

Interpretation of Judges

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Introduction

1. The word judge is taken from a Canaanite origin, and the accurate translation indicates the meaning of a leader or chief. The judges mentioned in this book are not judges in our general sense. Their work was not to judge or issue rulings according to a specific law to achieve justice. Rather, they worked to restore righteousness in the community. They also worked to defend and liberate the rights of the community's life from the distress in which they fell because of sin.

2. These judges appeared between the death of Joshua and the beginning of the era of kings (beginning with Saul). They had authority, but not like kings, as the ruling was divine. In the sense that God is the hidden king of the people, and the judge acts as God's deputy. Each tribe had a chief who managed their affairs. As for the major matters that affected the congregation at the level of all the tribes or some of them together, such as fighting enemies and getting rid of their yoke, it was up to the judge.

3. The period of appearance of the judges was a sad period after the death of Joshua. If the book of Joshua showed a life of striving and victory, we find that after his death, the people turned to temporal pleasures, and they shared with the nations their pagan worship. The judge had no right to enact laws or place burdens on the people, but he judged and disciplined especially those who deviated to pagan worship. He led the battles against the nations. The judge was seen as a savior who would save the people from the power of the pagan nations, and that would be by leading them militarily through repentance and return to God with striving.

4. The judges had no wages from the people, no guards, no followers, and no one to serve them, but each spent on himself. It was God who appointed the judge, and sometimes the people chose him.

5. The book of Joshua is the book of free salvation, as Joshua assumes the leadership of the people to enter the Promised Land with them (a symbol of baptism now). However, the Book of Judges reveals the condition of most believers, as they neglect God's great gift and slack in demanding God's free promises, as their zeal stops. Most of them turned to participate with the Gentiles in their worship and in the pleasure in sin. In this book, we see God's way of dealing with His children if they make a mistake. The Lord chastises whoever the Lord loves: " For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives." (Hebrews 12: 6). God does not leave His children in abominations but disciplines them. We find God chastising them, using the nations themselves as a harsh chastisement rod, and when the people returned, God would send them a savior to save them. Therefore, this book is the book of the life of every believer who has tasted the sweetness of the new life with Christ Jesus, as it is the spiritual land that overflows with milk and honey. But instead of going from strength to strength, the

believer slackens spiritually and returns to a life of physical pleasure, so the Lord disciplines him until he turns him into a holy son.

6. God commanded them to exterminate the Canaanites, but they spared them, so they became a stumbling block for them, and they taught them their idolatry and vices, but rather they were the cause of their apostasy. These peoples are (the peoples of Mesopotamia, the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Canaanites, the Midianites, and the Philistines). We note that among them are peoples whom the Lord asked to exterminate and others that He did not ask of them, but rather He asked not to intermarry or mix with them and their idols. It was that the Lord used these peoples to discipline and humiliate them, as the punishment of sin is itself. And these peoples oppressed the Israelites and imposed heavy tributes on them. But when they cried out to God in their hardships and repented, God would pity them and appoint leaders for them who would give them special courage and wisdom, so they would save them from those hardships and be in charge of their affairs. And the judges exercised their office until the end of their lives.

7. Most likely, this book was written by the prophet Samuel, as it came in the Jewish tradition, and many of the church fathers agreed. He wrote it after establishing the kingdom order (Judges 19: 1 + 21: 25) and before David took Jerusalem (Judges 1: 21 + 2 Samuel 5: 6-8). Therefore, the time of writing was determined to be in the days of King Saul, and the prophet of that time was Samuel the Prophet. The objection to this phrase that appeared in (Judges 18: 30) "until the day of the captivity of the land." Some imagined that the book was written after the captivity, and in response to that, we say:

a. Perhaps this verse meant that captivity indicated the time the Philistines took the Ark of the Covenant (1 Samuel 4: 11; Psalm 78: 60, 61).

b. This phrase was added later to refer to Dan's paganism. The evidence that the book was not written after the captivity is that it does not contain any Chaldean words, and it is known that Ezra used to do so while compiling the books of the Old Testament.

8. We can say that the period of the judges was marked by apostasy, but few believers worshiped God, as evidenced by the presence of the meeting tent in Shiloh (Judges 18: 31), the celebration of the yearly feast (Judges 21: 19), the presence of the high priest, and the caring for the Ark of the Covenant (Judges 20: 27-28), and offering sacrifices to God (Judges 13: 15, 16...) and practicing circumcision and making vows (Judges 11: 30; 14: 3; 15: 18).

9. Although some positive aspects refer to the presence of some believers, however, in general, they appear in a very faint way, so we only hear about the Levites twice, accompanied by scandals. The presence of the high priest appeared as a passing passage, and this expresses:

a. The decline of the religious situation.

B. To show the person of Christ as a judge, not a high priest. Christ is the true judge for us.

10. When Christ performs His role as a high priest, He is the atoning intercessor, but in this book, He appears as a judge who disciplines His people if they sin and saves them if they repent. In their salvation, by the hands of the judge, we see the image of Christ, the powerful Savior, who saves us from the bondage of sin and the devil. But if we sin, Satan is allowed to strike the body to save the soul (Judges + 1 Corinthians 5: 5).

11. The events of this book begin with Joshua's death and end with Samson's death or before Samuel's beginning. It is very difficult to determine the duration of this period through the book because if we combined the periods in which the judges ruled with the periods of distress or slavery to the nations when there were no judges, we would find it to be 410 years. This is assuming that the judges came in succession, and it is calculated like this:

a. Slavery to Cushan-rishathaim 8 years.

b. Othniel judged - 40 years.

c. Slavery to Eglon - 18 years.

d. Peace in the days of Ehud and Shamgar - 80 years.

e. Harassing Jabin - 20 years.

f. The period of Deborah and Barak's judgement was 40 years.

g. Enslavement to Midian - 7 years.

h. Gideon's reign - 40 years.

i. Abimelech ruled (not a judge) - 3 years.

j. Tola's judicial period - 23 years.

K. Jair's judicial period - 22 years.

l. The Ammonites oppressed them for 18 years.

- m. Jephthah's judicial period - 6 years.
- n. Ibzan judicial period - 7 years.
- o. Elon's judicial period - 10 years.
- p. Abdon judicial period - 8 years.
- q. Enslavement to the Palestinians for 40 years.
- r. Samson's judicial period - 20 years.

But this is probably the case that the judges did not succeed each other, but rather one was contemporary with the other. Each judge was responsible for part of the country and not the whole country, meaning that the judge's authority did not include all the tribes. Therefore, the authority of the judges was local and not at the level of the entire people, and the judges did not represent a connected link like kings, and we note that:

East of Jordan: Ehud, Jephthah, Elon, and Yair

North of Canaan: Barak and Tola

Central Canaan: Abdoun

South of Canaan: Ibzan and Samson

Therefore, the judges' period is set at around 200-300 years and cannot be determined precisely.

12. We note God's merciful hand, despite his people's sins. The periods of chastisement and slavery were (Judges 8 + 18 + 20 + 7 + 3 + 18 + 40 = 114 years). While periods of peace (410-114 = 296 years). As if the periods of distress are about a quarter of the whole period.

13. Eli and the prophet Samuel are the other judges outside this book.

14. In the book, the work of the Holy Spirit appears with power, the spirit of power through which the judges triumphed over the nations, and He himself is the fiery spirit who gives us victory, not by human action, but by His work in us.

15. The Book of Judges is divided into three parts:

- a. The condition of the people after Joshua (Introduction to the Book), Chapters 1-2.

B. The era of judges from Othniel to Samson = and we find in it the distress of the people because of their sins, then their miraculous salvation when they repent through the judges, Chapters 3-16.

c. Two incidents during the era of the judges. They indicate the extent of the people's immersion in paganism, their corruption, and the calamity that befell the tribe of Benjamin because it protected the evildoers, Chapters 17-21.

Chapter 1

The Book of Joshua declares our inheritance, the Promised Land, with the true Joshua. The Book of Judges reveals the commitment to perpetuate the striving as long as we are in the body until we conquer all of Canaan. That is, we enjoy the fulfillment of the promise. In this chapter, we see various news. In (verses 2-21) we see Judah's invasion of southern Canaan. And in (verses 22-26) we see the takeover of Bethel by the tribe of Joseph. And in (verses 27-36) a list of cities from which the middle and northern tribes could not expel the Canaanites. Thus, we see that God records those who strive and those who fail in one chapter to encourage us to strive against Satan. The possibility of defeating Satan exists, provided that we strive and are not complacent.

(Verse 1): **Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass that the children of Israel asked the Lord, saying, "Who shall be first to go up for us against the Canaanites to fight against them?"**

asked the Lord: Probably by the Urim. We must not begin any work except with prayer. **Who shall be first to go up for us:** We expected that there would be no war after the death of Joshua, but the striving must continue after Jesus died for us and rose and ascended. And whoever neglects to strive loses what he obtained of the blessing that Christ died to give it to him. Note Paul's saying, "But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified." (1 Corinthians 9: 27). The expulsion of the Canaanites symbolizes the works of Satan, and God gave us this capability through the new life that was raised in Christ through baptism.

(Verse 2): **And the Lord said, "Judah shall go up. Indeed I have delivered the land into his hand."**

And the Lord said, "Judah: Judah is the strongest and most numerous. God did not give them this strength and abundance to sleep and be idle, but rather to fight (the parable of the talents). And Judah is more honourable, so they must be more committed to carrying out their duties. If we know that Christ came out of Judah, we understand that this also indicates that the spiritual war is led by Christ, who came out of the tribe of Judah (Revelation 6: 2).

(Verse 3): **So Judah said to Simeon his brother, "Come up with me to my allotted territory, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I will likewise go with you to your allotted territory." And Simeon went with him.**

Come up with me .. and I will likewise go with you: This is generosity from Judah because Simeon is weak, and the strong must support the weak. But in a symbolic sense, the strong Christ (Judah) is asking me, the weak (Simeon), i.e., the listener (the one who listens to the call and responds), to fight with Him, and Christ came out conquering and to conquer. (Christ and me = Judah with Simeon).

(Verses 4-7): **Then Judah went up, and the Lord delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand; and they killed ten thousand men at Bezek. 5 And they found Adoni-Bezek in Bezek, and fought against him; and they defeated the Canaanites and the Perizzites. 6 Then Adoni-Bezek fled, and they pursued him and caught him and cut off his thumbs and big toes. 7 And Adoni-Bezek said, "Seventy kings with their thumbs and big toes cut off used to gather scraps under my table; as I have done, so God has repaid me." Then they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died.**

Adoni: Master. **Bezek:** Sparkling. They are two characteristics of Satan, who could deceive man, possess him, and become his master with his false sparkling deceptions. Satan made sin sparkles before man, so he deceives him and makes him fall, so he is humiliated under Satan, and Satan reigns over him. Therefore, Adoni Bezek symbolizes Satan, who humiliated humanity that God created as kings (**Seventy kings** = a number that may symbolize all mankind that Satan has humiliated). Adoni Bezek had defeated **Seventy kings**, i.e., the chief of a tribe, throughout his wars. **with their thumbs and big toes cut off** = This was the custom of the Persians and some peoples of the region to prevent their enemies from using the sword, as if they had stopped them from war. They also humiliated them = **used to gather scraps under my table**, and Judah, when they conquered Adoni Bezek, did the same to him. God often allows evil that we inflicted on our brothers to befall us, so we know its harm and repent from it, and this is what happened with David + (Obadiah 15). Spiritually, the cutting off of the thumbs of the hand indicates a complete cessation of working for the kingdom of God, and the cutting off of the toes indicates the cessation of movement in the royal way. Thus, Satan humiliated humanity, disrupted its heavenly movement, and made it a prisoner of his own, eating like animals from the fallen crumbs from the devil's table, walking without dignity. Christ came out of the tribe of Judah. Following Him the tribe of Simeon, that is, all the believers who responded and heard His call, and defeated Satan, so Christ gave us the authority to trample him (Luke 10: 19, 20) after defeating him (Luke 10: 18) and note that Adoni-Bezek died in Jerusalem = **Jerusalem** = vision of peace. Peace cannot come to the heart unless Adoni Bezek dies first, that is, when we put an end to the enemy of goodness, the soul lives in peace.

(Verse 8): **Now the children of Judah fought against Jerusalem and took it; they struck it with the edge of the sword and set the city on fire.**

Probably, Judah seized Jerusalem, but the fortress remained in the hands of the Jebusites until the days of David, who seized it (2 Samuel 5: 6, 7). Most likely, the fire was set in a part of the city, as the children of Benjamin and Judah remained living there with the Jebusites (refer to verse 21).

(Verse 9): **And afterward the children of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites who dwelt in the mountains, in the South, and in the lowland.**

And afterward the children of Judah went down: Jerusalem is 2593 feet high. Whoever resides in Jerusalem cannot but continue to fight Satan and resist his deeds. **who dwelt in the mountains** = that is, Bethlehem and Hebron, and the mountain refers to pride. **in the South** = a region known as the Negev, which is characterized by drought and scarcity, and reaches the wilderness, and indicates the destruction of the world because of sin. **and in the lowland** = a low area extending between the coast and the Judean Mountain range, which is a fertile area. But as long as it is in the hands of the Canaanites, it refers to the fruits of sin. In each of the three regions, the children of God fight against the works of Satan and do not fear the violence of sin and the power of Satan (the mountains), nor are they attracted by its fruits (the lowland).

(Verses 10-15): **Then Judah went against the Canaanites who dwelt in Hebron. (Now the name of Hebron was formerly Kirjath Arba.) And they killed Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi. 11 From there they went against the inhabitants of Debir. (The name of Debir was formerly Kirjath Sepher.) 12 Then Caleb said, "Whoever attacks Kirjath Sepher and takes it, to him I will give my daughter Achsah as wife." 13 And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it; so he gave him his daughter Achsah as wife. 14 Now it happened, when she came to him, that she urged him to ask her father for a field. And she dismounted from her donkey, and Caleb said to her, "What do you wish?" 15 So she said to him, "Give me a blessing; since you have given me land in the South, give me also springs of water." And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.**

Kirjath Arba: Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim (Joshua 14: 15 + 15: 13).

(Verse 16): **Now the children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up from the City of Palms with the children of Judah into the Wilderness of Judah, which lies in the South near Arad; and they went and dwelt among the people.**

the children of the Kenite: The word Kenite means blacksmith, for they are wandering blacksmiths. They are the nephews of Moses' wife. And they stuck to Judah. **from the City of Palms** = Jericho, but he did not say Jericho because it had been ruined. **into the Wilderness of Judah** = They, like all the Bedouins, do not like to live in cities but rather prefer the wilderness. They lived with the people of this place, i.e., the Amalekites, and they continued until King Saul asked them to isolate until he exterminated the Amalekites. And the Rechabites (Jeremiah 35: 2) are of the Kenites.

(Verse 17): **And Judah went with his brother Simeon, and they attacked the Canaanites who inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed it. So the name of the city was called Hormah.**

utterly destroyed: They destroyed and beat it completely because of the bitterness they suffered in the war of the Amalekites (Numbers 14: 45).

(Verse 18): **Also Judah took Gaza with its territory, Ashkelon with its territory, and Ekron with its territory.**

But soon, the Philistines recovered these cities from Judah.

(Verses 19-21): **So the Lord was with Judah. And they drove out the mountaineers, but they could not drive out the inhabitants of the lowland, because they had chariots of iron. 20 And they gave Hebron to Caleb, as Moses had said. Then he expelled from there the three sons of Anak. 21 But the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who inhabited Jerusalem; so the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.**

The iron chariots were a hindrance because of their laziness, not because God could not. The Philistines monopolized the iron industry so the Jews would not benefit from it (1 Samuel 13: 19-22). David's victory over the Philistines was the beginning of using iron as a public commodity in Israel.

(Verse 22): **And the house of Joseph also went up against Bethel, and the Lord was with them.**

the house of Joseph: In the beginning, Judah (Jesus) ascends, and with Him Simeon (everyone who responded to the voice of Christ and went out striving). Now we find progress in the spiritual life, Ephraim (multiple fruits) and Manasseh (forgetting the love of the world), as there is no strife without fruits. Judah acquired Jerusalem (seeing peace), and the house of Joseph took **Bethel**, meaning the house of God. That is, with our spiritual growth, we become a dwelling place for God. **and the Lord was with them** = We cannot break into **Bethel**, that is, the house of God, except through God, who carries us to His house, reveals His secrets to us, and makes us enjoy His heavenly life.

(Verse 23): **So the house of Joseph sent men to spy out Bethel. (The name of the city was formerly Luz.)**

The spy is asked to discover the weak spot in the city wall. Spiritually, the Church sends messengers and servants of the word, who testify to the truth, to open every heart to the account of the Kingdom of God.

(Verses 24-25): **And when the spies saw a man coming out of the city, they said to him, "Please show us the entrance to the city, and we will show you mercy." 25 So he showed them the entrance to the city, and they struck the city with the edge of the sword; but they let the man and all his family go.**

The man who led them to the city and did not enter with them indicates and symbolizes the Jewish people who were entrusted with prophecies and many mysteries and showed the way to the church, but did not believe in Christ themselves.

(Verse 26): **And the man went to the land of the Hittites, built a city, and called its name Luz, which is its name to this day.**

We find that the man went to live among the Hittites, the pagans. The Jews shared their disbelief and rejection of Christ with the pagans. **and called its name Luz** = It was the custom of the people of those days that if someone left his place and migrated, he went to establish a city with the same name as his original city (which is Luz here).

(Verses 27-36): **However, Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shean and its villages, or Taanach and its villages, or the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, or the inhabitants of Ibleam and its villages, or the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages; for the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land. 28 And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites under tribute, but did not completely drive them out. 29 Nor did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; so the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them. 30 Nor did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron or the inhabitants of Nahalol; so the Canaanites dwelt among them, and were put under tribute. 31 Nor did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Acco or the inhabitants of Sidon, or of Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, or Rehob. 32 So the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; for they did not drive them out. 33 Nor did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh or the inhabitants of Beth Anath; but they dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land. Nevertheless the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath were put under tribute to them. 34 And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountains, for they would not allow them to come down to the valley; 35 and the Amorites were determined to dwell in Mount Heres, in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim; yet when the strength of the house of Joseph became greater, they were put under tribute. 36 Now the boundary of the Amorites was from the Ascent of Akrabbim, from Sela, and upward.**

These verses refer to sluggishness towards the Canaanite pagans. Leaving them for the sake of tribute indicates their love for money, and this is a deviation in the heart. We notice in (verse 34) the harassment of the Amorites to the children of Dan, which caused the migration of the Danites afterwards to Lasham or Laish in the north (Chapter 18).

