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13:1 And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years. Once again the cycle of sin returns and God's children began to do evil again in His sight. And He delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years. This was the longest servitude that Israel had experienced when handed into the hands of the enemy at a time judges reigned.

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|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. To Bablyon 8yrs (3:7-8). | 5. To Midian 7yrs (6:1). |
| 2. To Moab 18yrs (3:12-14). | 6. To Philistines and Ammonites 18yrs (10:6-18). |
| 3. To Philistia—time unknown (3:31). | 7. To Philistines 40yrs (13:1). |
| 4. To Canaanites 20yrs (4:1-3). | |

He allowed them to be conquered. This suffering was not caused by God, but resulted from, the fact that the people ignored God as their true judge and ruler. The Philistines were able to penetrate the Israelite territory all the way to Shiloh, where they destroyed the tabernacle. How could this happen again? If we continue to harden our hearts against God, we can expect the same fate as Israel. Well, its judge died and it's repetition all over again.

13:2 And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren, and bare not. In Zorah, there was a man called Manoah from Dan's tribe. He had a wife that could not have children. His name is unknown.

13:3 And the angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son. The revelation of God's intention to rescue and deliver Israel happens when the Angel of the Lord appears not to the Deliverer this time, but to the wife of Manoah of the tribe of Dan in the city of Zorah, who is without child; barren. Although her name was not given or mentioned, she was deemed important of an appearance of an Angel of the Lord. He is none other than God Himself (Jesus Christ in angelic form), as He appeared to Abraham and Sarah (Gen.17:19). He is appearing again to give good news to an unnamed woman that she would conceive and bear a son.

13:4 Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing:— To prepare her for her son, restrictions are already given to the mother from the Angel of the Lord:

1. You (the mother) shall drink no wine nor strong drink (13:4).
2. You (the mother) shall eat no unclean thing (dead body) (13:4).

Their baby son is not even named yet; not until we get to Judges 13:24.

13:5 For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. The angel repeats again that she shall conceive and bear a son.

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3. No razor shall come upon his (your son's) head (13:5).

The reason for these restrictions is that her child would become a Nazarite unto God. The term "Nazirite" comes from the Hebrew word "nazir" meaning "consecrated" or "separated" and doing all the above things. A "Nazirite Vow" was usually entered voluntarily for a temporary period, but for this case, it was neither voluntary nor temporary, but for his entire life. The laws governing the Nazarite Vow are given in Numbers 6. In this instance the parents will make the vow for the son (Samson). This was her firstborn and she had to be careful as to what she ate and drank because her diet would influence her unborn Nazarite son, and could defile him. There was such an obligation on these parents and also an honor for them and the baby to be born. She will dedicate and separate him (for service) straight from the womb to be a Nazarene, meaning, will be given to God from the time of his birth. And she was told that he would be Israel's Deliverer from the Philistines.

13:6 Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible: but I asked him not whence he was, neither told he me his name: — For a woman, being barren was the opposite of this great news. You can't help but run and tell someone else. However, she really didn't know who he was. She didn't mince with any questions; didn't even ask who he was, and he didn't even tell her his name. So, leaving the angel, she ran to tell her husband Manoah. With excitement she refers to the Angel as a man of God, saying that he had appeared to her and had the countenance of an angel of God which frightened her.

13:7 But he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean thing: for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death. Everything the Angel had said to her, she repeated back to Manoah. And the angel did tell her that she would conceive and bear a son. I think that was the most important thing she heard and received. Second, she was not to drink any wine or strong drink. Thirdly, she was not to eat any unclean (contaminated and polluted) thing. As in verse 5, a "Nazirite Vow" was usually entered voluntarily for a temporary period, but for this case, it was neither voluntary nor temporary, but for her baby, he would be a Nazarite to God from the time of his birth to the end of his entire life; to the day of his death.

13:8 Then Manoah intreated the LORD, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born. Manoah's response was: to plead and beg the Lord. He prayed that the Angel would return and give more instructions about what they are to do in raising their child. His response was better than Zacharias (Lk.1:18). Zacharias doubted the Angel's Word, but Manoah prayed to get more instructions about the child He had predicted and they were to receive.