Chapter 2

(Verses 1-5): **Then the Angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said: "I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers; and I said, 'I will never break My covenant with you. 2 And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.' But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this? 3 Therefore I also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be thorns in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you.'" 4 So it was, when the Angel of the Lord spoke these words to all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voices and wept. 5 Then they called the name of that place Bochim; and they sacrificed there to the Lord.**

Bochim: It could be Bethel (Genesis 35:8). Or it is a place where they gathered, and heard the voice of God, so they cried, and the place took its name from the incident of their crying (Bochim is derived from the word crying). **the Angel of the Lord** = Probably this means a divine appearance of the Word of God. The Word of the living God led the people to Gilgal and brought them to Bochim. **from Gilgal to Bochim** = The verses here from (verses 1-5) are a reproach from God to the people, as God reminds them of His work with them. Gilgal mentioned here to remind them of what happened in Gilgal, the first camp of the people after crossing the Jordan, where God said that He rolled away from them the shame of slavery (Gilgal = rolling). Gilgal was the center of Joshua's operations, which reminded them of God's wondrous work in their victories.

In Gilgal, the people were circumcised, which reminds them that they are in a sacred covenant with God and are committed to a holy life. And the symbol of the holy life = **And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars** so that they do not worship their pagan gods, but they disobeyed God = **But you have not obeyed My voice**. Therefore, God inflicts harsh chastisement upon them. **I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be thorns in your side** = this was a motive for their weeping and repentance, as there is no hope of lifting God's wrath except through repentance. The phrase from Gilgal to Bochim carries the meaning of God's leadership for them. From the remembrance of God's work and grace to true repentance. He reminds them of His grace so that they thank Him and reminds them of their sins so that they weep over them, repent and ask for God's mercy (see the church's wisdom in putting Psalm 50, the penitential psalm after the prayer of thanksgiving in all prayers). A few notes on this text:

1. Not utterly destroying pagan people but mixing with them and imitating them was against God's commandments. Refer to (Exodus 23: 33 + 34: 12-16 + Numbers 33: 55 + Deuteronomy 7: 2, 5, 16).
2. These verses, rather, this chapter, contains a summary of the idea and philosophy of the Book of Judges.
3. The book began with the victory over Adoni Bezek to spread the spirit of hope, then he speaks to us now, about tears and repentance. It is not enough for our spiritual life to rejoice in a victory we have

obtained, but we must continue in a life of humility, tears, strife, and repentance, and we must continue moving from Gilgal to Bochim.

4. God does not change, but man does. Because the people, instead of obeying God, walked in evil ways and disobeyed God, so they exposed themselves to harsh chastisement, allowing them to weep. Here, man is the one who changed his position in relation to God, left God, and his love cooled.

5. We must not think of ourselves as strong. The people considered themselves to be strong and cohabited with the pagan peoples, so they fell into their paganism, so they became in great distress. Thus, everyone who violates God's commandments.

6. They left the peoples whom the Lord told them to exterminate, so their punishment was the same as their sin, meaning that the Lord will leave the peoples among them to be a thorn in their side. If we do not resist evil, we do not expect that God will resist it for us; rather, we must strive. God's judgment on them to leave these peoples was the reason for their crying. But leaving these peoples had other benefits, as God does not take revenge on His children but rather disciplines them and turns everything in their favour.

a. Disciplining them was a guarantee that they would not deviate later.

b. These peoples' existence made them always ready for war. So, they don't slack off.

c. These peoples' existence allowed them to learn the art of war.

d. So that the land not to be vacant for the beasts, for the number of the Children of Israel is now few and the land is vast, and when their number increases, they will completely expel the Canaanites.

7. To reconcile with God and lift the chastisements, repent with crying, "Return to Me, and I will return to you." Unfortunately, we noticed that the people wept, but they did not change or change their ways.

8. Establishing a covenant with the pagan inhabitants of the land is considered adultery, for God wants us to make a covenant with Him alone.

9. God sanctifies human freedom, and when the people established a covenant with the pagans, the pagans were left to them in the land. Didn't they ask for that!! Let them reap the fruits of their request, "May He grant you according to your heart's desire."

10. But the loving God, we find Him punishing to attract them to repentance, moving their hearts to attract them to Himself.

(Verses 6-10): **And when Joshua had dismissed the people, the children of Israel went each to his own inheritance to possess the land. 7 So the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord which He had done for Israel. 8 Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died when he was one hundred**

and ten years old. 9 And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Heres, in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash. 10 When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel.

It is clear that the writer of these verses is the same as the author of the verses (Joshua 24: 29-31). This was for connecting the Book of Joshua with the Book of Judges, as they are one series of God's work with His people. We note here that the people under the leadership of Joshua, or the elders who saw the Lord's deeds with them, were those who worshiped the Lord. But when the elders who did not see the works of the Lord came as rulers over the people, they worshiped Baal. This is a picture of the church that surrenders her leadership to Christ and has fathers who have a spiritual experience and have come into contact with Christ. Therefore, this church lives a holy life and continuous repentance.

And they buried him within the border of his inheritance = This verse reveals faith in the resurrection and the inheritance of eternal life. **Timnath Heres** = Before that, its name was Timnath Serah, and the people manipulated the word and made it Heres instead of Serah. The word Heres means sun, and they drew a sun on Joshua's tomb as a reminder of the incident when the sun stood, according to his request.

(Verses 11-23): **Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served the Baals; 12 and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the Lord to anger. 13 They forsook the Lord and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. 14 And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. 15 Wherever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for calamity, as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed. 16 Nevertheless, the Lord raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them. 17 Yet they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot with other gods, and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the Lord; they did not do so. 18 And when the Lord raised up judges for them, the Lord was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the Lord was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and harassed them. 19 And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way. 20 Then the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel; and He said, "Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers, and has not heeded My voice, 21 I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died, 22 so that through them I may test Israel, whether they will keep the ways of the Lord, to walk in them as their fathers kept them, or not." 23 Therefore the Lord left those nations, without driving them out immediately; nor did He deliver them into the hand of Joshua.**

Here we find a summary of the Book of Judges and God's dealings with the people. The new generation forgot God's deeds with their fathers, so they returned to pagan worship because of its pleasures. **Then the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel** (as they angered the Lord, whose anger was kindled against them) = God does not get angry or irritated like humans, for He is absolute love, but rather He is jealous in His love. He would like to join us as a bride to Him whose love overflows on us. Angering God means our falling short of accepting His love. His anger indicates that we fall under His divine justice so that we reap the fruits of our sins, which appears as if God is angry. Despite this, in His love, when they were returning to Him, He would return to them and send judges for them to save them from the hand of their plunderers. This is the story of the Book of Judges but rather the story of our lives. When we forget God's dealings with us to act according to our whims, we reap the fruits of our evil, so we suffer and cry out. When we cry out, God delivers, but unfortunately, we go back again and forget the Lord and transgress His covenant.

Worshipping Baal:

Baal is a Canaanite deity, and the plural of Baal is Baalim. The meaning of the word Baal = is master, lord or husband. Baal's wife was the goddess Astarte. He is the sun god, and she is the moon goddess. Baal was the god of fertility, the lord of farms, and the animal caretaker. The women used to knead cakes for Ashtaroth (Jeremiah 7: 18), on which the image of the moon was drawn. The idol worshipers considered Baal their father and Ashtaroth their mother. They used to offer them sacrifices and burnt offerings from their children.

The statues of these idols were made of hollow copper, inside which fires were kindled until it turned red, and the mother threw her infant on his hands, which burned. Drums are beaten so hard that the infant's cries are not heard as it burns. The priests of these idols deceived people with their magic and sorcery, and there were girls who vow to commit adultery in these temples (indeed, there were men dedicated to this purpose). This adultery was part of the rituals of worship. Therefore, it was said that there was none like the Canaanite cults in their abominations and their killing of human emotions, and they deserved the judgment of God over them.

The Judges:

God chose some of the weak to save the people, showing that strength is God's power, not theirs.

1. **Othniel** = was Caleb's younger brother.
2. **Ehud the son of Gera** = He was a left-handed man.
3. **Shamgar the son of Anath** = all his equipment was ox goad (his military tools).
4. **Deborah** = weak woman.

5. **Barak** = He asked the weak woman Deborah to take the lead.

6. **Gideon** = His clan was the smallest in Manasseh, and he was the youngest in his father's house. His war equipment is trumpets and jars.

7. **Jephthah** = descendant of an adulterous woman, persecuted and expelled by his brothers.

8. **Samson** = uses the jawbone of a donkey to kill 1000 men.

And note that God reduced Gideon's army to only 300 men. God wants us to know that the bounty of the power in us is for God and not from us so that we do not become proud as a haughty spirit before a fall (2 Corinthians 4: 7).

Chapter 3

(Verses 1-7): **Now these are the nations which the Lord left, that He might test Israel by them, that is, all who had not known any of the wars in Canaan 2 (this was only so that the generations of the children of Israel might be taught to know war, at least those who had not formerly known it), 3 namely, five lords of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites who dwelt in Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal Hermon to the entrance of Hamath. 4 And they were left, that He might test Israel by them, to know whether they would obey the commandments of the Lord, which He had commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses. 5 Thus the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 6 And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons; and they served their gods. 7 So the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. They forgot the Lord their God, and served the Baals and Asherahs.**

Here he announces the people's repeated deviation, and the sign of this is their marriage to pagans and the worship of pagan gods. Here, he begins to mention marrying pagans first before referring to idolatry because marriage to pagans leads to pagan worship (this is what happened with King Solomon). We notice Abraham's caring that his son Isaac marries a woman who knows God.

that He might test Israel by them: This definitely does not mean that God is waiting for the outcome of this test to judge whether the people worship God or pagan gods, for everything is revealed to God, the past, present and future. Rather, the word "**test**" here means that God reveals to the people their condition. If they drift into these pagan worships and fall into distress, they know the reason for their distress, which is their idolatry, so they cry out to God, and God responds and saves them, and by this they know the power of God. Therefore, from these enemies, Israel will know whether God is with them or not. If the enemies were submissive to them, then God is with them, and if their enemies were strong against them, then God has abandoned them and they need repentance so He may return to them. Thus, they continue to look to God, seeking His help, and do not neglect Him in their laziness. Hence, we understand the meaning of **might be taught to know war:** God does not care about military training, but rather that His people experience overcoming and winning through a godly life and relying on the Lord. Thus, they see His works with them for their victory. God brings good even out of our weaknesses. We also understand that all those who did not know the Canaan wars neglected to know what the Lord had done. God, then, left these peoples so that the young ones might learn war, those who were born after the death of men of war. God wants to teach his people, not harm them.

(Verses 8-11): **Therefore the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He sold them into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia; and the children of Israel served Cushan-Rishathaim eight years. 9 When the children of Israel cried out to the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer for the children of Israel, who delivered them: Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. 10 The Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the Lord delivered**

Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed over Cushan-Rishathaim. 11 So the land had rest for forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

Cushan-Rishathaim: Cushan = pertaining to Cush, **Rishathaim** = (the one with two evils), because the people made a mistake in two evils (marriage with pagans and worshipping idols) God handed them over to the one with two evils. **Mesopotamia** = in Syria between the Tigris and Euphrates, i.e., the war was from the north. Therefore, God allowed a king to come from afar to chastise them. **and the children of Israel served Cushan-Rishathaim** = that is, he humiliated and disciplined them and became their master to enslave them. **When the children of Israel cried out to** = This is the benefit of the test. Before, they were not praying, and now they are crying out **the Lord raised up a deliverer for the children of Israel, who delivered them: Othniel the son of Kenaz** = so he was the first judge. The first saviour was of the tribe of Judah "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" to refer to Christ. **Othniel** = God's response or God's power. What is achieved in terms of salvation is not achieved by human strength but is the response from the Lord, who hears the cries of His children. Othniel is the one who seized Kirjath Sepher and married Aksah, daughter of Caleb (Joshua 15: 15-19). The secret of Othniel's power = the Spirit of the Lord was upon him (2 Corinthians 4: 7). And Kirjath Sepher means book. Here we understand the role of the word of God in the Bible, in that it gives strength to those who possess it (Psalm 119: 22). **So the land had rest for forty years** = the number 40 is repeated a lot, and it refers to a period that God gives us. If we pass it, we will be blessed and vice versa. And God gave them 40 years of rest here, and unfortunately, they reverted to evil, so they fell into the bondage of Eglon.

(Verse 12): **And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord. So the Lord strengthened Eglon king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord.**

They thought that the first enemy, Cushan, had ended and they were now safe, so they started their evils again, not understanding that God has many discipline tools. The current tool is Eglon. It is dangerous if days of peace, health, and wealth pass through our lives so we feel safe and consequently sin. True safety can only be found through life in Christ, for He alone is the King of Peace. Everything else is like a mirage, something fleeting and unsafe, and there is no guarantee of its continuity. The meaning of the name **Eglon** = a fat calf or like calves, perhaps a reference to his obesity (verse 17) or his brutal strength in war and his deadly anger and cruelty. Eglon is the one who succeeded Balak, the king of Moab.

(Verses 13-14): **Then he gathered to himself the people of Ammon and Amalek, went and defeated Israel, and took possession of the City of Palms. 14 So the children of Israel served Eglon king of Moab eighteen years.**

We see the alliance of Moab and the Ammonites and Amalekites, the enemies of Israel, who did not have authority over Israel. But because of the evils of Israel, they now have authority over it. **and took possession of the City of Palms** = Jericho. However, if we understand that "The righteous shall flourish

like a palm tree" (Psalm 92: 12), then the city of palm trees is a sign of the Church that, if she abandons her Christ and deviates to walk like a world, God allows the world to rule over her. And her enemies, who could not control her, now have authority over her. Rather, Eglon established his headquarters in the city of Palms (which is the headquarters in which Ehud struck him).

(Verse 15): **But when the children of Israel cried out to the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer for them: Ehud the son of Gera, the Benjamite, a left-handed man. By him the children of Israel sent tribute to Eglon king of Moab.**

Ehud: It may be an abbreviation of Abihud = The father of glory or honour. It may also mean united. The meaning of the name is that God responds to our cries if we unite with Him because He is jealous for His glory. **a left-handed man** = that is, he is not good at using his right hand. (God turns our weaknesses into strength if He handles our life). **tribute** = a sign of friendship, friendliness, and acceptance of submission to Eglon. Ehud and some men took the gift to him.

(Verses 16-18): **Now Ehud made himself a dagger (it was double-edged and a cubit in length) and fastened it under his clothes on his right thigh. 17 So he brought the tribute to Eglon king of Moab. (Now Eglon was a very fat man.) 18 And when he had finished presenting the tribute, he sent away the people who had carried the tribute.**

he sent away the people: Ehud left with the people after presenting the gift, then returned alone.

1. To protect his people from Eglon's revenge if they discover his plan.
2. Prepare his escape route.
3. He could not carry out his plan in the presence of all the guards of Eglon, as he gained the trust of Eglon first, then he returned to enter to him alone.

(Verse 19): **But he himself turned back from the stone images that were at Gilgal, and said, "I have a secret message for you, O king." He said, "Keep silence!" And all who attended him went out from him.**

stone images: They are sections of stones from which they take stones for their idols. Gilgal was the center of these idols, so the Jews turned it into a holy place. Ehud left with his people, then returned to Eglon again and convinced him that there was a secret. Kings care about secrets, so he dismissed his soldiers after he trusted Ehud. Eglon probably thought that Ehud would betray his people and tell the king the secret of a plot against him, or help him on how to possess other parts of Israel, so he expelled everyone.

(Verses 20-23): **So Ehud came to him (now he was sitting upstairs in his cool private chamber). Then Ehud said, "I have a message from God for you." So he arose from his seat. 21 Then Ehud reached with his left hand, took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly. 22 Even the hilt went in after the blade, and the fat closed over the blade, for he did not draw the dagger out of his belly; and his entrails came out. 23 Then Ehud went out through the porch and shut the doors of the upper room behind him and locked them.**

Ehud met Eglon in private **in his cool private chamber** = a private room at the top of his palace where the king sat under an umbrella to cool off from the heat. **I have a message from God for you** = Eglon thought that since Ehud was returning from the place of the idols, the pagan gods sent a message to Eglon through Ehud, **So he arose from his seat** = out of respect for the pagan gods who inspired the message. Most likely, Eglon was residing in the city of palm trees, and he established a headquarters for himself with his men to rule over Israel. The distance was not significant between Gilgal (where the stone images are) and Jericho (the city of palm trees).

(Verses 24-27): **When he had gone out, Eglon's servants came to look, and to their surprise, the doors of the upper room were locked. So they said, "He is probably attending to his needs in the cool chamber." 25 So they waited till they were embarrassed, and still he had not opened the doors of the upper room. Therefore they took the key and opened them. And there was their master, fallen dead on the floor. 26 But Ehud had escaped while they delayed, and passed beyond the stone images and escaped to Seirah. 27 And it happened, when he arrived, that he blew the trumpet in the mountains of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mountains; and he led them.**

He is probably attending to his needs in the cool chamber: It is a polite expression for going to the lavatory.

(Verses 28-30): **Then he said to them, "Follow me, for the Lord has delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand." So they went down after him, seized the fords of the Jordan leading to Moab, and did not allow anyone to cross over. 29 And at that time they killed about ten thousand men of Moab, all stout men of valor; not a man escaped. 30 So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest for eighty years.**

seized the fords of the Jordan: The fords are the ones that cross on foot, and Ehud planned to control these fords to prevent the Moabites from escaping through them to Moab, and also this prevents the arrival of any help from Moab to protect the besieged army in Israel. And after they besieged the army of Moab in the west of the Jordan, they struck and killed them (verse 29) (10,000 men).

Ehud's symbols of Christ:

1. In his name, he is "My Father is glorified," and Christ glorified the Father on earth, and the Father glorified Him (John 17: 1). And the meaning of his name is united = He is one with His Father, and He came to give us unity (John 17: 11, 21).
2. Ehud appears carrying a double-edged sword that he wore on his right thigh to kill Eglon with it = (Psalm 45: 3), and the sword refers to the word of God (Hebrews 4: 12). The word of God is a two-edged sword that works in the heart of the shepherd and the parish. The meaning of carrying the sword on the thigh refers to His incarnation carrying His will (His sword) on His thigh (body).
3. Ehud's gift to Eglon, which made him happy in the beginning = the cross that Christ accepted, so Satan rejoiced first, and some men went with Ehud to present the gift as Simon of Cyrene carried the cross with Christ. However, the battle of the cross was for Christ alone, as Ehud went alone to kill Eglon.
4. Ehud killed Eglon after he rose from his royal throne. Christ defeated Satan and deprived him of his leadership. He made him lose his authority (Luke 10: 18; Colossians 2: 15).
5. Ehud closed on Eglon, and only his servants opened to him, and Christ chained Satan for us, and no one goes to Satan except who wants to be his slave and servant. Man's return to Satan can only be achieved by the mere will of man.
6. After Ehud killed Eglon, the people killed 10,000 men. After the defeat of Satan through Jesus, the people of God throughout the ages, through their spiritual striving, will rise to the victory of Satan (Revelation 6: 2).

(Verse 31): **After him was Shamgar the son of Anath, who killed six hundred men of the Philistines with an ox goad; and he also delivered Israel.**

Shamgar's work was local, confined to a specific place only. Shamgar did not come after the death of Ehud, which is evident in what he said in verse (Judges 4: 1) "When Ehud was dead," and he did not say when Shamgar was dead. Shamgar's service was during the life of Ehud but in another place. In the days of Shamgar, the Philistines used to block the way for God's people, beat them, and rob them, and this is what Deborah said (Judges 5: 6, 7) " The highways were deserted." It seems that Shamgar was plowing the land, and in his hand was **an ox goad** = a stick at the end of which was a sharp piece of iron used to care cows. While he was in his work, the Palestinians appeared, the bandits, so God guided him to strike them with what was in his hand, and God can use the little as the much. And God can use us whatever our capabilities.

Chapter 4

We see here that God highlights the positive role of women, as the woman is half of the Church, and she has a great role to play. Deborah did a job that men did not do. She is the one who thought of saving her people from the yoke of slavery. She aroused the fainting jealousy of Barak and rebuked men who did not cooperate in the time of trouble. However, we see the integration of the members of the Church. We note that Deborah alone could not do the work solely, nor could Barak work alone, but they had 10,000 men, and there was Jael also. We must not despise the smallest member of the Church.

We note that Deborah was the mind of Barak, and Barak was the hand of Deborah. She was the weak vessel but full of faith, and Barak was a strong vessel, but his faith was less, so he needed her prayers and strong faith to support his weaker faith.

This chapter combines the victory over Jabin, king of Hazor, by of Zebulun and Naphtali, and the victory over Sisera, who lives in Harosheth Hagoyim, by the convergence of many tribes. This last victory is praised in the fifth chapter.

(Verses 1-3): **When Ehud was dead, the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord. 2 So the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth Hagoyim. 3 And the children of Israel cried out to the Lord; for Jabin had nine hundred chariots of iron, and for twenty years he had harshly oppressed the children of Israel.**

Jabin: Perhaps it was a title for the kings of Canaan, as Pharaoh was a title for the kings of Egypt. Sisera was his army chief; his name meant the loss of joy. This is the reward of those who leave the Lord, as joy leaves them. **Harosheth Hagoyim** = a mixture of nations or a group. It is a place in the north of Palestine, so called because of the different races of its inhabitants.

(Verse 4): **Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time.**

The judge refers to Christ. The female judge, Deborah, refers to the church. Deborah means bee, and so it was said about the Church (Song of Solomon 4: 11). The bee flies over the meadows of biblical teaching and gathers wisdom into its storehouses, thus turning it into honey inside. Note her husband's name is **Lapidoth**, which means bright as a lamp and the Groom of the Church, Christ, is the Light of the World.

(Verse 5): **And she would sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim. And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.**

the palm tree of Deborah: What is this palm tree that was called by her name, and she used to sit under it for men to come to her for judgment, except the wood of the cross (Song of Solomon 2: 3). Note that it is between Ramah and Bethel. **Ramah** means heights. And it is in **mountains of Ephraim** = the spiritual meaning is that whoever enters the house of God (**Bethel**) and dwells in the heavenly places, i.e., lives in the heavenly heights (**Ramah**) under the shade of the cross (**the palm tree**), he will have multiplied fruits (**Ephraim**). Heights also refer to those who sit above the worries and temptations of the world. There are opinions that Barak is the son or husband of Deborah, but they are not confirmed.

(Verses 6-8): **Then she sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, "Has not the Lord God of Israel commanded, 'Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun; 7 and against you I will deploy Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude at the River Kishon; and I will deliver him into your hand'?" 8 And Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go!"**

ten thousand men: Deborah urged Barak to fight with 10,000 men. This is similar to the church's call to her children to strive to implement the commandments (10), and whoever carries out the commandments will live a heavenly life (1000). This is the meaning of the number 10,000, which refers to a person who keeps the commandments, so he lives through his striving in heavenly life.

(Verse 9): **So she said, "I will surely go with you; nevertheless there will be no glory for you in the journey you are taking, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh.**

Deborah wanted to urge Barak to go out to war, but he insisted that she go out with him, so she accepted. Her words were that **the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman** is a prophecy because Jael was the one who killed Sisera. There is a nice symbol of what happened. Barak, who went out to fight with Deborah, refers to the men of the Old Testament who were fighting through the prophecies, but the one who completed the work and struggle was a Gentile woman, referring to the Church that came from the Gentiles. Deborah's prophecy is about the church which triumphed over the forces of evil represented in Sisera. Therefore, in the beginning, we did not hear about Jael, but we only heard about Barak and Deborah.

(Verses 10-13): **And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; he went up with ten thousand men under his command, and Deborah went up with him. 11 Now Heber the Kenite, of the children of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, had separated himself from the Kenites and pitched his tent near the terebinth tree at Zaanaim, which is beside Kedesh. 12 And they reported to Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor. 13 So Sisera gathered together all his chariots, nine**

hundred chariots of iron, and all the people who were with him, from Harosheth Hagoyim to the River Kishon.

This is an interjection verse explaining the reason for the presence of **Heber the Kenite** in this place to get to know Jael. This Heber retired from the Kenites, but he did not enjoy the inheritance in the Promised Land despite his belief in the God of Israel, and he camped on the borders of the Canaanites and Israel (**Zaanaim**). He allied with the Canaanites and was associated with the friendship of Israel, so he became the representative of the Gentiles who, according to the natural law, knew the Lord, but they remained allied with paganism and its abominations (the Canaanites) until Jael, the symbol of the Church, emerged from them.

(Verse 14): **Then Deborah said to Barak, "Up! For this is the day in which the Lord has delivered Sisera into your hand. Has not the Lord gone out before you?" So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him.**

Up: The secret of victory over Satan is the resurrection with the risen Lord. So, Barak descended from Mount Tabor, which is the mountain of transfiguration, where Christ transfigured with Moses and Elijah in front of his disciples. The disciples said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here," enjoying transfiguration, comfort, and joy. But the transfiguration ended, and the disciples returned to the striving. Thus, Barak went down to striving.

(Verses 15-16): **And the Lord routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sisera alighted from his chariot and fled away on foot. 16 But Barak pursued the chariots and the army as far as Harosheth Hagoyim, and all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; not a man was left.**

And the Lord routed Sisera: God's work with him is the secret of Barak's strength, with all his chariots and armies. With his 10,000 men, Barak defeated Sisera and his armies because the Lord was with them, for God does not need abundance.

(Verse 17): **However, Sisera had fled away on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite; for there was peace between Jabin king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite.**

Sisera left his chariot, for the chariots are the focal point of the enemy. He searched for a hiding place while he was hiding.

(Verse 18): **And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said to him, "Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me; do not fear." And when he had turned aside with her into the tent, she covered him with a blanket.**

He took refuge in the tent of Jael, as there was no war between the Kenites and between Jabin and Sisera, but the Kenites were sympathetic to the Israelites and loved and worshiped their God YHWH, since the days of Moses. Another reason for Sisera's refuge in a woman's tent is that men do not enter women's tents, for no one will search for him while he is in a woman's tent, and thus he will be safe. Because Deborah praised Jael, we understand that the Spirit of God is the one who guided Jael to kill Sisera and that Jael ended the life of this tyrant in the implementation of a divine will and not out of personal revenge.

(Verse 19): **Then he said to her, "Please give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty." So she opened a jug of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him.**

It's curdled milk, that has a narcotic effect. **a jug of milk** = it is a leather container in which milk is placed, and if milk refers to the teachings of the faith that quench the soul of the believer and fill it with the love of God, these same teachings are fatal to Satan and destroy him. The Church overcomes her enemy, not with worldly weapons, but with her faith and teachings (2 Corinthians 10: 4, 5). Another spiritual meditation:

The tent refers to the body (2 Corinthians 5: 1), and our body hosted Satan for a while by accepting lusts, but by accepting the teachings of faith, we kill him and crucify our desires and passions (the peg is a symbol of the cross).

(Verses 20-24): **And he said to her, "Stand at the door of the tent, and if any man comes and inquires of you, and says, 'Is there any man here?' you shall say, 'No.'" 21 Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a tent peg and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple, and it went down into the ground; for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died. 22 And then, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said to him, "Come, I will show you the man whom you seek." And when he went into her tent, there lay Sisera, dead with the peg in his temple. 23 So on that day God subdued Jabin king of Canaan in the presence of the children of Israel. 24 And the hand of the children of Israel grew stronger and stronger against Jabin king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.**

Fixing the pegs was the job of women at the time. And the pegs are wooden, so the peg symbolizes the cross, and it is in the hands of Jael, killing Sisera with it. It is the cross with which I crucify my desires and passions, so Satan dies inside my tent. **went softly** = she walked towards him on her tiptoes. And let us see that whoever disturbs the people of God with chariots of iron dies with a peg. In the story of our mother, Eve, Satan infiltrated her with a desire for food, killing her with her husband, and now in the story of Jael, she offers food to Sisera to kill him, so she saves everyone from him.

Chapter 5

Praise of Deborah = Hymn of Victory. It is written in a wonderful poetic style. The striving person, who is like Deborah, an active bee, chants this praise during his spiritual striving. The hymn is divided into three parts, each of which has nine verses (3-11, 13-21, 22-30). As for verses 1 and 2, they are an introduction to the hymn, verse 12 is an introduction to the second part, and verse 31 is a conclusion to the praise.

(Verse 1): **Then Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam sang on that day, saying:**

Sang: When we are distressed, we cry out to God, but when we are happy, we rarely return to God with thanksgiving and praise [the story of the ten lepers (Luke 17: 13)]. The importance of praising is not to be preoccupied with the gifts and blessings of Christ rather than Christ, the Grantor of the gift. We note here that Deborah led the praise, and Barak led the army. Just as Moses led the people, Mary led the praise (Exodus 15: 1).

(Verse 2): **"When leaders lead in Israel, When the people willingly offer themselves, Bless the Lord!**

When leaders lead: God is the one who leads the leaders of His people. God is the grantor of victory, but the praise also praises the leaders who strived. **When the people willingly offer themselves** = i.e., for their acceptance of work and war voluntarily, the people also strived with the leaders—teamwork led by God.

Bless the Lord = Don't be distracted by your victories from praising and thanking the Lord.

(Verse 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.**

Israel did not have a king. Therefore, the invitation here is addressed to the pagan kings of the nations, to contemplate the works of the living God and to believe. **I, even I** = repetition of **I** indicates that Deborah speaks for the two churches of the Old and New Testaments, who feel their weakness and the strength in them is attributed to God, their protector.

(Verse 4): **"Lord, when You went out from Seir, When You marched from the field of Edom, The earth trembled and the heavens poured, The clouds also poured water;**

She brings her memory back to God's dealings with His people who came out of Egypt, for the God who saved their fathers is the same one who accompanied them against Sisera. Here, she means to depict the Lord amid the cloud as He leads His people in Sinai. As if God is the same yesterday and today, doing

wonders to protect His people. **when You went out .. When You marched** = God goes out and ascends with His people. He is in their midst, does not separate from them, and is not isolated from them. **Seir** = hair. God takes us out of the carnal mind. **Edom** = land or blood, and Seir and Edom are Esau's names. God ascends us above the earthly level so that we may live with heavenly thought. **The earth trembled** = the fear that befell the nations. Also, the earth refers to the body, and when God works in it, it fears God and submits to the Spirit of the Lord and does not follow its lusts. **the heavens poured** = the pagan earth trembled, but the children of God are like the heavens pouring dew by the work of the Holy Spirit. The body refers to the earth that trembles, while the soul refers to the heavens that offer joyful rain.

(Verse 5): **The mountains gushed before the Lord, This Sinai, before the Lord God of Israel.**

Compare this with (Isaiah 64: 3). And the mountains shook on the day the law was given. After Deborah presented the works of God with the fathers in the wilderness, she returned to describe their condition during those days and their need for God's work.

(Verses 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. 7 Village life ceased, it ceased in Israel, Until I, Deborah, arose, Arose a mother in Israel.**

Deborah presents a bitter picture of the Canaanites' harassment of them. They closed the main roads, so they were forced to take dangerous **byways** = there was no safety in the roads and no trade or travellers because the enemy and thieves everywhere **walked along the byways**.

The highways were deserted: No travellers were on them out of fear. The enemy of goodness always tries to close the divine paths from the believers by cutting off hope, and evil temptations, to lead man into crooked paths. **In the days of Jael** = she testifies to Jael that her heart was upright before God amid these hardships like **Shamgar**. The rulers could not do anything to save the Lord's people = **it ceased in Israel**. Even the best of them, Barak, could not do anything **Until I, Deborah, arose**. This state and distress remained until the rise of the Church, which proclaimed her motherhood in the Lord and played the role of teaching = **Arose a mother in Israel** = It is not possible to liberate from the bitterness of the Canaanites (Satan) except through the rise of Deborah (the Church). As for us, we are born of water (the Church) and the Spirit.

(Verse 8): **They chose new gods; Then there was war in the gates; Not a shield or spear was seen among forty thousand in Israel.**

They chose new gods: The people of Israel left the worship of the Lord and worshiped idols, so the Lord left them, and the war reached the doors = **Then there was war in the gates** = God is a wall for us (Zechariah 2: 5) If He abandons us, the enemies will reach the doors. If He leaves, we become even

without a weapon = **Not a shield or spear was seen** = then the Philistines prevented them from carrying weapons or manufacturing them for 20 years (1 Samuel 13: 19) during the days of King Saul. Probably the same problem was repeated by the Canaanites and others. We note the words: **war in the gates** = The gates in which the people's judges and elders sit have become a place of war. If the Lord abandons His people, peace will turn into blood.

(Verse 9): **My heart is with the rulers of Israel Who offered themselves willingly with the people. Bless the Lord!**

But God does not abandon His people forever, so He sends them judges. Let his people praise him = **Bless the Lord.**

(Verse 10): **"Speak, you who ride on white donkeys, Who sit in judges' attire, And who walk along the road.**

you who ride on white donkeys: The greats ride donkeys from the desert, a rare type of donkey. **Who sit in judges' attire** = men of the judiciary. **And who walk along the road** = the rest of the poor people and the common people walking on their feet. May all praise the Lord.

(Verse 11): **Far from the noise of the 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.**

the archers: Some interpreted it as archers, while others interpreted it as those who share the spoils. So, they are the men of Israel who fought and won with the help of the Lord and came to the pools of water sharing their spoils = **among the watering places** and the water places are the most dangerous place because thieves lurk there for people. But now that there is peace, everyone is at the water basins praising God for His work. **Then the people of the Lord shall go down to the gates** = they went down in safety without fear, so there is no war at the gates, but a victorious people who divide the spoils.

(Verse 12): **"Awake, awake, Deborah! Awake, awake, sing a song! Arise, Barak, and lead your captives away, O son of Abinoam!**

This verse introduces the second part, which declares God's salvation work through Deborah and Barak as a symbol of Christ's salvation for His church. **Awake** = repeated four times because Christ saved the church all over the world so that the pagan peoples would wake up from their sleep with their Christ, the risen from the dead. **and lead your captives away:** Barak led the battle and gained many spoils. Thus, Christ, who liberated humanity and saved us. We whom Satan had captivated under the yoke of

sin "You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive;" (Psalm 68: 18). Christ, after His redemption and ascension, liberated us from the captivity of sin, and we became in Christ Jesus the children of God, captivated by His joyful love, and we became the spoils of His exalted love.

(Verse 13): **"Then the survivors came down, the people against the nobles; The Lord came down for me against the mighty.**

the survivors: He is the fugitive and the expelled. Those who were displaced from the people of Israel because of the oppression of the Canaanites, now, through the work of Deborah, rule over the nobles of the Canaanites.

The Lord came down for me = She became a leader of the tribes in battle. She mentioned the tribes that followed her and did not mention Judah and Simeon, who were busy fighting the Philistines.

(Verse 14): **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 recruiter's staff.**

those whose roots were in Amalek: The land of Ephraim was like a stronghold against the surrounding Amalekites. **After you, Benjamin, with your peoples** = When Ephraim went out to war, Benjamin also went out after him.

From Machir rulers came down = Machir is the tribe of Manasseh, and these army leaders emerged from them. And thus, the tribe of Zebulun, leaders came out of it = **who bear the recruiter's staff.**

(Verse 15): **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.**

Here, she praises the leaders of Issachar, who went out with her to the battlefield and were not satisfied with sending their men and people. To praise their courage, she likened them to Barak = **As Issachar, so was Barak.** Issachar rushed with Barak to the valley against the enemy infantry and their chariots **Among the divisions of Reuben There were great resolves of heart** = Deborah gave each tribe its right, so Ephraim came out first, and Benjamin followed him. Thus, here she blames Reuben strongly because he did not fight.

(Verse 16): **Why did you sit among the sheepfolds, To hear the pipings for the flocks? The divisions of Reuben have great searchings of heart.**

Instead of going to war with his brothers, Reuben apologized with a trivial excuse that he was busy with his livestock. Here we see a mockery from a woman who fought a battle against the enemy, while

Reuben's men who were discussing whether to go to war or continue to care for their herds = **have great searchings of heart**. Saying that the searchings are great is a bitter mockery because the result of the discussions was not to go to war, but to sit in the waters to take care of the sheep. Deborah marvels at the hearts of these negligent men = **great searchings of heart** = their negligent hearts destined to abandon their brothers to hear **the pipings for the flocks** instead of hearing the sound of the battle horn. This tribe, in its apology, is similar to the bride of Song of Solomon: "I have washed my feet; How can I defile them?" (Song of Solomon 5: 3). They are flimsy excuses for every soul that has been associated with the love of the world and does not want to strive against the lust of the flesh and sin.

(Verse 17): **Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan, And why did Dan remain on ships? Asher continued at the seashore, And stayed by his inlets.**

Here is a rebuke to the rest of the tribes that rejected war. **Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan** = Gilead represents the soul that does not want to cross the Jordan, i.e., does not want to die with Christ and chooses the broad path. And Dan apologized because he was caring for his ships. **Asher continued at the seashore** = That is the bays on the beaches. Asher represents the one suffocated by the world's turmoil and chaos, as the sea represents the turbulent world. As for the tribe of Dan, the fathers say that it represents the heretics, as the Antichrist comes out of them. His interest in his ships indicates that the heretics spread their heresies in the world.

(Verse 18): **Zebulun is a people who jeopardized their lives to the point of death, Naphtali also, on the heights of the battlefield.**

Zebulun is a people who jeopardized their lives to the point of death: That is, he risked himself to death for his bravery. The tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali went out after Barak, and there were leaders among them. **on the heights of the battlefield** = It is bravery when someone fights on a hill where the enemy sees him clearly.

(Verse 19): **"The kings came and fought, Then the kings of Canaan fought In Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo; They took no spoils of silver.**

She is talking here about the kings who assisted the king of Canaan. They came to **Taanach**, a city 5 miles southeast of **Megiddo**. **Taanach** belonged to Issachar, and then it became to Manasseh. The battle was in **Taanach**, next to the waters of **Megiddo**. But the enemy did not take any silver.