13:9-23 The Lord answered Manoah's prayer. The Angel of the Lord appears again to Manoah's wife while she is in the field and she runs to tell her husband to come. He sees the Angel of the Lord, but obviously, Manoah does not know who this is either. He does not fall down on the ground in fear; he does not worship Him. The Angel repeats His instructions to raise the child as a Nazarite. He also says, "*do not eat anything that comes of the vine* (including grapes and raisins); *strong drink; no unclean thing; all that I have commanded her let her observe.*" It was no "ifs", "ands", or "buts" about it; this was a command! Manoah and his wife desire to honor the Angel by suggesting that the Angel of the Lord stay until they could prepare a meal for Him. What Manoah is offering is simply common, mid-eastern hospitality. He doesn't realize who this stranger is. The Angel

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related that He would not eat, but what would be appropriate would be to offer a burnt offering to God. Manoah still didn't know He was the Angel of the Lord.

He also wanted to know the Angel's name so they could honor Him when the prophecy came to pass. It was customary to give gifts to prophets and seers. However, the Angel says it's a secret! While Manoah offers a young goat (kid) as burnt offering, the Angel does something so wondrously by ascending into the fire blazing from the altar toward heaven, proving that He Himself was a Spirit being from heaven and Immortal; God Himself. They finally realizes that He was the Angel of the Lord, and they both became very frightened and fell on their faces to the ground. They thought they would die because they had seen God. However, Manoah's wife chooses to believe that if God wanted to kill them:

- He wouldn't have accepted burnt offering from someone that He is going to execute.
- He wouldn't have shown His ascension into heaven.
- He wouldn't have told them in advance that they were to bear a son and telling them all those things to do.

The calm reasoning and intelligence of his wife causes us to realize why God chose to principally appear to her. He appeared to her to prepare her to commitment which began with an offering to the Lord.

13:24 And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him. For this purpose, all that Manoah and his wife went through of fulfilling the commitment of the Nazarite Vow, now the son promised to them has been born, and his name is Samson. In this verse is the first of hearing and knowing Manoah and his wife's baby's name. His name means "*sunlight*" or "*brightness*", like the nation of Israel who had been chosen to be holy to God. Samson grew and experienced the blessings.

13:25 And the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol. Samson was prepared from the womb. He was set apart and consecrated in the womb, as his mother fulfilled all that the Angel of the Lord had told her to do. As Samson grew, he was still being groomed for leadership. The Spirit of the Lord began to stir him and give him a sense of God's mission, and he began to display his amazing ability. Because of the anointing of the Spirit of the Lord upon Samson, his power was a weapon to fight. He was what Israel needed at that time in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.

SUMMARY:

²²Only two elements in the recurrent pattern remain in the Samson story: apostasy and oppression. We look in vain for a cry for help or deliverance from the Philistines. Instead, during the forty-year period of Philistine oppression, an Angel of the Lord appeared to the barren wife of an Israelite named Manoah with the announcement that she would bear a son. He was to be a Nazirite, "dedicated" to the Lord at the time of his birth. A Nazirite was forbidden to touch the carcass of dead bodies, to drink alcoholic beverages, or to cut their hair. The special purpose for which Samson was dedicated was the beginning of the deliverance of Israel from the hand of the Philistines. She told her

²² <http://www.enterthebible.org/resourcelink.aspx?rid=660>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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husband in detail what the Man of God said, but she couldn't tell him his name nor did he reveal it to her. All she could say was that she would conceive and bear a son and reveal the Nazarite Vow to him. Her son would be a Nazarite to God from the time of his birth, to the end of his entire life; to the day of his death. Manoah's response was: to plead and beg the Lord, meaning pray that the Angel would return and give more instructions about what they are to do in raising their child who was to be born. (13:1-7).

The son of Manoah and his wife was born, and he was called Samson, meaning *"sunlight" or "brightness"*, and the Lord blessed him as he grew. Then the Spirit of the Lord began to stir him and give him a sense of God's mission, and he began to display his amazing ability. Because of the anointing of the Spirit of the Lord upon Samson, his power was a weapon to fight. He was what Israel needed at that time in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol (13:24-25).

APPLICATION:

We were born with a purpose. Everything we do is preparation for the purpose. Leadership comes before occupation. That's why preparation comes before leadership. Preparation involves going through some tests. You can't occupy before preparing. And all of it relies on being under God's leadership first. Our walk in God's path is important because we're being set-up for the purpose!