(Verses 20-21): **They fought from the heavens; The stars from their courses fought against Sisera. 21 The torrent of Kishon swept them away, That ancient torrent, the torrent of Kishon. O my soul, march on in strength!**

Why didn't the enemies take any silver? Because they were surprised that the heavens themselves were fighting them. Those who are hostile to God are hostile to nature, as nature is God's creation. The heavens repulsed against them with harsh natural conditions until their planets seemed like soldiers fighting them. **The stars from their courses** = the orbits (their paths). Then she explains what nature has done. **The torrent of Kishon swept them away** = The heavens exploded with clouds, and then the torrents that made the Kishon River overflow and submerge and sweep away the enemies, their alive with their dead. **That ancient torrent** = i.e., the river that is from old. Deborah here reveals that nature played an important role in the battle, and Josephus supported this. When a person returns to God with repentance, heaven gives him aid. The heavenly beings of angels, martyrs, and saints (as stars) fight with him. And the spring of the Holy Spirit rains on him to wash away the sin, then the soul says, "**O my soul, march on in strength!**" on Satan and his deeds.

(Verse 22): **Then the horses' hooves pounded, The galloping, galloping of his steeds.**

Here, Deborah reveals, in the third part, the weakness of Sisera, as a symbol of Satan's weakness. This verse indicates that when Sisera realized his defeat, hit the horses hard to escape = **Then the horses' hooves pounded**, and the horses hit the ground with their hooves from the insane leadership of Sisera's leaders = **The galloping, galloping of his steeds** = i.e., from driving the horses. Horses refer to human power, but does human power save? Human power cannot save.

(Verse 23): **'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 against the mighty.'**

The curse befell Meroz with all its inhabitants because they took a negative attitude. When they saw Sisera fleeing, they did not try to catch him. Meroz seemed to be a big city and had no footprint after this curse. Meroz betrayed the covenant with the tasks entrusted to her in the battle and did not help the Lord's people.

(Verses 24-25): **"Most blessed among women is Jael, The wife of Heber the Kenite; Blessed is she among women in tents. 25 He asked for water, she gave milk; She brought out cream in a lordly bowl.**

This is the opposite of what happened to Meroz. Here we see Jael's blessing, representing the brave and striving soul.

(Verses 26-27): **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. 27 At her feet he sank, he fell, he lay still; At her feet he sank, he fell; Where he sank, there he fell dead.**

the workmen's hammer: The hammer used to hit the peg. It is a picture of the fallen devil by the cross, crushed without authority.

(Verse 28): **"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?'**

Sisera's mother, who had expected his return victorious with many spoils, now moaned at the length of his absence.

(Verse 29): **Her wisest ladies answered her, Yes, she answered herself,**

One of the palace women reassured her that he would share the women and spoils of Israel and the precious embroidered clothes.

(Verse 30): **'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?'**

Two-sided embroidered clothes are the most valuable clothes. **for the neck of the looter** = they used to adorn their necks with their spoils. But alas, Sisera's clothes were now embroidered with his blood.

(Verse 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." So the land had rest for forty years.**

The beloved of God, that is, His people, after He destroyed their enemies, were light. The Church shines like the sun in its might, that is, in the midst of the day with power. This church will be at rest = **the land had rest.**

Chapter 6

We see a recurring image. God gave rest to the land for 40 years. Instead of thanking the Lord for His benevolence, they forgot God and lived in sin. This is a recurring image in the Book of Judges and the lives of each of us. Here the Lord left them to the Midianites, not the Midianites of the south, where Moses' father-in-law lived, but the Midianites of the east who had united with Moab in the story of Balaam. Those Midianites were evil and full of aggressiveness. They were the first to use domesticated camels on a large scale, making raiding from a faraway place easy for them. They agreed with the giants and the people of the East (tribes from the Arab desert) to harass the Israelites, so the Israelites fled from them to caves in the mountains. Whenever the Israelites planted, they destroyed their fields, seized their crops, and stole their animals, so that they did not leave them the necessary food for life.

(Verses 1-6): **Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. So the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years, 2 and the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel. Because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made for themselves the dens, the caves, and the strongholds which are in the mountains. 3 So it was, whenever Israel had sown, Midianites would come up; also Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them. 4 Then they would encamp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep nor ox nor donkey. 5 For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, coming in as numerous as locusts; both they and their camels were without number; and they would enter the land to destroy it. 6 So Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried out to the Lord.**

as far as Gaza: That is, from Jordan to Gaza, i.e., all the country's width.

(Verses 7-10): **And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried out to the Lord because of the Midianites, 8 that the Lord sent a prophet to the children of Israel, who said to them, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'I brought you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of bondage; 9 and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you and gave you their land. 10 Also I said to you, "I am the Lord your God; do not fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell." But you have not obeyed My voice.'"**

God sent them a prophet to reveal to them the reason for the dominion of Midian over them, which is sin. And this prophet told them about God's love to attract them to repentance, as there is no salvation except through repentance. Thus, John the Baptist came before Christ to call for repentance.

(Verses 11-12): **Now the Angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide it from the Midianites. 12 And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him, and said to him, "The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!"**

the Angel of the Lord: It is one of the appearances of Christ before the incarnation. And the evidence for this is his saying: Have I not sent you? (verse 14) and Surely I will be with you (verse 16). Note the angel was sitting under the terebinth: **sat under the terebinth tree** = the terebinth is a tree, because Gideon's salvation is a symbol of Christ's salvation with His wooden cross. **Ophrah** = the village of Manasseh west of the Jordan. **Abiezer** = is the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, son of Manasseh. **threshed wheat in the winepress** = He used to thresh the wheat with a stick to extract the grain from it because first, he lost the threshing tools because of the enemy's attacks, and secondly, he used to do this in the winepress, as the Midianites did not imagine that there was wheat being threshed in the winepress, otherwise, they would come and take it. He was hiding from their eyes. Generally, threshing with a stick is used with small quantities, especially for the poor who have no livestock or tools for threshing. The ears that Gideon beat were the rest after the looting of the Midianites. The meaning of the name **Gideon** is a wrestler. If Gideon symbolizes Christ, then Christ also does this, for He separates the wheat (the children of God) from the chaff (the children of the world) to present the children of God to the Father. He did this with His cross (as Gideon used to thresh wheat with a stick). **The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!**

Gideon seems to have been known for his bravery. And God uses the strong and the weak, and we notice that Gideon was from the most minor clan in Manasseh, a symbol of Christ, mighty in valor, who became a slave.

(Verse 13): **Gideon said to Him, "O my lord, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, 'Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?' But now the Lord has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites."**

We notice Gideon's care for his people and zeal towards them. God chose His servants whose hearts were burning with love for their brothers (this was how Moses, Joshua, David, and the weeping Jeremiah for his people). Gideon's words do not mean doubt about God's promises but indicate love, asking for mercy for his brothers. God sends people like those to save his people. The Lord rejoices in such a heart.

(Verse 14): **Then the Lord turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?"**

God sends him. **Go in this might of yours** = that is, by your holy zeal.

(Verses 15-16): **So he said to Him, "O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." 16 And the Lord said to him, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man."**

Gideon, full of jealousy, does not act contrite for his work but rather accepts it. However, he asks how to save while he is the youngest. God replies **Surely I will be with you**. This is a complete spiritual approach for any servant to feel that he is nothing and the smallest, but when he believes that God is with him, he can conquer.

(Verses 17-24): **Then he said to Him, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who talk with me. 18 Do not depart from here, I pray, until I come to You and bring out my offering and set it before You." And He said, "I will wait until you come back." 19 So Gideon went in and prepared a young goat, and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot; and he brought them out to Him under the terebinth tree and presented them. 20 The Angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And he did so. 21 Then the Angel of the Lord put out the end of the staff that was in His hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire rose out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. And the Angel of the Lord departed out of his sight. 22 Now Gideon perceived that He was the Angel of the Lord. So Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord God! For I have seen the Angel of the Lord face to face." 23 Then the Lord said to him, "Peace be with you; do not fear, you shall not die." 24 So Gideon built an altar there to the Lord, and called it **The-Lord-Is-Peace**. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.**

Gideon thought it too much for him that God would speak to him, but rather to send him as a judge to the people. Therefore, he asked for a sign so he would not think that what was happening was a dream or a fantasy. Probably, at first, Gideon imagined that an ordinary person was speaking to him as He was travelling with a rod, and this ordinary person was pushing him to fight to save his people. Then, over time, it appeared that this person was speaking authoritatively, **"I will be with you... Have I not sent you"** so he began to doubt whether what he saw was real or imaginary. And is the one who speaks to him God? so he wanted to offer Him what is presented to God according to the law (sacrifice and unleavened bread), so if He accepts it, He is God. The sign of God's acceptance would be the descent of fire from heaven to accept the offering. But if the traveler ate the food in a normal way, he would be an ordinary person. The rock here plays the role of the altar. The **young goat** refers to the sin for which Christ was offered as a sin offering with His cross, i.e. the rod, so the fire of the Holy Spirit came out to burn our sins, for He is the spirit of burning. After the angel disappeared, Gideon was sure that He was the Lord, so he feared. Therefore, God reassured him. In front of this love, Gideon set up an altar to God, who granted him peace, **The-Lord-Is-Peace** = God's peace (John 14: 27).

(Verses 25-32): **Now it came to pass the same night that the Lord said to him, "Take your father's young bull, the second bull of seven years old, and tear down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the wooden image that is beside it; 26 and build an altar to the Lord your God on top of this rock in the proper arrangement, and take the second bull and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the image which you shall cut down." 27 So Gideon took ten men from among his servants**

and did as the Lord had said to him. But because he feared his father's household and the men of the city too much to do it by day, he did it by night. 28 And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, there was the altar of Baal, torn down; and the wooden image that was beside it was cut down, and the second bull was being offered on the altar which had been built. 29 So they said to one another, "Who has done this thing?" And when they had inquired and asked, they said, "Gideon the son of Joash has done this thing." 30 Then the men of the city said to Joash, "Bring out your son, that he may die, because he has torn down the altar of Baal, and because he has cut down the wooden image that was beside it." 31 But Joash said to all who stood against him, "Would you plead for Baal? Would you save him? Let the one who would plead for him be put to death by morning! If he is a god, let him plead for himself, because his altar has been torn down!" 32 Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, "Let Baal plead against him, because he has torn down his altar."

When God appeared to Gideon and sanctified the place with His appearance, Baal couldn't remain with the divine appearance, nor could burnt offerings be offered to the Lord with sacrifices to Baal. The Lord's commands to Gideon were:

1. He demolishes the altar of Baal, which his father set up, and cuts down the pole with him, which is a wooden pillar erected in a high place at which worship is offered to Baal and Ashtaroth, his wife.
2. **Take your father's young bull** = Gideon had to take the bull in front of his father because his father used to prepare this bull to offer as a sacrifice to Baal (and use it either for work or as food).
3. He will bring a bull of 7 years old [the number of years of humiliation of the people to the Midianites (verse 1)], and it is as if with the death of this bull, the years of humiliation to Midian would end. There is an opinion that the second bull belonged to the people of the village, and they were also preparing it to be offered as a sacrifice (and this is the reason for the agitation of the people of the village).
4. To build an altar to the Lord on which the second bull to be offered, and to use the wood of the pole as firewood (fuel). What God asked of Gideon is exceptional, as Gideon is not from the tribe of Levi, nor is he a priest. What Gideon did was not a usurpation of the priesthood; it was at God's request and command and not the priesthood's lust. Probably, the Levites were fleeing because of the Midianites. Rather, what the Lord probably asked of Gideon was not to offer a sin offering or a burnt offering but to show the weakness of Baal and that it was unable to defend itself. Sacrifices are offered only in the Tabernacle of Meeting. Therefore, offering the bull as a sacrifice is not a priestly act but rather a demonstration that the worship of Baal is invalid, and this is an unprecedented act. We also notice the corruption of the city that raged against Gideon and his ten men. The worshipers of Baal are much more than those of YHWH, as the nature of worshiping Baal is in line with the fallen nature of man. It seems that Gideon's father, Joash, worshiped Baal while Gideon resisted this work. It seems that the ten men who were with him were against the worship of Baal. When the people of the city asked to kill Gideon, his father became emboldened and supported his son. Some souls are encouraged if they find someone to start the work. Joash mocked the people defending their broken god. **Let the one who would plead for him be put to death by morning!** Whoever defends Baal will be killed quickly this morning. Joash called his son Jerubbaal: **Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal** = that is, there was a fight

between him and Baal. This name became famous for Gideon later. **Let Baal plead against him:** This is a mockery of Baal, who has to fight Gideon if he can after destroying his altar.

(Verses 33-35): **Then all the Midianites and Amalekites, the people of the East, gathered together; and they crossed over and encamped in the Valley of Jezreel. 34 But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon; then he blew the trumpet, and the Abiezrites gathered behind him. 35 And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, who also gathered behind him. He also sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali; and they came up to meet them.**

Valley of Jezreel: This valley is in the heart of Palestine, often the site of battles. This valley extends from Mount Carmel to the Jordan Valley. The Midianites gathered because:

1. It was harvest time, and they came to take the spoils (the evidence is that Gideon was threshing the wheat).
2. To discipline Gideon and those with him for destroying the altar of Baal, and perhaps they felt that the destruction of the altar of Baal was a revolt against them that they wanted to abort violently. **then he blew the trumpet** = he who secretly hit the wheat out of fear; after the Spirit of the Lord came upon him completely changed to become a commander of the army. This is what happened with the disciples on the day of Pentecost. Rather, the Spirit of the Lord moved his clan, so they gathered behind him. Those who rebelled against him for destroying the altar of Baal are now moving after him to battle. The Holy Spirit can make my sin-enslaved body an instrument in the hands of the Lord to serve as an instrument of righteousness. Gideon summoned others, and they responded to him.

(Verses 36-40): **So Gideon said to God, "If You will save Israel by my hand as You have said— 37 look, I shall put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece only, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that You will save Israel by my hand, as You have said." 38 And it was so. When he rose early the next morning and squeezed the fleece together, he wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowlful of water. 39 Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me, but let me speak just once more: Let me test, I pray, just once more with the fleece; let it now be dry only on the fleece, but on all the ground let there be dew." 40 And God did so that night. It was dry on the fleece only, but there was dew on all the ground.**

Gideon asks for a sign to go out to war. In this sign the fathers saw a pleasant interpretation. The dew on the fleece is the faith among the Jews, for the word of God descends like dew (Deuteronomy 32: 2), while the whole world was dry because of its submission to Satan. On the contrary, the dew on the whole floor, except for the fleece, is the rejection of the Jews and the acceptance of the Gentiles (Psalm 72: 6 + Isaiah 5: 6 + Matthew 15: 24). The divine stream has turned into the hearts of the Gentiles (Romans 5: 5). This means that Christ left the lost sheep of the house of Israel because they rejected Him and turned to the Gentiles.

Chapter 7

(Verse 1): **Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him rose early and encamped beside the well of Harod, so that the camp of the Midianites was on the north side of them by the hill of Moreh in the valley.**

The Midian army was 135,000 men (Judges 8: 10). Also, note that Gideon meets at **the well of Harod**. The secret of victory is the divine capabilities that the believer enjoys through the fountain of baptism, and the work of the Holy Spirit in him. **Harod** means trembling. This name refers to the trembling of the Midianites, or the trembling of Gideon's army, who left the battle, and perhaps to Satan's trembling at God's work with his people.

(Verse 2): **And the Lord said to Gideon, "The people who are with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.'**

The number of Gideon's army was 32,000, which was much less than the army of Midian.

(Verse 3): **Now therefore, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, 'Whoever is fearful and afraid, let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead.'" And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained.**

Those who are afraid represent those who are not confident in God's promises (Revelation 21: 8). Unfortunately, they were more than two-thirds of the army, and these, firstly, are of no use, and secondly, they spoil the courage of the rest.

(Verses 4-6): **But the Lord said to Gideon, "The people are still too many; bring them down to the water, and I will test them for you there. Then it will be, that of whom I say to you, 'This one shall go with you,' the same shall go with you; and of whomever I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' the same shall not go." 5 So he brought the people down to the water. And the Lord said to Gideon, "Everyone who laps from the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart by himself; likewise everyone who gets down on his knees to drink." 6 And the number of those who lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men; but all the rest of the people got down on their knees to drink water.**

putting their hand to their mouth: These drank while standing and did not get down on their knees to drink because they were in a state of war and did not sit down, as they felt responsible and were not lazy. As for those who sat and rested, they were not interested in war. The warrior man of God does not care much about eating and drinking, for they are means and not an end, but his eye is on his striving,

and he is attentive to any movement of the enemy. Therefore, the characteristics of the servants of God whom He chooses:

- 1) They are brave, and their faith is strong.
- 2) Not sluggish.

(Verses 7-8): **Then the Lord said to Gideon, "By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. Let all the other people go, every man to his place." 8 So the people took provisions and their trumpets in their hands. And he sent away all the rest of Israel, every man to his tent, and retained those three hundred men. Now the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.**

Number 300 in Greek "T" which is the sign of the cross by which we overcome. When we crucify our passions with our desires, we enjoy the power of the work of Christ's cross. The men took supplies with the trumpets, and we need in our striving more supplies from the word of God (the trumpets refer to the word of God and the provisions to faith).

(Verses 9-14): **It happened on the same night that the Lord said to him, "Arise, go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand. 10 But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant, 11 and you shall hear what they say; and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp." Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outpost of the armed men who were in the camp. 12 Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude. 13 And when Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his companion. He said, "I have had a dream: To my surprise, a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian; it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed." 14 Then his companion answered and said, "This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp."**

Note Gideon's difficult position:

1. His army is 300 men against 135,000 fighters.
2. The war is on the plain, where there are no natural fortresses.
3. They are without military equipment, as the Midianites robbed them of everything during the seven years of enslavement.
4. They are an army without training or experience in war.

But God is the one who fights and gives signs of His presence to Gideon to strengthen him.

- a. He appears to him and sends him forth with clear words.
- b. He accepts his sacrifice with heavenly fire.
- c. He gives him clear signs (fleece).
- d. And here He makes him hear the dream of a Midian man.

Purah your servant: Your armour carrier. **the outpost of the armed men** = the last ranks of the army ready for war, and the benefit of the dream is that God shows the state of terror upon which the Midianites are. God caused the Midianites to be afraid, and He wanted to show Gideon their state. So, God showed a dream to one of them, and another interpreted it. The barley loaf (**a loaf of barley bread**) is the cheapest bread in Palestine. It is eaten by the poor and given to animals as if God was announcing even to the enemy that He would destroy the Midianites with Gideon, who appears in weakness and poverty as a cheap loaf of barley, for Gideon appears to the Midianites as weak and poor. And we, no matter how weak we are, even as a loaf of barley, God uses us, so we ought not fear. We notice that when the enemies of God's people see God's hand with His people, they are terrified and astonished.

(Verses 15-18): **And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel, and said, "Arise, for the Lord has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand." 16 Then he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet into every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and torches inside the pitchers. 17 And he said to them, "Look at me and do likewise; watch, and when I come to the edge of the camp you shall do as I do: 18 When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me, then you also blow the trumpets on every side of the whole camp, and say, 'The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!'"**

What are Gideon's weapons against this trained army?

- 1) 300 men.
- 2) Torches.
- 3) Empty Pitchers.
- 4) Trumpets.

But Gideon developed a war plan using all his resources and capabilities. We must strive with all that God has given us of wisdom and reason. God is the one who gave us wisdom, reason, and talents. He sanctifies human work, blesses it, and gives it a success. We must understand that we must strive as much as possible, but the strength is from God, not us. Gideon makes a plan and leaves its success to the Lord. The three divisions (each of 100 men) occupied a position around the camp.

(Verses 19-23): **So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outpost of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just as they had posted the watch; and they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers that were in their hands. 20 Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers—they held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing—and they cried, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" 21 And every man stood in his place all around the camp; and the whole army ran and cried out and fled. 22 When the three hundred blew the trumpets, the Lord set every man's sword against his companion throughout the whole camp; and the army fled to Beth Acacia, toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel Meholah, by Tabbath. 23 And the men of Israel gathered together from Naphtali, Asher, and all Manasseh, and pursued the Midianites.**

at the beginning of the middle watch: around 10 p.m.

broke the pitchers = the pitchers were used for:

1. Hide the light of the torches until the time comes.
2. Protect the torches from the wind so they do not go out.
3. The sound of pitchers breaking makes the Midianites think that a huge army is attacking them.

What terrified the army of Midian?

1. God's terror fell on them, so the effect of Gideon's plan was intense.
2. The sound of trumpets and the sudden crack of the pitchers while they were sleeping. Each man broke his pitcher against his brother's pitcher as if it were the sound of warship weapons clashing together.
3. The night is already terrifying, as no one can see, but they were surprised by the torches surrounding them.
4. **The sword of the Lord and of Gideon** = Gideon borrowed the word from the mouth of the man of Midian (verse 14), but he said a sword to the Lord, for he knows that God is the one who fights. And he said a sword to Gideon because he understood that the name Gideon became a terror to the Midianites. They thought the torches were some helps coming to Gideon from afar.

Out of the intensity of terror, the Midianites struck themselves, so the battle took place between themselves while they were unaware. Note that Gideon asked the Lord where the miracles are (Judges 6: 13), and here he sees them with his own eyes, and let us notice that God can make the enemies of His Church fight together and the Church survives. The rest of the Midian army fled towards the east of the Jordan. They fled from the face of a force they felt and did not see. God made them to flee without a pursuer, for He is the one who terrified them and delivered them to their evil deeds that made them lose their peace (Proverbs 14: 32 + 28: 1).

(Verse 24): **Then Gideon sent messengers throughout all the mountains of Ephraim, saying, "Come down against the Midianites, and seize from them the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan." Then all the men of Ephraim gathered together and seized the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan.**

The Midianites fled towards the Jordan to cross it to escape from Gideon, so Gideon asked the men of Ephraim to cut off the escape route in front of them. **seize from them the watering places** = that is the men of Ephraim seize the fords of the Jordan and not let the Midianites cross to flee, for they cut off the route of return and escape from them. Now that the army of Midian was destroyed, the deserters, the fearful, the fading, and the sluggish from the army of Israel began to pursue the remnants of the fleeing army of Midian. Christ's victory on the cross (Gideon is a symbol of Christ) gave us the weak the possibility of defeating Satan. How do we defeat Satan? **seize from them the watering places** = water symbolizes God's gifts and grace to us, that is, all our talents, energies, and body that Satan seized. So we must take it from him to use it for the account of Christ. (Midian captured first the fords of the Jordan to flee from it or cross over it whenever they want, when they want to enter and when they want to get out) and now the people of Ephraim seized it so that Midian could not use it, but instead, they perished inside the land of Israel.

(Verse 25): **And they captured two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they killed at the winepress of Zeeb. They pursued Midian and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side of the Jordan.**

Oreb means raven, and **Zeeb** means wolf.

The dove refers to the Holy Spirit or the Church led by the Holy Spirit. And the raven refers to Satan (the raven of Noah's ark lives on dead bodies, and Satan rejoices at the destruction of God's people and their being like dead bodies). The lamb refers to Christ and every believer united with Him. And the wolf refers to the enemy of goodness, who is characterized by the ferocity and predatory nature and gives his followers to be like him in his nature, preying on meek lambs. So, the raven is a sign of corruption, and the wolf is a sign of predation. With our association with Jesus, our Gideon, we defeat a raven and a wolf. Note that the killing of the raven and the wolf was on a rock (Christ is the rock 1 Corinthians 10: 4), and the winepress refers to the church. So, the Christian's attachment to the church that is filled with the fruit of the vine (the blood of Christ) as a source of life is the secret of the believer's life and the secret of Satan's destruction. Notice the path of victory:

1. Gideon's men were 300 = believers carrying a cross (300 in Greek, "T" is the form of the sign of the cross).
2. They are 3 divisions = belief in the power of resurrection working in them.
3. They have trumpets = the word of God that warns the soul, and mortal bodies broken like pitchers, and the Holy Spirit like a shining torch.

4. Rejection of the spirit of corruption (raven) and evil (wolf).

Chapter 8

(Verse 1): **Now the men of Ephraim said to him, "Why have you done this to us by not calling us when you went to fight with the Midianites?" And they reprimanded him sharply.**

The tribe of Ephraim had its strength among the tribes, and when Israel was divided into two kingdoms, one of them (the northern one, which is the largest of 10 tribes) was called Ephraim. The Ephraimites occupied the best lands. And the meaning of their words here is a reproach to Gideon why he did not summon them to fight Midian, and the apparent meaning of their words was courage and zeal for the glory of God. But the reality of their feelings is a battle for leadership, as Ephraim feared that the leadership would go to Manasseh.

(Verses 2-3): **So he said to them, "What have I done now in comparison with you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? 3 God has delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. And what was I able to do in comparison with you?" Then their anger toward him subsided when he said that.**

Gideon's wisdom and humility show here, as he answered very kindly that he did nothing besides what Ephraim did = **What have I done now in comparison with you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?** = The gleaning of the grapes is what remains in the vineyard after it has been harvested, and it is very little. He means by Abiezer, his own family. That is, in humility, the least of what Ephraim has is better than the Gideon family. He made them better for bringing the heads of **Oreb and Zeeb**. "A soft answer turns away wrath "(Proverbs 15: 1)." Gideon could have rebuked them harshly, saying, "Where have you been during the seven years of humiliation?" But he did not lose them; rather, he wisely gained them to his side. The meaning of his words is that he did the work of preparing for the battle, and they were the ones who fought.

(Verses 4-9): **When Gideon came to the Jordan, he and the three hundred men who were with him crossed over, exhausted but still in pursuit. 5 Then he said to the men of Succoth, "Please give loaves of bread to the people who follow me, for they are exhausted, and I am pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian." 6 And the leaders of Succoth said, "Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand, that we should give bread to your army?" 7 So Gideon said, "For this cause, when the Lord has delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, then I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers!" 8 Then he went up from there to Penuel and spoke to them in the same way. And the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered. 9 So he also spoke to the men of Penuel, saying, "When I come back in peace, I will tear down this tower!"**

Gideon's army pursued the kings of Midian and became tired of hunger, so they asked for food from the people of the cities of Succoth and then Penuel. All that was required of Succoth and Penuel was some bread to symbolize their participation in the battle, but they were cowards. They imagined that the

Midianites could not be defeated, so they were afraid to help Gideon, lest Midian take revenge on them after that for this help. While Gideon and his men are fighting Midian on behalf of the whole Israelites, Succoth and Penuel are sparing bread for them instead of helping them in that war. These represent the quitted and the discouraged. Rather, they mocked Gideon, "**Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand**" These people underestimated the God of Israel and the man of God, so they are probably worshipers of Baal. Therefore, the threat of Gideon (the meek one before Ephraim) was terrifying to them. As a judge of Israel, he must discipline them so that the curse does not fall upon the whole people. In Gideon's threat to the people of Succoth, saying **I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers** = thorns is a symbol of sin, as it is one of the curses of sin. The sin that we carry out with our bodies will be the cause of our destruction. Gideon's threat to the people of Penuel was **I will tear down this tower** = so it seems that they had a fortified tower to take refuge in, so they were not afraid of Gideon's threats. They became like the people of Babylon, building a tower to protect them, and this tower represents their pride. If we understand the word **Penuel** = seeing the face of God, then the people of Penuel would be representatives of those who obtained a measure of spirituality, so they were arrogant and puffed up and thought themselves fortified in a tower, while the people of Succoth represent those living according to the flesh. And they both perish.

(Verses 10-12): **Now Zebah and Zalmunna were at Karkor, and their armies with them, about fifteen thousand, all who were left of all the army of the people of the East; for one hundred and twenty thousand men who drew the sword had fallen. 11 Then Gideon went up by the road of those who dwell in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah; and he attacked the army while the camp felt secure. 12 When Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued them; and he took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and routed the whole army.**

the road of those who dwell in tents: Most likely, it was an unusual road, and the Midianites did not expect that Gideon would take it, so they were surprised and became confused again and trembled (perhaps this road of those who dwell in tents was a road inhabited by Arabs whom Midian thought were protection against Gideon). The enemy initially had a strength of 135,000. And now he's a terrified runaway enemy. **Zebah** = a sacrifice, as it is slaughtered for idols. **Zalmunna** = the dark god. **Karkor** = flat to the ground.

Christ, our true Gideon, defeated Satan, the dark god, and brought him to the level of the earth (Luke 10: 19). Notice the defeat of the two kings of Midian in the wilderness. And Jesus went to be tempted by Satan in the wilderness and to defeat him.

(Verses 13-17): **Then Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle, from the Ascent of Heres. 14 And he caught a young man of the men of Succoth and interrogated him; and he wrote down for him the leaders of Succoth and its elders, seventy-seven men. 15 Then he came to the men of Succoth and said, "Here are Zebah and Zalmunna, about whom you ridiculed me, saying, 'Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand, that we should give bread to your weary men?'" 16 And he took the**

elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth. 17 Then he tore down the tower of Penuel and killed the men of the city.

(Verses 18-21): **And he said to Zebah and Zalmunna, "What kind of men were they whom you killed at Tabor?" So they answered, "As you are, so were they; each one resembled the son of a king." 19 Then he said, "They were my brothers, the sons of my mother. As the Lord lives, if you had let them live, I would not kill you." 20 And he said to Jether his firstborn, "Rise, kill them!" But the youth would not draw his sword; for he was afraid, because he was still a youth. 21 So Zebah and Zalmunna said, "Rise yourself, and kill us; for as a man is, so is his strength." So Gideon arose and killed Zebah and Zalmunna, and took the crescent ornaments that were on their camels' necks.**

The Midianites probably killed Gideon's brothers on the day they met in the Valley of Jezreel. (Judges 6: 33), before the battle with Gideon. Here, Gideon investigates the two kings and proves the charge of murder against them, as he is not thirsty for blood and does not judge anyone until he examines his affairs. Gideon asked his young son to carry out the death sentence, to teach him to fight, and give him confidence against the enemies. **Rise yourself, and kill us** = because the murderer is above the murdered. And they asked Gideon to kill them, as the strike of Gideon, the strong and seasoned in war, would be fatal at once. As for the strike of the frightened, hesitant young boy, it would be a torment for them, as he would have to hit them several times for his hesitation, which would torture them a lot. And **took the crescent ornaments that were on their camels' necks** = these pagan kings, worshipers of the moon, used to make these crescents as veils to protect them, and Gideon's seizure of them symbolized that he controlled and defeated their gods.

(Verses 22-23): **Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, "Rule over us, both you and your son, and your grandson also; for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian." 23 But Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you."**

We see the first attempt to establish a monarchy here, i.e. the son inherits his father's kingdom. Gideon also succeeded in this test when he stated that the kingdom is to God because Gideon was walking in the spirit, and he was not deceived by power but accepted to be a servant of the people. And note that the people of Israel attributed the victory to Gideon, "**for you have delivered us.**" Gideon rejected this and attributed the credit to God for the victory. And if God is the one who won, then let God rule over the people = **the Lord shall rule over you**. Here, Gideon rejects the temporal dignity, which is always a strike directed at the men of God. Despite Gideon's rejection of the kingship, his son then tried to rule. And let us ask ourselves, "If Israel had asked Gideon to rule over them, when he saved them from Midian, then do we not let Christ rule over us when he saved us from a more evil enemy?"

(Verses 24-27): **24 Then Gideon said to them, "I would like to make a request of you, that each of you would give me the earrings from his plunder." For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites. 25 So they answered, "We will gladly give them." And they spread out a garment, and each man threw into it the earrings from his plunder. 26 Now the weight of the gold earrings that he requested was one thousand seven hundred shekels of gold, besides the crescent ornaments, pendants, and purple robes which were on the kings of Midian, and besides the chains that were around their camels' necks. 27 Then Gideon made it into an ephod and set it up in his city, Ophrah. And all Israel played the harlot with it there. It became a snare to Gideon and to his house.**

Gideon succeeded in rejecting the kingship, but here he fell to another test:

The Midianites had golden earrings like the Ishmaelites, and they thought that the earrings had superstitious powers, so they made gods out of them (Exodus 32: 2). This is how Aaron made the golden calf. Gideon asked that the people give him earrings to make statues and an ephod as a memorial to his victory. The ephod is the clothes of the priests. Perhaps Gideon established a kind of local worship near his home instead of going to the tabernacle of meeting in Shiloh (Ephraim), his competitor. Perhaps he desired the priesthood (while he did not desire the kingship), so he wore an ephod in offering sacrifices in front of this statue but rather attracted the people to this pagan worship = **And all Israel played the harlot with it there**. Adultery here is spiritual adultery in the sense of worshipping idols. Or the ephod is a kind of garment used in divination, but these are also pagan customs. The matter summarizes in that Gideon's fall that he set up a kind of worship in his residence was a reason to attract people away from God, so they did not go to the Tabernacle of meeting. I wish Gideon had asked the Lord about this, and if he did, he would not have fallen, and the people would not have fallen with him. It is better to worship God as He wants, not as we want, imagine, or desire. However, many scholars believe that Gideon repented of his fall, with evidence that:

1. Paul called him a man of faith (Hebrews 11: 32).
2. The Bible says that he died at a good old age (Judges 8: 32). However, this ephod and this pagan worship may have continued with his children and was the cause of their sad end at the hands of Abimelech (Judges 9: 5).

(Verse 28): **Thus Midian was subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted their heads no more. And the country was quiet for forty years in the days of Gideon.**

Note the repetition of number 40 with the judges and with Samuel, Saul, David and Solomon.

(Verses 29-31): **Then Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house. 30 Gideon had seventy sons who were his own offspring, for he had many wives. 31 And his concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son, whose name he called Abimelech.**

his concubine: She is called concubine as he married her secretly from his wife, and her children do not inherit. **Abimelech** = the meaning of his name, my father possesses, and this is how his mother named him to urge him to ask for something from his father's inheritance and greatness. This one set up an evil role, in agreement with his mother's family from Shechem, against his seventy brothers for him to rule over Israel.

(Verses 32-35): **Now Gideon the son of Joash died at a good old age, and was buried in the tomb of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. 33 So it was, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals, and made Baal-Berith their God. 34 Thus the children of Israel did not remember the Lord their God, who had delivered them from the hands of all their enemies on every side; 35 nor did they show kindness to the house of Jerubbaal (Gideon) in accordance with the good he had done for Israel.**

Baal-Berith: Covenant master. As if they promised Baal to worship him, and as if Baal promised to protect them, or they pledged with the Canaanites to worship Baal, the god of the Canaanites.

Chapter 9

(Verses 1-2): **Then Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem, to his mother's brothers, and spoke with them and with all the family of the house of his mother's father, saying, 2 "Please speak in the hearing of all the men of Shechem: 'Which is better for you, that all seventy of the sons of Jerubbaal reign over you, or that one reign over you?' Remember that I am your own flesh and bone."**

Gideon had many wives and concubines, and this was a cause of his problems. One of his concubines was from Shechem, in Ephraim, of a Canaanite family, and she bore him Abimelech. This went to his mother's family after his father's death to provoke them against his seventy brothers, claiming that his seventy brothers wanted to reign. This did not happen; their father, Gideon, rejected this idea. But Abimelech was the one who coveted the kingship, which prompted him to kill all his brothers (except for Jotham, who fled). We note that Gideon, who rejected the kingship, lived in peace for 40 years, while Abimelech, who coveted the kingship, lived a little and in turmoil, and his days were evil, and he and his countrymen were destroyed. His qualifications were "**I am your own flesh and bone**" so the service turned into compliments on account of blood kinship and personal relationships. Abimelech made a mistake in his love of domination, and Ephraim chose an unsuitable person to rule, a bad choice that caused them great losses. Therefore, we must be careful in choosing any servant of the Lord.

(Verse 3): **And his mother's brothers spoke all these words concerning him in the hearing of all the men of Shechem; and their heart was inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, "He is our brother."**

He is our brother: This was the logic of the Israelites and Canaanites of Shechem; he is our relative in the flesh, so he will support us when he reigns.

(Verses 4-6): **So they gave him seventy shekels of silver from the temple of Baal-Berith, with which Abimelech hired worthless and reckless men; and they followed him. 5 Then he went to his father's house at Ophrah and killed his brothers, the seventy sons of Jerubbaal, on one stone. But Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left, because he hid himself. 6 And all the men of Shechem gathered together, all of Beth Millo, and they went and made Abimelech king beside the terebinth tree at the pillar that was in Shechem.**

from the temple of Baal-Berith: That is the money house in the temple of Baal-Berith. This amount was for Abimelech to hire evil men to kill his brothers, and perhaps they took the money from the house of Baal because they thought they would be blessed by doing this and their plan would succeed. Here we hear of the existence of a king for the first time, but he was not king over all the tribes, but rather over Shechem and some of the neighboring countries, so he was not counted as king over Israel, like Saul and David. **all of Beth Millo** = Shechem tower or fortress. **the terebinth tree at the pillar** = under which Jacob buried the strange gods (Genesis 35: 4). Beneath it, Joshua erected the Stone of Testimony

(Joshua 24: 26). That is why it was called **the terebinth tree at the pillar**, that is, a stone set up for testimony and standing under this terebinth.

(Verse 7): **Now when they told Jotham, he went and stood on top of Mount Gerizim, and lifted his voice and cried out. And he said to them: "Listen to me, you men of Shechem, That God may listen to you!"**

Jotham: YHWH is perfect or complete. It was Jotham's talk to the people of Shechem when he heard what they had done and that they had set up Abimelech as king over them. Jotham's words were like a warning or a prophecy from God to Shechem, but the people of Shechem had ears that did not hear.

That God may listen to you = He rewards you well by responding to your requests. Jotham stood on the mountain as if on a pulpit. The sound resounds in the middle of the desert, and it can be heard in Shechem and even on the opposite mountain, Ebal. He began his speech with a parable mysteriously and interestingly to attract them to listen and think and ended with a painful conclusion so that if they rebelled against him, he could escape into one of the mountain's caves. The magnificence of the proverb that Jotham said is consistent with his being the son of a great man like Gideon.