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SYNOPSIS:

14:10-20 Samson is about to get married to a Philistine girl, but during the party which last for seven days, Samson proposed a riddle for the 30 Philistine men and they were to declare its meaning within seven days. If they didn't, Samson wins (30 sheets and 30 change of garments). If they did get it right, they would win (the same from Samson). So the riddle goes: *"Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness."* On the seventh day the men didn't know the answer and pressured; well, blackmailed his wife to find out the answer, or they would burn down her and her father's house. So, Samson's wife goes to him sobbing and saying you don't love me or else you would have told me the riddle. So, he tells her and she told the men. Then the men of the city tell the answer to Samson: *"What is sweeter than honey? And what is stronger than a lion?"* Samson goes right in on them and says: *"If you hadn't plowed with my heifer, you wouldn't have found the answer to my riddle!"* Samson was aware of the source. He was saying, *"If you hadn't manipulated my wife, you wouldn't have learned the answer to the riddle."* And at that point the Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson (enabling him) and he went to the city of Ashkelon and killed thirty men, took their clothing in payment to give to the young men who had told him the answer to his riddle. He was furious about it and abandoned his wife and went back home to live with his father and mother. And Samson's wife was given in marriage (by her father) instead to the man who was the best man at Samson's wedding.

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SYNOPSIS:

15:1-8 At the time of wheat harvest, Samson visited his wife bringing a young goat as an offering and desiring to go into her chamber to sleep with her. Samson had never consummated the marriage and so he probably thought he was legally married to her, he was not. So, her father prohibited him to her. The father thought he utterly hated her, so he gave her in marriage to the best man in Samson's wedding. And now in turn the father offers him her younger sister who is prettier than her. *'Marry her instead'* he says. Now, Samson was furious and tells him *"You can't blame me for whatever happens now."* Samson went out and caught 300 hundred foxes and tied their tails together in pairs with a torch between each pair. Then he lit the torches and let the foxes run through the fields of the Philistines, burning the grain to the ground along with all the sheaves and shocks of grain, and destroying the olive trees. The Philistines wanted to know who had done this and they told them Samson had did it, and all the other details. And the Philistines took the girl and her father and burned them alive. Well, this didn't sit well with Samson, and he avenged and wouldn't quit until he's done. He tore into them ripping out the hip and thigh killing many of them in a huge slaughter. Then he went to live in a cave in the rock of Etam.

15:9 Then the Philistines went up, and pitched in Judah, and spread themselves in Lehi. The Philistines in turn sent a huge posse invading into Judah and raided Lehi after what Samson had done.

15:10 And the men of Judah said, Why are ye come up against us? And they answered, To bind Samson are we come up, to do to him as he hath done to us. Now, the men of Judah are wondering why the Philistines are coming up against them, and they were told that they wanted to capture Samson and do to him what he's done to them.

15:11 Then three thousand men of Judah went to the top of the rock Etam, and said to Samson, Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? what is this that thou hast done unto us? And he said unto them, As they did unto me, so have I done unto them. So, they knew where Samson was (in a cave in the rock of Etam), and 3000 men of Judah went to the rock of Etam inquiring of what he had done because it was affecting them (Judah). Why so many men of Judah go? Well, Judah wanted to be prepared. They asked if he knew that the Philistines ruled them. Samson's reply was that he only did to them what has been done to him.

15:12 And they said unto him, We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines. And Samson said unto them, Swear unto me, that ye will not fall upon me yourselves. The spokesperson of the 3000 men of Judah lets Samson know that they have only come to bind him up and deliver him into the hand of the Philistines. Samson wants them to promise *"that they will not fall upon him themselves"*, meaning Judah won't kill him themselves.

15:13 And they spake unto him, saying, No; but we will bind thee fast, and deliver thee into their hand: but surely we will not kill thee. And they bound him with two new cords, and brought him up from the rock. Judah promised that they themselves would not kill him, but they were only there to bind him up and deliver him into <http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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the hand of the Philistines. Samson allowed them to bind him with two new cords and they brought him down from the rock.

15:14 And when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him: and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands. This just amazes me. The Philistine men thought they had won and began shouting against Samson when Judah brought him down to Lehi. His spider antennas came up, for *"the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him."* God is still using him to get rid of the Philistines, and the cords broke that bound him and fell off his arms and became like fiery burnt strands of flax. The bands just melted loose from off his hands.

15:15 And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith. With a new donkey's jawbone lying on the ground, Samson killed 1000 men.

15:16 And Samson said, With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men. This seems like a chant or song. Samson says that with a single jawbone of an ass he killed 1000 men and he's piled them in heaps on top of heaps.