(Verse 8): **"The trees once went forth to anoint a king over them. And they said to the olive tree, 'Reign over us!'"**

Do trees seek protection from a king?! This is their first rebuke of the idea of a king protecting Israel, for God is the one who protects it as He protects trees. The following advice is that if they think of having a king, let him have a benefit like the olive tree, the vine, and the fig tree; that is, he can give and serve his people.

(Verse 9): **But the olive tree said to them, 'Should I cease giving my oil, With which they honor God and men, And go to sway over trees?'**

the olive tree is the source of oil, and anointing is a symbol of the Church filled with the Holy Spirit, or the soul filled with the Spirit (Psalm 52: 8 + Jeremiah 11: 16). The person who is filled with the Spirit is full of the fruits of the Spirit. He does not seek temporal dignity or authority but seeks to serve people. What makes his heart happy is that he uses the oil that is in him to illuminate people with healing and satiety (oil is used for lighting, treatment and eating). The true servant burns to enlighten people.

(Verses 10-11): **"Then the trees said to the fig tree, 'You come and reign over us!' 11 But the fig tree said to them, 'Should I cease my sweetness and my good fruit, And go to sway over trees?'"**

the fig tree refers to the church, as it is full of seeds, referring to her members. The fig tree has one cover that collects the seeds, which is the sweet Spirit of love and unity. The Church is filled with love, and every individual in her has the Spirit of serving others. None of her members is seeking leadership over others.

(Verses 12-13): **"Then the trees said to the vine, 'You come and reign over us!' 13 But the vine said to them, 'Should I cease my new wine, Which cheers both God and men, And go to sway over trees?'**

the vine represents the Church as the house of the cross, where the grapes are pressed to produce fresh wine (new wine). This church rejoices in the cross and in suffering so that God may be pleased with her. Wine refers to joy, and God rejoices in the church that accepts the pain and the cross, and He pours out His comforts and joys upon her, so she rejoices amid her sufferings. The vine refers to the joy of God associated with the sacrifice of Christ and the joy of the suffering church with her Christ. Such a church (the vine) does not search for temporal dignity.

(Verse 14): **"Then all the trees said to the bramble, 'You come and reign over us!'**

the bramble is a plant with thorns, which is harmful, painful, and fruitless. It appears in dry areas and does not need much water. Because it has little moisture, it is subject to burning and even causes the burning of the trees next to it. Jotham's proverb summarizes that the one who has work and service does not seek leadership and control over others. In contrast, the one without work among the people is concerned with domination and exploiting the position because he feels his lack, and this is like the bramble (Abimelech) that burns and burns others.

(Verse 15): **And the bramble said to the trees, 'If in truth you anoint me as king over you, Then come and take shelter in my shade; But if not, let fire come out of the bramble And devour the cedars of Lebanon!'**

The bramble asked the trees to take shelter under its shade, even though the trees are taller and larger than the bramble plant, which is small in size, and its leaves and thorns are sharp, so that no one can take shade under it. The bramble was not satisfied with the kingship when it was presented to it but threatened the trees by burning them instead of thanking them. This is the case of the cruel, "If you honor the cruel, he rebels."

(Verses 16-19): **"Now therefore, if you have acted in truth and sincerity in making Abimelech king, and if you have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house, and have done to him as he deserves— 17 for my father fought for you, risked his life, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian; 18 but you have**

risen up against my father's house this day, and killed his seventy sons on one stone, and made Abimelech, the son of his female servant, king over the men of Shechem, because he is your brother— 19 if then you have acted in truth and sincerity with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, then rejoice in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you.

This is a rebuke from Jotham to the people of Shechem for repaying Gideon's favor by betraying them.

(Verses 20-21): **But if not, let fire come from Abimelech and devour the men of Shechem and Beth Millo; and let fire come from the men of Shechem and from Beth Millo and devour Abimelech!" 21 And Jotham ran away and fled; and he went to Beer and dwelt there, for fear of Abimelech his brother.**

Here is Jotham's warning to them as a prophecy of what will happen next. The people of Shechem thought that Abimelech would support them, but they did not realize that he would be a fire that would burn them and burn himself. His evil was like a fire that burned everyone. How can they accept a treacherous king who killed his brothers?

(Verse 22): **After Abimelech had reigned over Israel three years,**

Abimelech had reigned: He only reigned over Shechem and its environs, and no one respected him. He did not even say that he was a judge of Israel, but he rejoiced in calling himself a king.

(Verse 23): **God sent a spirit of ill will between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech,**

We do not know how Abimelech lived these three years. Still, here we hear that God sent an ill spirit between him and the people of Shechem, meaning that each side realized the evil of the other, and a spirit of hatred and betrayal became in them as if he who strengthened his hands to kill his brothers is now unbearable. Rather, they felt that he who betrayed his brothers could not be entrusted, and he probably felt their new hatred for him. **and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech** = For those who betrayed Gideon and killed his children, how can they not betray this usurper after they discovered his incompetence.

(Verse 24): **that the crime done to the seventy sons of Jerubbaal might be settled and their blood be laid on Abimelech their brother, who killed them, and on the men of Shechem, who aided him in the killing of his brothers.**

Here is a summary of what happened after that, as the ill spirit between Abimelech and the people of Shechem was the cause of the ruin of both parties. What happened to them of ruin because of their betrayal.

(Verse 25): **And the men of Shechem set men in ambush against him on the tops of the mountains, and they robbed all who passed by them along that way; and it was told Abimelech.**

Shechem's plan to get rid of Abimelech and kill him was to stir up unrest in the region, so they set ambushes on the tops of the mountains to rob everyone who passes by. So, the people of the region feel insecure, and they would go to complain to King Abimelech. These ambushes also deprived King Abimelech of the tribute he collected from the merchants, as they lost their trade from plunder. This was what happened that those who were affected from the ambushes went to Abimelech = **and it was told Abimelech**. The plan was that if Abimelech had come out, he would have ambushed him, they would have killed him and set up someone else as king. We notice that whoever plotted a plan to kill his brothers and his relatives are now plotting a plan to kill him.

(Verses 26-29): **Now Gaal the son of Ebed came with his brothers and went over to Shechem; and the men of Shechem put their confidence in him. 27 So they went out into the fields, and gathered grapes from their vineyards and trod them, and made merry. And they went into the house of their god, and ate and drank, and cursed Abimelech. 28 Then Gaal the son of Ebed said, "Who is Abimelech, and who is Shechem, that we should serve him? Is he not the son of Jerubbaal, and is not Zebul his officer? Serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem; but why should we serve him? 29 If only this people were under my authority! Then I would remove Abimelech." So he said to Abimelech, "Increase your army and come out!"**

A leader of the people of Shechem appeared, who is **Gaal the son of Ebed** to lead the revolution against Abimelech. Gaal is probably a Canaanite because in his words he glorified Hamor the Canaanite = **Serve the men of Hamor**. Gaal also challenged Abimelech and his officer, Zebul. **Now Gaal the son of Ebed came with his brothers** = they were probably a group of thieves and bandits working under the leadership of Gaal. The people of Shechem rejoiced with them and made him their ruler and began their plan to entrap Abimelech with a pagan religious ritual. (Verse 27): They picked grapes and pressed them: **gathered grapes from their vineyards and trod them** = and trampled them down to make wine and glorified their god Baal, meaning they sang and glorified Baal, their false god, **and cursed Abimelech** = meaning they asked their gods to abandon Abimelech, so that he would be cursed, and they would overcome him. **Who is Abimelech, and who is Shechem** = it is an underestimation of Abimelech and his saying Shechem also means Abimelech, for Abimelech now reigns over Shechem. **Is he not the son of Jerubbaal**: Jerubbaal is Gideon. He mentions the nickname of Gideon, i.e., Jerubbaal (fighting the Baal), to excite the worshipers of Baal and remind them of what Gideon did to the temple of Baal, so they revolted against Abimelech, his son. The meaning of his words is how do we allow the enemy of Baal reigns over the worshipers of Baal, i.e., how he reigns over us while we all worship Baal, so these words

are a provocation for the existing worshipers of Baal. **Serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem** = It is understood from this that **Gaal the son of Ebed** is a descendant of Hamor, the Canaanite. He is here calling on his listeners to revolt against Abimelech the Hebrew and make him king, for he is the son of Hamor, who founded Shechem = **the father of Shechem**. Here he considers Hamor the legitimate king of Shechem, and the Hebrews are intruders. The name Hamor is derived from the donkey sacrifice, which was a key aspect in the conclusion of treaties among the Amorites in the 18th century BC. And in (verse 29) it means: Make me a king, and I will expel Abimelech. Then he sent a message to Abimelech, saying, **Increase your army and come out** = it is a challenge to war.

(Verses 30-33): **When Zebul, the ruler of the city, heard the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, his anger was aroused. 31 And he sent messengers to Abimelech secretly, saying, "Take note! Gaal the son of Ebed and his brothers have come to Shechem; and here they are, fortifying the city against you. 32 Now therefore, get up by night, you and the people who are with you, and lie in wait in the field. 33 And it shall be, as soon as the sun is up in the morning, that you shall rise early and rush upon the city; and when he and the people who are with him come out against you, you may then do to them as you find opportunity."**

Abimelech appointed Zebul as ruler over Shechem and as his deputy. Zebul secretly sent to Abimelech to attack Gaal suddenly and destroy him because Abimelech was residing outside of Shechem.

(Verses 34-36): **So Abimelech and all the people who were with him rose by night, and lay in wait against Shechem in four companies. 35 When Gaal the son of Ebed went out and stood in the entrance to the city gate, Abimelech and the people who were with him rose from lying in wait. 36 And when Gaal saw the people, he said to Zebul, "Look, people are coming down from the tops of the mountains!" But Zebul said to him, "You see the shadows of the mountains as if they were men."**

Zebul pretended to be Gaal's friend. And the plan of Zebul was that Abimelech would not enter the city but would go down with his men at night and lie in wait in the field, and when he and his men came out in the morning, he would fight them at the gates of the city, so that there would be no strongholds to take refuge in. When he saw the army of Abimelech descending from the mountains (it was divided into four teams, and they would descend team after team to terrify Gaal and his men), Zebul deceived him that what he saw was not an army but shadows so that he would not prepare for war. Zebul's attempt is also to break the morale of Gaal as a coward who is afraid of war would fantasize that there are armies when there are none. In addition, if he imagines what he sees as shadows, he will not enter the city and close the doors.

(Verse 37): **So Gaal spoke again and said, "See, people are coming down from the center of the land, and another company is coming from the Diviners' Terebinth Tree."**

Diviners' Terebinth Tree: Probably, it is a terebinth tree under which they sit to know the unseen and the future.

(Verse 38): **Then Zebul said to him, "Where indeed is your mouth now, with which you said, 'Who is Abimelech, that we should serve him?' Are not these the people whom you despised? Go out, if you will, and fight with them now."**

Now Zebul, after Abimelech and his army arrived, spoke in disdain, **Where indeed is your mouth now** = i.e., fight and prove that you are capable of what you were talking about hours ago. You challenged Abimelech, so fight now and prove that you can implement what your mouth said.

(Verse 39): **So Gaal went out, leading the men of Shechem, and fought with Abimelech.**

The people of Shechem betrayed the sons of Gideon, and now they are planning a way to save them from Abimelech. (i.e., Gaal the pagan evil), So the means was corrupted, Gaal was defeated, and many of the people of Abimelech (i.e., the people of Shechem) fell dead. Corruption is like fire consuming one another.

(Verse 40): **And Abimelech chased him, and he fled from him; and many fell wounded, to the very entrance of the gate.**

The fact that the dead were **to the very entrance of the gate** means that when Gaal was defeated, he withdrew into Shechem and closed its doors on him, so Abimelech and his soldiers returned.

(Verse 41): **Then Abimelech dwelt at Arumah, and Zebul drove out Gaal and his brothers, so that they would not dwell in Shechem.**

Abimelech spent the night in **Arumah**. He returned to Shechem in the morning to kill Gaal and his men. On the other hand, Zebul agitated the people of Shechem with his deceptions, perhaps by accusing him of cowardice and ignorance that they were the reason for his defeat, then he persuaded the people of Shechem to expel him.

(Verse 42): **And it came about on the next day that the people went out into the field, and they told Abimelech.**

The people of Shechem were afraid of Abimelech's revenge, so when they saw that he had returned to Shechem, they went out to appease him and told him that they had expelled his enemy from Shechem.

(Verse 43): **So he took his people, divided them into three companies, and lay in wait in the field. And he looked, and there were the people, coming out of the city; and he rose against them and attacked them.**

Abimelech was determined to take revenge on the people of Shechem for their betrayal of him. He pretended that he believed them, but he ambushed them in the field, and when they went out as usual and assured that Abimelech had pardoned them, he rose and attacked them. He killed even the defenceless people (peasants) who went out to their fields.

(Verse 44): **Then Abimelech and the company that was with him rushed forward and stood at the entrance of the gate of the city; and the other two companies rushed upon all who were in the fields and killed them.**

stood at the entrance of the gate of the city: So that no one escapes from its people. And they do not close the doors until he completed his revenge on all of its people.

(Verse 45): **So Abimelech fought against the city all that day; he took the city and killed the people who were in it; and he demolished the city and sowed it with salt.**

sowed it with salt: A phrase that means that he ruined the city severely.

(Verses 46-49): **Now when all the men of the tower of Shechem had heard that, they entered the stronghold of the temple of the god Berith. 47 And it was told Abimelech that all the men of the tower of Shechem were gathered together. 48 Then Abimelech went up to Mount Zalmon, he and all the people who were with him. And Abimelech took an ax in his hand and cut down a bough from the trees, and took it and laid it on his shoulder; then he said to the people who were with him, "What you have seen me do, make haste and do as I have done." 49 So each of the people likewise cut down his own bough and followed Abimelech, put them against the [m]stronghold, and set the stronghold on fire above them, so that all the people of the tower of Shechem died, about a thousand men and women.**

all the men of the tower of Shechem had heard: These are the tower guards. They heard what happened in the city, so they took refuge in the tower, and their god, **Berith**, to protect them. But can Baal protect anyone.!! Here we see that Jotham's parable was literally fulfilled. A fire came out of the bramble and devoured the cedar trees.

(Verses 50-57): **Then Abimelech went to Thebez, and he encamped against Thebez and took it. 51 But there was a strong tower in the city, and all the men and women—all the people of the city—fled**

there and shut themselves in; then they went up to the top of the tower. 52 So Abimelech came as far as the tower and fought against it; and he drew near the door of the tower to burn it with fire. 53 But a certain woman dropped an upper millstone on Abimelech's head and crushed his skull. 54 Then he called quickly to the young man, his armorbearer, and said to him, "Draw your sword and kill me, lest men say of me, 'A woman killed him.'" So his young man thrust him through, and he died. 55 And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they departed, every man to his place. 56 Thus God repaid the wickedness of Abimelech, which he had done to his father by killing his seventy brothers. 57 And all the evil of the men of Shechem God returned on their own heads, and on them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal.

Thebez: Probably it was within the kingdom of Abimelech and rebelled against him in this rebellion, so he went to it also to burn it, as he did to Shechem, but God had ended the time of his life because of his evil, and absolutely every person knows that it is forbidden to approach the walls of a besieged city and in a state of war. But he who is hostile to God loses all wisdom and acts as a fool. The bramble has been burned along with the trees it has burned.

Chapter 10

(Verses 1-2): **After Abimelech there arose to save Israel Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar; and he dwelt in Shamir in the mountains of Ephraim. 2 He judged Israel twenty-three years; and he died and was buried in Shamir.**

After Abimelech there arose: What is meant is that he came after him in time as Abimelech was not a judge. **Tola** was from the tribe of Issachar and was appointed a judge in Ephraim. He rose to save Israel, perhaps from slight harassment that was not worth mentioning. **Tola** = worm or scarlet cloth. This is the meaning of his name. Since the judges symbolize Christ, we find that Tola refers to salvation through the blood of Christ after the fire devoured the bramble together with those who appointed him as king.

Shamir = means thorns = whoever chooses the path of temporal dignity (like Abimelech) spent his days in suffering, together with those who followed him. As for whoever chose the path of thorns (Christ who was crowned with a crown of thorns), he brought peace to those who followed him.

(Verses 3-5): **After him arose Jair, a Gileadite; and he judged Israel twenty-two years. 4 Now he had thirty sons who rode on thirty donkeys; they also had thirty towns, which are called "Havoth Jair" to this day, which are in the land of Gilead. 5 And Jair died and was buried in Camon.**

Referring back to (Numbers 32: 41), we find that Jair, the son of Manasseh, took the farms of Gilead and called them **Havoth Jair**. And Jair here is from the tribe of Judah. The explanation for this is one of two reasons:

1. Perhaps Jair is from the tribe of Manasseh and he was a judge. His name was added in the Book of Numbers and Deuteronomy after the time of Moses.
2. That Jair the judge is the son of Jair the son of Manasseh, and his ownership of his father's lands was confirmed, and the cities remained in their name **Havoth Jair**, which is the meaning of **to this day. thirty donkeys** = there were no horses. The one who rides the donkey is a sign of dignity and wealth. **they also had thirty towns** = in reality, they are 30 farms filled with buildings and facilities, so they were called cities. It was called **Havoth Jair**: they call it **Havoth Jair**, meaning the farms of Jair. The word Jair = means to enlighten, as the Judge Jair symbolizes Christ, who sent His Holy Spirit to enlighten the world. We get this enlightenment by the Holy Spirit through baptism (indicated by the number 30, the age in which Christ was baptized), and we have the dignity and wealth of the Holy Spirit (symbolized by riding a donkey).

(Verse 6): **Then the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served the Baals and the Ashtoreths, the gods of Syria, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the people of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines; and they forsook the Lord and did not serve Him.**

Pagan worship usually begins with the worship of God (as one now says, no fanaticism) and then, after a while, leaves the worship of God and indulges in pagan worship.

(Verses 7-9): **So 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 people of Ammon. 8 From that year they harassed and oppressed the children of Israel for eighteen years—all the children of Israel who were on the other side of the Jordan in the land of the Amorites, in Gilead. 9 Moreover the people of Ammon crossed over the Jordan to fight against Judah also, against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim, so that Israel was severely distressed.**

they harassed and oppressed the children of Israel: God let them taste the bitterness of what they chose. They were humiliated for 18 years by those whom they worshiped their gods.

(Verse 10): **And the children of Israel cried out to the Lord, saying, "We have sinned against You, because we have both forsaken our God and served the Baals!"**

Their cry to the Lord was because they loved themselves and did not love God. Therefore, the Lord's response was not quick, but he admonished them for their ungrateful behavior in exchange for His love, care and salvation.