15:17 And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking, that he cast away the jawbone out of his hand, and called that place Ramathlehi. When Samson finished speaking, he threw the jawbone out of his hand and called the place Ramathlehi which means *"Jawbone Hill."*

15:18 And he was sore athirst, and called on the LORD, and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?— Samson had gotten so thirsty that his need for water led him to question as he called upon the Lord: *"Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?"*

15:19 But God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived: wherefore he called the name thereof Enhakkore, which is in Lehi unto this day. God opened up a mortar or socket of a tooth (a hollow place) that was in the jaw (jawbone), and water came out of it. When Samson drank the water that had gushed out, he became strong again and his spirit was revived, so he called the spring of water Enhakkore which means *"Caller's Spring or Praying Well"* which is in Lehi unto this day.

15:20 And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years. Samson was Israel's leader for 20yrs during the Philistine period.

SUMMARY:

The Philistines sent a huge posse to invade Judah and raided Lehi after Samson had burned and destroyed their grain using 300 foxes tying their tails together in pairs with a lit torch between each pair. The men of Judah are

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wondering why the Philistines are coming up against them. The Philistines tells them that they wanted to capture Samson and do to him what he's done to them. (3000 men of Judah went to the rock of Etam inquiring of him of what has he done because it was affecting them (Judah). They asked if he knew that the Philistines ruled them. His reply was that he only did to them what has been done to him. So Judah lets him know that they have only come to bind him up and deliver him into the hand of the Philistines. Samson wants them to promise that they (Judah) will not kill him themselves. And Judah promised that they themselves wouldn't kill him, but they were only there to bind him up and deliver him into the hand of the Philistines. Samson allowed them to bind him with two new cords, and they brought him down from the rock (**15:9-13**).

The Philistine men were shouting against Samson when they saw him in Lehi, and *"the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon Samson."* The cords broke that bound him, and fell off his arms and became like fiery burnt strands of flax. The bands melted loose from off his hands. There was a new donkey's jawbone lying on the ground with which Samson took and killed 1000 men. He piled them in heaps. When Samson finished speaking, he threw the jawbone out of his hand and called the place Ramathlehi which means *"Jawbone Hill"* (**15:14-17**).

Samson had gotten so thirsty that his need for water led him to question as he called upon the Lord: *"Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?"* God opened up a mortar or socket of a tooth (n hollow place) that was in the jaw (jawbone), and water came out of it. When Samson drank the water that had gushed out, he became strong again and his spirit was revived, so he called the spring of water Enhakkore (which means *"Caller's Spring or Praying Well"* which is in Lehi unto this day. Samson was Israel's leader for 20yrs during the Philistine period (**15:18-20**).

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SNOPSIS:

Chapter 16:4-5, 16-20 Time passed Samson fell in love with a woman in the valley of Sorek. Her name was Delilah. ⁵The *lords of the Philistines* (5 heads of the Philistines) came to bribe Delilah into discovering the secret of Samson's strength,¹⁶Delilah had pressed upon him so much day after day about this; urging him to tell her, till he was so vexed (annoyed and angry) and wearied to death. ¹⁷He couldn't stand it any longer and he begins to tell her: *"A razor has never come upon my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If my head is shaved, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak and be like any other man."* ¹⁸When Delilah saw the sincerity of Samson, she realized this was the inner truth from his heart. She then sent for the *lord of the Philistines* saying; *"Come quickly for he had told me his heart."* And they probably came running when they heard this, bringing her the money in their hands. ¹⁹Delilah made Samson go to sleep on her knees while she summoned a man to shave off the seven locks of hair from his head. She began to afflict him, meaning beat upon him until he awakened; taunting and mocking him with words to control him till he began to lose strength. ²⁰With words again she said *"The Philistines be upon thee Samson."* He awoke out of his sleep saying, *"I will go out as at other times and shake myself free."* But he did not know that the Lord had left him.

16:21 **But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house.** God had patiently dealt with Samson after he touched the dead lion and drank wine at the feast, but now as the outward sign of Samson's Nazirite vow disappeared, God's patience turned to judgment and Samson was utterly powerless without the help of the Lord. The Philistines for the first time were able to rush into Delilah's chamber and take Samson and bring him down to Gaza through the very gates he had recently carried upon his shoulders. Now he's blind because they have put out his eyes and bound him with fetters of brass in humiliation, and made him grind (grain) in the prison house.