(Verses 11-13): **So the Lord said to the children of Israel, "Did I not deliver you from the Egyptians and from the Amorites and from the people of Ammon and from the Philistines? 12 Also the Sidonians and Amalekites and Maonites oppressed you; and you cried out to Me, and I delivered you from their hand. 13 Yet you have forsaken Me and served other gods. Therefore I will deliver you no more.**

Therefore I will deliver you no more: Not to close the door of His mercy. Rather, it is firm fatherhood in which God tells them He will not save them as long as they are in their sins. They must first remove the alien gods.

(Verse 14): **"Go and cry out to the gods which you have chosen; let them deliver you in your time of distress."**

A gentle reproach from God that they go to the idols that are still in their midst. The meaning of the verse is that as long as these idols are among them, I will not save you. God, in his reproach, leads them to the depth of the problem or its real cause.

Note (1): In verse 11, he says, **So the Lord said to the children of Israel** = This was through a prophet or a priest.

Note (2): Comparing verse 6 with verses 11-12, we find that seven peoples have humiliated Israel in exchange for seven pagan gods that Israel worshiped.

(Verses 15-16): **And the children of Israel said to the Lord, "We have sinned! Do to us whatever seems best to You; only deliver us this day, we pray." 16 So they put away the foreign gods from among them and served the Lord. And His soul could no longer endure the misery of Israel.**

So they put away the foreign gods from among them and served the Lord. And His soul could no longer endure the misery of Israel:

"Return to Me," says the Lord of hosts, "and I will return to you, (Zechariah 1: 3). Now that they have removed the foreign gods, the Lord will return to save. He cannot bear the hardship of His children, nor bear their tears (1 Kings 21: 19, 25, 29 + Song of Solomon 6: 5 + Hosea 11: 8, 9).

(Verses 17-18): **Then the people of Ammon gathered together and encamped in Gilead. And the children of Israel assembled together and encamped in Mizpah. 18 And the people, the leaders of Gilead, said to one another, "Who is the man who will begin the fight against the people of Ammon? He shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead."**

As God returned to His people, He was preparing for them a savior, Jephthah, to turn the Ammonites away from them.

Chapter 11

(Verses 1-3): **Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valor, but he was the son of a harlot; and Gilead begot Jephthah. 2 Gilead's wife bore sons; and when his wife's sons grew up, they drove Jephthah out, and said to him, "You shall have no inheritance in our father's house, for you are the son of another woman." 3 Then Jephthah fled from his brothers and dwelt in the land of Tob; and worthless men banded together with Jephthah and went out raiding with him.**

The word **Jephthah** = the one who opens. **the son of a harlot** = the word harlot, as already said with Rahab, may mean the owner of a hotel, and she is generally a Canaanite stranger to the people of God, and not an Israelite. Being the son of adultery, this does not disgrace him, as the son is not asked for his father's sin, for "the soul who sins shall die." (Ezekiel 18: 4). Therefore, the Apostle Paul counts Jephthah among the righteous (Hebrews 11: 32). But socially, the son of adultery is mistreated, and therefore the law prohibited him from entering the congregation, that is, from membership in the synagogue, so that he would not be scolded for being the son of adultery. However, this did not deprive him of commanding the army or the judiciary or enjoying the eternal inheritance. His brothers expelled him, so they lost him without any sin he committed. As a result of society's poor treatment of him, he clung to the wicked and became their leader, perhaps in plundering. He was **a mighty man of valor**. We note that God has multiple ways of calling and preparing His men. Here, an angel did not appear to Jephthah, as to Gideon or to the parents of Samson. But God used the natural way, as the people sat thinking about a leader, and God guided them to Jephthah as a suitable leader. God had allowed all these circumstances that surrounded his life as a preparation for him. God benefited from his being mighty and fierce, to lead the flagging army and to lead it well. Like every judge, he has symbols of Christ:

1. His name is "he who opens," and Christ is the one who opens and no one shuts (Revelation 3: 7).
2. Jephthah was expelled and rejected by his brothers, and so was Christ, who did not find a place to be born and had no place to lay His head.
3. The expelled Jephthah accepted to save those who expelled him, and Christ opened his heart, with love on the cross, to embrace everyone. And He opened the door of paradise for us.

Jephthah was called the Gileadite for two reasons:

1. He was raised in Gilead.
2. His father's name was Gilead.

(Verses 4-11): **It came to pass after a time that the people of Ammon made war against Israel. 5 And so it was, when the people of Ammon made war against Israel, that the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob. 6 Then they said to Jephthah, "Come and be our commander, that we may fight against the people of Ammon." 7 So Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, "Did you not hate me, and expel me from my father's house? Why have you come to me now when you are in distress?"**

8 And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, "That is why we have turned again to you now, that you may go with us and fight against the people of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead." 9 So Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, "If you take me back home to fight against the people of Ammon, and the Lord delivers them to me, shall I be your head?" 10 And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, "The Lord will be a witness between us, if we do not do according to your words." 11 Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and commander over them; and Jephthah spoke all his words before the Lord in Mizpah.

When Jephthah was expelled from Gilead, his brothers relied on the judgment of the elders of Gilead. Now the elders themselves came asking him to be a leader. He is known for his strength and tyranny and for being a mighty warrior, famous for his bravery as a gang leader. **Then they said to Jephthah, "Come and be our commander** = The word "commander" that the elders used means only in war but Jephthah did not accept to be a commander in war only but asked that they have him as a head, that is, a leader in war and peace. We find him admonishing the elders for their previous decision to expel him = **Did you not hate me, and expel me from my father's house?** And they announced their regret for that by saying **That is why we have turned again to you now**. The elders accepted that they would have Jephthah as a head, so Jephthah entered into a relationship with the Lord in Mizpah (verse 11) as if he received the work from the hands of the Lord and not from the hands of the elders = **and Jephthah spoke all his words before the Lord in Mizpah**. And as long as the Lord sent him, He filled him with the Spirit, and we find him changed after that completely, and he acquired wisdom and stands of faith.

(Verse 12): **Now Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the people of Ammon, saying, "What do you have against me, that you have come to fight against me in my land?"**

Jephthah's wisdom appeared in that he began his work with a spirit of wisdom and dialogue and sought peace, not war. He sent a message of admonishment to the king of the Ammonites not to fight him in his land.

(Verse 13): **And the king of the people of Ammon answered the messengers of Jephthah, "Because Israel took away my land when they came up out of Egypt, from the Arnon as far as the Jabbok, and to the Jordan. Now therefore, restore those lands peaceably."**

The king of the Ammonites claimed that Israel, in their ascension from Egypt, took the land of the Ammonites. But the truth of the matter was that God prevented Israel from possessing the land of Moab and the land of the Ammonites. The words of the king of the Ammonites are wrong (Deuteronomy 2: 9, 19). However, the Ammonites originally owned the land in dispute, and the Amorites seized it (Numbers 21: 26). The Israelites took the land from the Amorites, not from the Ammonites.

(Verses 14-27): **So Jephthah again sent messengers to the king of the people of Ammon, 15 and said to him, "Thus says Jephthah: 'Israel did not take away the land of Moab, nor the land of the people of Ammon; 16 for when Israel came up from Egypt, they walked through the wilderness as far as the Red Sea and came to Kadesh. 17 Then Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, "Please let me pass through your land." But the king of Edom would not heed. And in like manner they sent to the king of Moab, but he would not consent. So Israel remained in Kadesh. 18 And they went along through the wilderness and bypassed the land of Edom and the land of Moab, came to the east side of the land of Moab, and encamped on the other side of the Arnon. But they did not enter the border of Moab, for the Arnon was the border of Moab. 19 Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, king of Heshbon; and Israel said to him, "Please let us pass through your land into our place." 20 But Sihon did not trust Israel to pass through his territory. So Sihon gathered all his people together, encamped in Jahaz, and fought against Israel. 21 And the Lord God of Israel delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel, and they defeated them. Thus Israel gained possession of all the land of the Amorites, who inhabited that country. 22 They took possession of all the territory of the Amorites, from the Arnon to the Jabbok and from the wilderness to the Jordan. 23 'And now the Lord God of Israel has dispossessed the Amorites from before His people Israel; should you then possess it? 24 Will you not possess whatever Chemosh your god gives you to possess? So whatever the Lord our God takes possession of before us, we will possess. 25 And now, are you any better than Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he ever strive against Israel? Did he ever fight against them? 26 While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and its villages, in Aroer and its villages, and in all the cities along the banks of the Arnon, for three hundred years, why did you not recover them within that time? 27 Therefore I have not sinned against you, but you wronged me by fighting against me. May the Lord, the Judge, render judgment this day between the children of Israel and the people of Ammon.'"**

The arguments of Jephthah in response to the king of Ammonites:

1. Israel seized the land of Sihon and Og, who prevented Israel from passing through their land, but went out to fight Israel, and Israel defeated them and took their land. The claim of the Ammonites now to the land is without right.
2. Israel seized the land about 300 years ago, which became theirs by hand (verse 26). Jephthah speaks mostly in the third century after entering the Promised Land, but he says 300 years as a general number.
3. What Israel obtained was not from the hand of the Ammonites but from the hand of the Lord as a divine gift (verse 23), as if the subject of the dialogue was not the land but rather the kingdom of God.
4. Jephthah cited that Moab did not claim the land as the Ammonites are doing now (verse 25).

(Verse 28): **However, the king of the people of Ammon did not heed the words which Jephthah sent him.**

The king of the Ammonites refused peace that Jephthah offered, as he had been accustomed for 18 years to take advantage of Israel while they were silent, and now he wants to devour them.

(Verse 29): **Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh, and passed through Mizpah of Gilead; and from Mizpah of Gilead he advanced toward the people of Ammon.**

The Spirit was upon Jephthah, not to prophesy, but to give him the gift of commanding the army, for God would prepare him for the work sent He sent him.

(Verses 30-31): **And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord, and said, "If You will indeed deliver the people of Ammon into my hands, 31 then it will be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the people of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering."**

Under the influence of the pagan Canaanite atmosphere and his Canaanite mother, Jephthah believed that he would please God with human sacrifices. It is a vow that contains no wisdom, and God disapproves of it. But God was silent and did not prevent the daughter from being presented as a vow:

1. Let all believers be taught a harsh lesson that making a vow in this way, i.e. offering human souls as sacrifices, is unacceptable.
2. For Jephthah to learn the lesson personally, God allowed his virgin daughter to go out to meet him, so the story became bitter, but if any other virgin had met him, would he have felt the same bitterness? He will not feel, but her family will, so it is a lesson for him.

In general, a vow is not a price, as God gives out of His love for free, without a price, and gives generously without reproach. But the vow is an expression of thanks. But this unacceptable vow was cruel, and its fulfillment even more bitter. There is no comparison between this story and Isaac's presentation as a sacrifice. God, who asked this from Abraham to explain the story of Christ's redemption, did not allow Abraham to slay him. But to the credit of Jephthah and his daughter, they accepted the fulfillment of the vow and did not back down. They were both ignorant but longing to present the most precious thing they have to God, so they offered something that God does not approve of, but what they did was to express intense love and intense devotion to God.

(Verses 32-40): **So Jephthah advanced toward the people of Ammon to fight against them, and the Lord delivered them into his hands. 33 And he defeated them from Aroer as far as Minnith—twenty cities—and to Abel Keramim, with a very great slaughter. Thus the people of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel. 34 When Jephthah came to his house at Mizpah, there was his daughter, coming out to meet him with timbrels and dancing; and she was his only child. Besides her he had neither son nor daughter. 35 And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he tore his clothes, and said, "Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low! You are among those who trouble me! For I have**

given my word to the Lord, and I cannot go back on it." 36 So she said to him, "My father, if you have given your word to the Lord, do to me according to what has gone out of your mouth, because the Lord has avenged you of your enemies, the people of Ammon." 37 Then she said to her father, "Let this thing be done for me: let me alone for two months, that I may go and wander on the mountains and bewail my virginity, my friends and I." 38 So he said, "Go." And he sent her away for two months; and she went with her friends, and bewailed her virginity on the mountains. 39 And it was so at the end of two months that she returned to her father, and he carried out his vow with her which he had vowed. She knew no man. And it became a custom in Israel 40 that the daughters of Israel went four days each year to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.

Chapter 12

(Verse 1): **Then the men of Ephraim gathered together, crossed over toward Zaphon, and said to Jephthah, "Why did you cross over to fight against the people of Ammon, and did not call us to go with you? We will burn your house down on you with fire!"**

The same thing that Ephraim did with Gideon, they are repeating it again with Jephthah. They were afraid of the war of the Ammonites, and now that Jephthah won, they raise problems because in their pride they refuse to be ruled or judged by Jephthah. They always seek leadership. We note that they did this instead of thanking Jephthah for the salvation he made, or consoling him for the loss of his daughter. They thought his saving the rest of Israel without recognizing their sovereignty as an unforgivable sin. There were two differences between the incident of Gideon and the incident of Jephthah:

1. Gideon was calm and patient, while Jephthah was a violent man of war devastated by the loss of his daughter.
2. Ephraim came this time with brutality and men of war to burn the house of Jephthah, but they came in thousands. From the number of those killed among Ephraim, we understand that they crossed over with a large army to fight Jephthah. So they came not to reproach but to war.

(Verses 2-4): **And Jephthah said to them, "My people and I were in a great struggle with the people of Ammon; and when I called you, you did not deliver me out of their hands. 3 So when I saw that you would not deliver me, I took my life in my hands and crossed over against the people of Ammon; and the Lord delivered them into my hand. Why then have you come up to me this day to fight against me?" 4 Now Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead and fought against Ephraim. And the men of Gilead defeated Ephraim, because they said, "You Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites and among the Manassites."**

Jephthah's reply was:

1. He rebuked them, declaring that he called them to war, but they did not respond.
2. Therefore, they are liars in their attack on him that he did not call them to war; rather, they are neglectful and careless.
3. Jephthah risked his life for them.
4. **the Lord delivered them into my hand** = God is the one who gave victory, so every resistance to Jephthah is resistance to God.

Instead of Ephraim's men returning after this convincing response, they increased their revolt and began insulting the Gileadites by saying **You Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites and**

among the Manassites. In other words, the people of Gilead are a group of fugitives from Ephraim because of their crimes (robbery, murder, etc.). They were fleeing from Ephraim and did not go to Manasseh but stayed in Gilead, that is, they sought refuge in the land between the lands of the two tribes. Therefore, because of these insults and their revolution, Jephthah attacked them and beat 42,000 of them.

(Verses 5-7): **The Gileadites seized the fords of the Jordan before the Ephraimites arrived. And when any Ephraimite who escaped said, "Let me cross over," the men of Gilead would say to him, "Are you an Ephraimite?" If he said, "No," 6 then they would say to him, "Then say, 'Shibboleth!'" And he would say, "Sibboleth," for he could not pronounce it right. Then they would take him and kill him at the fords of the Jordan. There fell at that time forty-two thousand Ephraimites. 7 And Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then Jephthah the Gileadite died and was buried among the cities of Gilead.**

The Gileadites seized the fords of the Jordan before the Ephraimites arrived: The Gileadites stopped at the fords of the Jordan = that is, the places from which Ephraim's men crossed to return to their country west of the Jordan so that the Ephraimites would not flee to Ephraim. They used to ask who crosses, are you an Ephraimite? If he said yes, they killed him, and if he said no, they put him to the test with the pronunciation of Shibboleth. שִׁבּוֹלֵת, which means a ford, so the Ephraimites pronounce it Sebolt (in some countries of Upper Egypt, here in Egypt, they say about the sun "Sams" instead of saying shams as the rest of the Egyptians). The tribe of Ephraim was crushed by their own pride.

(Verses 8-9): **After him, Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel. 9 He had thirty sons. And he gave away thirty daughters in marriage, and brought in thirty daughters from elsewhere for his sons. He judged Israel seven years.**

He made everyone gets married from outside to expand the family = **And he gave away.**

And came after Jephthah 3 judges Ibzan / Elon / Abdon. We do not know much about them, for they spent quiet days, and there were no specific situations in their lives, but for their honesty, they deserved to have their names recorded in the Bible. Ibzan is mentioned here, and the other two in the next verses.

(Verses 10-15): **Then Ibzan died and was buried at Bethlehem. 11 After him, Elon the Zebulunite judged Israel. He judged Israel ten years. 12 And Elon the Zebulunite died and was buried at Aijalon in the country of Zebulun. 13 After him, Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite judged Israel. 14 He had forty sons and thirty grandsons, who rode on seventy young donkeys. He judged Israel eight years. 15 Then Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the mountains of the Amalekites.**

Chapter 13

Chapters (13-16) are the story of Samson, who symbolizes Christ in many ways. We mention it and put an * next to it. Samson was probably contemporary to Jephthah. Jephthah saved Israel from the Ammonites, and Samson saved them from the Philistines. The Philistines were of great status at that time until the days of David. They did not subdue Israel militarily but exploited, terrorized and harassed them. The Palestinians are not Canaanites, but rather from the island of Crete (Caphtor), so they were called the Caphtorians.

(Verse 1): **Again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.**

Some believe that the forty years ended with what was mentioned in (1 Samuel 7: 13). Eli the priest would have died towards the time when Samson reached the perfection of his manhood.

(Verse 2): **Now there was a certain man from Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren and had no children.**

1. Samson's mother was barren and could not give birth, and her birth was after the good tidings of an angel. The Virgin Mary had no husband and was born by the good tidings of an angel. 1-* Samson and Christ both came to save their people from the ordeal of slavery.

2. 2-* Both of them saved their people by the strength of their arms, but Samson saved by physical strength, while Christ opened his arms on the cross. Samson's mother was barren (and this is a sign of God's wrath among the Jews), but waiting for God with faith yields much fruit.

(Verse 3): **And the Angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, "Indeed now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son.**

The angel assures Samson's mother that she is barren, meaning that she cannot have children according to nature. What she receives, then, is the fruit of a divine promise of God's love. This is what happened with the Virgin Mary.

(Verse 4): **Now therefore, please be careful not to drink wine or similar drink, and not to eat anything unclean.**

be careful not to drink wine: God prepares a holy atmosphere for Samson while he is still a fetus in his mother's womb **3** -* Samson's mother was sanctified before giving birth to him. And God chose the Jews as a holy people from whom the Messiah would come.

(Verse 5): **For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines."**

To be a Nazirite to God = **4** -* Christ was not a Nazirite in the Jewish concept, but He was to his Father in everything, doing His will, pure and without sin. The Nazirites were a symbol of Christ. **and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines** = salvation began with Samson, and Samuel completed the work, then after him, Saul the king, and the work was finished with David, the king. God wanted salvation to come gradually, and therefore the chastisement of the Philistines was gradual, and Samson did not come as a military commander like Gideon. As for Christ, He began and ended salvation, and He was Samson and David at the same time **5** -*.

(Verses 6-7): **So the woman came and told her husband, saying, "A Man of God came to me, and His countenance was like the countenance of the Angel of God, very awesome; but I did not ask Him where He was from, and He did not tell me His name. 7 And He said to me, 'Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. Now drink no wine or similar drink, nor eat anything unclean, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death.'"**

Samson's mother's words are full of confidence and faith, and she was not skeptical like Sarah.