16:22 **Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven.** But, his hair that was shaved off his head began to grow again.

16:23 **Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand.** The *lords of the Philistines* got together again for a great sacrifice to their god Dagon. They wanted to rejoice and praise their god for giving them the victory and deliverance over Samson their enemy into their hand. A great mistake!

16:24 **And when the people saw him, they praised their god: for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us.** The Philistines began to give praise to the god Dagon when they saw him (a statue). And they began to chant and shout: *"Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us."* Since the Philistines had control over the Israelites, they thought their god was stronger.

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16:25 And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made them sport: and they set him between the pillars. By this time the people were half drunk for their hearts were merry, and they began to call for Samson to be brought into their midst so they can have some fun (sport) with him. So, they called for Samson out of the prison house and made fun of him placing him between the pillars.

16:26 And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them. The lad that held blind Samson by the hand, led him into the presence of the Philistines, and Samson began to plead with him to have compassion to just let him feel the (two) pillars, and rest and lean against them; the same pillars that were supporting the house (the temple).

16:27 Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines were there; and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport. The house was packed full of men and women, and all the *lords of the Philistines*, and also about 3,000 men and women upon the roof of the temple structure watching Samson and making fun of him.

16:28 And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. Now, Samson sincerely calls upon the Lord to remember and strengthen him.

1. Samson calls upon the LORD (*Adonai*)—sovereign Lord, Ruler and Master.
2. He calls upon O Lord GOD (*Yahweh*)—Imminence, a presence that's accessible.
3. And he calls upon O God (*Elohim*)—speaks things into existence (the Triune nature of God); God Creator, Mighty and Strong!

He prays: "*I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.*" Samson is asking God for the only thing he could do in his state of blindness. He wanted to be strengthened one more time to be avenged; that the Philistines would pay back for the loss of his two eyes gauged out by the Philistines.

16:29 And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left. After praying Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the temple stood; that which bare it up, and he took hold and pushed against one with his right hand, and the other with his left.

16:30 And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life. At this point Samson says let him die with the Philistines. In spite of what Samson had done to get in this predicament, God heard his prayer, and Samson bowed himself with all his might pushing the pillars of the temple causing the temple to fall upon the *lords of the Philistines*, and all the people that were therein. God allowed Samson to destroy the heathen temple and its worshipers. So, the dead which he slew at his death were more than those he slew in his life. This was Samson's final victory.

16:31 Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought him up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the buryingplace of Manoah his father. And he judged Israel twenty years. After Samson died in the collapse of the temple of Dagon at Gaza with the Philistines, his brethren and all the house of his father came to get his body and bury him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the burying-place of

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Manoah his father; a hill country overlooking the valley of Sorek, for he was an only child. His father was probably deceased by this time. Samson judged Israel for 20yrs.

SUMMARY:

The Philistines captured Samson and gauged out his eyes and brought him down to Gaza bound with fetters of brass in humiliation, and made him grind (grain) in the prison house. But, his hair that was shaved off began to grow again (**16:21-22**).

The *lords of the Philistines* got together and wanted to rejoice and praise their god Dagon for giving them the victory and deliverance of Samson, their enemy into their hand. A great mistake! The people gave praise to the god Dagon when they saw him (a statue) and began to chant and shout. By this time the people were half drunk, for their hearts were merry, that they began to call for Samson, so they could have some fun with him, placing him between the pillars. The lad that held blind Samson by the hand, led him into the presence of the Philistines, and Samson began to plead with him to have compassion to just let him feel the (two) pillars, and rest and lean against them; the same pillars that were supporting the house (the temple). The house was packed full of men and women, with all the lords of the Philistines, and about 3,000 men and women upon the roof of the temple structure watching Samson and making fun of him (**16:23-27**).

Samson sincerely called upon the Lord to remember and strengthen him. He wanted to be strengthened one more time to be avenged; paid back for the loss of his two eyes gauged out by the Philistines. After praying Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the temple stood; that which bare it up, and he took hold and pushed against one with his right hand, and the other with his left. At this point Samson says to let him die with the Philistines. And Samson bowed himself with all his might and the temple fell upon the lords of the Philistines, and all the people that were therein. Samson in his death destroyed more than he slew in his life. This was Samson's final victory. After he died with the Philistines in the collapse of the temple of Dagon at Gaza, his fellow countrymen came to get his body and bury him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the burying-place of Manoah his father. Samson had judged Israel for 20yrs (**16:28-31**).

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