(Verse 8): **Then Manoah prayed to the Lord, and said, "O my Lord, please let the Man of God whom You sent come to us again and teach us what we shall do for the child who will be born."**

Manoah trusted the woman's words, but he longed to see the **Man of God** as his wife.

(Verse 9): **And God listened to the voice of Manoah, and the Angel of God came to the woman again as she was sitting in the field; but Manoah her husband was not with her.**

the Angel of God:

(This was one of the appearances of Christ before the incarnation) fulfilling Manoah's request to appear again.

(Verses 10-14): **Then the woman ran in haste and told her husband, and said to him, "Look, the Man who came to me the other day has just now appeared to me!" 11 So Manoah arose and followed his**

wife. When he came to the Man, he said to Him, "Are You the Man who spoke to this woman?" And He said, "I am." 12 Manoah said, "Now let Your words come to pass! What will be the boy's rule of life, and his work?" 13 So the Angel of the Lord said to Manoah, "Of all that I said to the woman let her be careful. 14 She may not eat anything that comes from the vine, nor may she drink wine or similar drink, nor eat anything unclean. All that I commanded her let her observe."

(Verse 15): **Then Manoah said to the Angel of the Lord, "Please let us detain You, and we will prepare a young goat for You."**

Here, Manoah thinks that the angel of the Lord is an ordinary person or perhaps a prophet, so he wanted to offer Him food.

(Verse 16): **And the Angel of the Lord said to Manoah, "Though you detain Me, I will not eat your food. But if you offer a burnt offering, you must offer it to the Lord." (For Manoah did not know He was the Angel of the Lord.)**

The angel explains to Manoah that He is not a human being to eat = **I will not eat your food** to correct his understanding, **But if you offer a burnt offering, you must offer it to the Lord** = We do not understand from this that He is not the Lord so that he does not accept the burnt offering, but Manoah must understand first that He is the Lord. Because Manoah thought that he was talking to a person until this moment, as how could he offer a burnt offering to a person? This is like Christ's discourse to the young man, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God", and His saying to Magdalene, "Do not cling to Me"

(Verse 17): **Then Manoah said to the Angel of the Lord, "What is Your name, that when Your words come to pass we may honor You?"**

What is Your name: So that if your words are fulfilled, we will come to you and honor you. Until this moment, Manoah did not yet know that he was the Lord 6 -* "He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him." This was said about Christ

(Verse 18): **And the Angel of the Lord said to him, "Why do you ask My name, seeing it is wonderful?"**

Wonderful: Thus, it was said about Christ that His name would be called "Wonderful" (Isaiah 9: 6). But in the New Testament, His name became known as YHWH the Savior, but this secret was hidden in the Old Testament. The fact that His name is wonderful indicates that He is beyond comprehension and speech and enters the heart into a state of wonder.

(Verse 19): **So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering, and offered it upon the rock to the Lord. And He did a wondrous thing while Manoah and his wife looked on—**

Perhaps from the last sentence, Manoah began to understand that the one speaking to him was the Lord, so he offered Him the burnt offering, and Christ is the rock on which we offer our sacrifices of love, for He became our sacrifice.

(Verse 20): **it happened as the flame went up toward heaven from the altar—the Angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar! When Manoah and his wife saw this, they fell on their faces to the ground.**

What happened is a vivid picture of the work of salvation through the cross, in which the Lord Christ Himself presents a sacrifice of love, blazing fire, through which He erases all our sins. The image before us in which the sacrifice, with its blood, and the divine fire fuses with the divine hypostasis, who entered heaven (the holies) with His own blood to find eternal redemption and intercede for us (Hebrews 9: 12), for He is the one who came from heaven and ascended to heaven (John 3:13 + 6: 62). Therefore, Manoah and his wife were looking as the disciples during the ascension.

(Verses 21-22): **When the Angel of the Lord appeared no more to Manoah and his wife, then Manoah knew that He was the Angel of the Lord. 22 And Manoah said to his wife, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God!"**

Manoah believed that he would die because God said to Moses, "for no man shall see Me, and live." But God meant that we could not see Him in His glory while we are still in our sinful body.

(Verse 23): **But his wife said to him, "If the Lord had desired to kill us, He would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering from our hands, nor would He have shown us all these things, nor would He have told us such things as these at this time."**

The view of Manoah's wife was absolutely correct. God appeared after obscuring His glory so they did not die.

(Verses 24-25): **So the woman bore a son and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him. 25 And the Spirit of the Lord began to move upon him at Mahaneh Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.**

Samson: The power of the sun, and they probably called him this name, because with his birth, salvation from the Philistines will begin, and the light of freedom will shine, according to the promise of the Lord. And Christ is the Sun of Righteousness 7 -* **And the Spirit of the Lord began to move upon him** = Christ was filled with the Spirit and the Spirit accompanied him.

Chapter 14

(Verses 1-4): **Now Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines. 2 So he went up and told his father and mother, saying, "I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore, get her for me as a wife." 3 Then his father and mother said to him, "Is there no woman among the daughters of your brethren, or among all my people, that you must go and get a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?" And Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, for she pleases me well." 4 But his father and mother did not know that it was of the Lord—that He was seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines. For at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.**

Marriage to a Gentile is not according to the law of Moses but rather against it. Therefore, it is against God's will. So why was it said that **it was of the Lord** = Samson made a mistake in his request, for he acted according to his desire and chose a pagan woman. Still, because God wants to discipline the enemies of His people and because God can make all things work together for the good, He allowed this to be for the good of his people. Could Samson, who undoubtedly made a mistake in this choice, possibly symbolize Christ as a judge? Undoubtedly, Samson was a symbol of Christ in: * 8- He came down to betroth himself to a pagan woman. And Christ came down to our world to betroth to Himself, from among the nations, a bride who is His church. He betrothed her to himself spiritually. * 9- Just as Samson's father did not feel comfortable with this relationship, the Jewish people did not feel comfortable with Christ's relationship with the nations and did not understand that the matter was from God. * 10- With this relationship, Samson began to harass the enemies of his people. And when Christ began betrothing His bride, the church, He began harassing the enemies of his people (the devils) as a prelude to striking them completely. Review the first chapter of the Gospel of St. Mark, and you will find that Christ shows his authority three times in this chapter over the devils, and let us see what Satan said, " Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us?" (Mark 1: 23-28 + 34 + 39). Rather, He gave His disciples and apostles authority over the demons (Luke 10: 19), and this authority has continued for the church until now.

Christ was without sin, but He bore our sins and died with them on the cross, for He condemned them on the cross and destroyed them * 11- And thus is Samson. But Samson really had his sins, a symbol of Christ, who, while without sin, became sin for our sake (2 Corinthians 5: 21). Samson, by his death under the ruins of the Philistine Temple, was condemned for his sins in his body and died because of sin. And in his death was the destruction of the lords of the Philistines (Judges 16: 30).

We note that God did not want a general war against the Philistines but merely to harass and chastise them because the Philistines did not fight Israel. Still, through their tyrants, they usurped the possessions of the Jews and imposed a tax on them, so God responded to them in the same way. So God did not send a leader like Gideon.

Timnah = 740 feet above sea level, while the height of the city of Saul is 1,500 feet, so it was said that Samson descended as a symbol of the descent of Christ.

(Verses 5-9): **So Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother, and came to the vineyards of Timnah. Now to his surprise, a young lion came roaring against him. 6 And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he tore the lion apart as one would have torn apart a young goat, though he had nothing in his hand. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done. 7 Then he went down and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well. 8 After some time, when he returned to get her, he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion. And behold, a swarm of bees and honey were in the carcass of the lion. 9 He took some of it in his hands and went along, eating. When he came to his father and mother, he gave some to them, and they also ate. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion.**

God gave strength to Samson, and He gave him here to test his strength and trust in himself, for God would train him to be able to stand before the Philistines. And so God did with David. So David killed a lion and a bear, and he trusted the possibility of killing the mighty Goliath (Goliath the mighty). Killing the lion and eating honey from its belly was a prelude to the riddle that baffled the Palestinians. Here Samson appears stronger than the others because the Spirit of the Lord moves him and leads him, and Christ, no one was in his strength * **12**- He has power over everything, even nature and even death. And Samson was working on his own, as it was said about Christ, I tread the winepress alone * **13**-. And Samson defeated the lion, and Christ defeated the devil, who roams like a roaring lion seeking to swallow his bride * **14**- And Samson's parents did not know the secret of defeating and killing the lion, and the Jews until now did not know the secret of the cross * **15**- And Samson went down with his parents To the vineyards of Timna = a symbol of Christ, who descended to his church, the true vine.

But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done: Maybe out of humility. **And behold, a swarm of bees and honey were in the carcass of the lion:** The lion's body dried quickly because of the sun, so the bees came and made a hive in it. **He took some of it in his hands and went along, eating:** He was happy because he found a riddle that was difficult for anyone to solve. Just as Samson rejoiced and ate honey after defeating the lion, thus everyone who overcomes a sin after resisting it will have this joy and pleasure. The strong turns into sweetness. What preys on others becomes for us something we eat. God always brings forth sweetness to His Church and His people from all the hardships that their enemies plot to harm them. **he gave some to them, and they also ate. But he did not tell them** = He was afraid to tell them that honey is from a corpse, and the law forbids touching the dead. He was also afraid to tell them, as he is a Nazirite, and he is as a Nazirites not appropriate for him to touch a dead body. And also so they do not divulge the secret of the riddle that he told the Philistines. And our Jesus, after defeating Satan* **16**-, offered us the honey of the mysteries of His love, God's exalted love. And his parents ate honey, indicating that it was among the Jews. * **17**- believers in Christ tasted the honey of His love.

And some meditated on what happened and said that Samson symbolizes the Jewish people who killed Christ, and He is the lion emerging from the tribe of Judah. Christ is the lion who was defeated by death to defeat death, and by His death, He was victorious over Satan * **18**-, And the two opinions

complement each other. And the honey in the mouth of the lion is the life-giving teachings of Christ (Psalm 119: 103) * 19-

(Verses 10-11): **So his father went down to the woman. And Samson gave a feast there, for young men used to do so. 11 And it happened, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him.**

When they saw him and his strength, they brought 30 men out of fear of him to protect themselves.

(Verses 12-13): **Then Samson said to them, "Let me pose a riddle to you. If you can correctly solve and explain it to me within the seven days of the feast, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing. 13 But if you cannot explain it to me, then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing." And they said to him, "Pose your riddle, that we may hear it."**

linen garments: Linen bodice as an undergarment. **changes of clothing** = special for attending banquets and occasions, instead of the daily dress.

(Verse 14): **So he said to them: "Out of the eater came something to eat, And out of the strong came something sweet." Now for three days they could not explain the riddle.**

Out of the eater: That is, the belly of the lion, which should have been a tomb for Samson, **came something to eat** = that is, honey, which became a source of life, food, and sweetness. This is a reference to the Philistines, whom Samson was going to stand before, and instead of killing him, he killed them, saved his people, and gave his people life. It also refers to our conflict with Satan, as God gives us strength to defeat him so that the cause of our destruction suits our coronation. **the strong** = the bitter, the unfriendly, or the unkind.

(Verses 15-18): **But it came to pass on the seventh day that they said to Samson's wife, "Entice your husband, that he may explain the riddle to us, or else we will burn you and your father's house with fire. Have you invited us in order to take what is ours? Is that not so?" 16 Then Samson's wife wept on him, and said, "You only hate me! You do not love me! You have posed a riddle to the sons of my people, but you have not explained it to me." And he said to her, "Look, I have not explained it to my father or my mother; so should I explain it to you?" 17 Now she had wept on him the seven days while their feast lasted. And it happened on the seventh day that he told her, because she pressed him so much. Then she explained the riddle to the sons of her people. 18 So the men of the city said to him on the seventh day before the sun went down: "What is sweeter than honey? And what is stronger**

than a lion?" And he said to them: "If you had not plowed with my heifer, You would not have solved my riddle!"

Their response was that mysterious so that Samson would understand that they had realized the solution through their intelligence and not from his Palestinian fiancée. But Samson understood what had happened and said, **If you had not plowed with my heifer**, that is, if you did not press my fiancée as with a plow until they took out what was inside her like a plowed land that what was inside it would appear. We note that Satan cannot harm us unless he plows on the wheel of our lusts and corrupt nature.

(Verse 19): **Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon him mightily, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of their men, took their apparel, and gave the changes of clothing to those who had explained the riddle. So his anger was aroused, and he went back up to his father's house.**

It appeared here why the engagement was from God, i.e., with His permission, for the joys of the enemies of God's people turned into sorrows. The seven days of joy were distress for the woman and her family because of the pressure of men on them, and distress for the men, as they could not solve the riddle, then the death of 30 men of them. Note the repetition of the saying that **the Spirit of the Lord came upon him**, which was the secret of his strength. If we hear that the secret of his strength is in his hair, this is because hair is a sign of his consecration as a Nazirite to the Lord, and the strength is not in his hair, but rather in the Spirit of the Lord that moves him.

The number *20th symbol resemblance in the story of Samson with Christ: **Out of the eater came something to eat** = it refers to Christ. The eater is the death that Christ experienced, but from this death, something to eat came, as Christ gave us His body to eat (John 6: 41). The pagan nations believed and found the sweetness of life from the one who bore their dryness (bitter and vinegar). From the mouth of the dead lion, that is, from the mouth of Christ, who crouched and lay like a lion, came out a swarm of bees, the Christians. **If you had not plowed with my heifer, You would not have solved my riddle:** The heifer is the Church, the betrothed of Christ, to whom the secrets of our faith were revealed through her husband. Through the teachings of the apostles and saints and through their preaching, the mysteries of the Trinity, redemption, resurrection, judgment, and the kingdom of heaven were spread. The banquet in which the woman knew the secrets and broadcast them to the world (30 of her companions), so they enjoyed the robes of salvation through the baptismal waters (the number 30 indicates the age of Christ's baptism). It is the same feast that was the secret of the destruction of 30 strangers and the robbing of their garments. The graces and blessings each of us receives through the work of Christ (symbolized by Samson) are considered to be the destruction of Satan and the usurpation of his possessions, which he previously usurped. Satan has been stripped of all his capabilities after being once the morning star and his seat in the heavenly places, so that man could enjoy heavenly capabilities and rise among the angelic ranks. Every believer has a power corresponding to the power of Samson, which is the power of faith that moves mountains (the miracle of moving Mokattam Mountain

which happened in Cairo, Egypt) and destroys strongholds (2 Corinthians 10: 4). The greatest thing that faith changes is that it transforms a sin-filled heart into a God-loving heart.

(Verse 20): **And Samson's wife was given to his companion, who had been his best man.**

And Samson's wife was given to his companion: He is the groom's friend who helps him on his wedding day, i.e., his best man (John 3: 29).

Chapter 15

(Verses 1-3): **After a while, in the time of wheat harvest, it happened that Samson visited his wife with a young goat. And he said, "Let me go in to my wife, into her room." But her father would not permit him to go in. 2 Her father said, "I really thought that you thoroughly hated her; therefore I gave her to your companion. Is not her younger sister better than she? Please, take her instead." 3 And Samson said to them, "This time I shall be blameless regarding the Philistines if I harm them!"**

After a while, when Samson's anger subsided, he wanted to return to his fiancée and took with him a gift for reconciliation, a young goat. But he was surprised that her father gave her to his companion, and he tried to please or bribe him by giving him her younger sister, but is love bribed by beauty or young age?! Undoubtedly, her father hastened in doing so.

This time I shall be blameless =

1. They rejected him because he was Israeli.
2. They took his wife and married her to someone else.
3. They fooled her and found out his riddle.

Samson revolted, and his anger was the beginning of several strikes against the Philistines. The Spirit of the Lord has many ways and takes advantage of all things for the benefit of His people. God here is the one who brought out sweetness (salvation) from the strong (Samson's betrothal to the pagan woman) and saved His people from the Philistines.

(Verses 4-7): **Then Samson went and caught three hundred foxes; and he took torches, turned the foxes tail to tail, and put a torch between each pair of tails. 5 When he had set the torches on fire, he let the foxes go into the standing grain of the Philistines, and burned up both the shocks and the standing grain, as well as the vineyards and olive groves. 6 Then the Philistines said, "Who has done this?" And they answered, "Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he has taken his wife and given her to his companion." So the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire. 7 Samson said to them, "Since you would do a thing like this, I will surely take revenge on you, and after that I will cease."**

The first strike against the Philistines was to tie torches to the tails of "foxes." A fox is an animal smaller than a wolf. The animals were running, terrified of the flames in their tails everywhere, so they burned all the fields because they were dry and it was harvest time. So the Philistines got angry and burned the house of Samson's wife and burned her and her father with fire. Let us note that they threatened her with burning if she did not reveal the secret, and she made a mistake by revealing the secret, and here she is dying in the same way, as sin does not save her. The meaning of verse (7) is that if you imagined that you would please me by burning my wife and her family, this does not please me because of all

your betrayal because I still love my wife and burning her angered me. I will also take revenge on you for this action (i.e. killing my wife), and afterwards, calm down.

(Verse 8): **So he attacked them hip and thigh with a great slaughter; then he went down and dwelt in the cleft of the rock of Etam.**

So he attacked them hip and thigh: This is an expression taken from wrestling and translated as there was a great massacre for them. By striking the sword, he made them into pieces, one on top of the other, so that the hip became above the thigh, the foot above the head, and so on. **then he went down and dwelt in the cleft of the rock of Etam.**

(Verses 9-13): **Now the Philistines went up, encamped in Judah, and deployed themselves against Lehi. 10 And the men of Judah said, "Why have you come up against us?" So they answered, "We have come up to arrest Samson, to do to him as he has done to us." 11 Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam, and said to Samson, "Do you not know that the Philistines rule over us? What is this you have done to us?" And he said to them, "As they did to me, so I have done to them." 12 But they said to him, "We have come down to arrest you, that we may deliver you into the hand of the Philistines." Then Samson said to them, "Swear to me that you will not kill me yourselves." 13 So they spoke to him, saying, "No, but we will tie you securely and deliver you into their hand; but we will surely not kill you." And they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock.**

The question of the Jews to the Palestinians is, "**Why have you come up against us?**" It means, "Why have you come upon us now with enmity while we pay you tribute?" This is a question that indicates submission to slavery. The Jews denounced what Samson did, as if they were satisfied with the dominion of the Palestinians over them, satisfied with their slavery. Instead of fighting with Samson and striving, they agreed to seize Samson, tie him up, and hand him over to the hand of the Philistines. It is amazing that this mighty Samson did not harm any of the Jews who came seeking to seize him, for he only disciplines the enemies of his people, but he did not direct a single word of reproach to them for their cowardice and submission. Samson's surrender to the Jews was filled with meekness and weakness before his people, but full of mighty strength before the enemies of his people. Rather, Samson asked the Jews not to kill him because he was afraid that he might harm any of them. We note that the Palestinians rose against him with an army, as he alone is an army. And we must not resemble the Jews here in their submission to slavery, that we despair of our sins, but strive in our prayers, and that we abstain from our sins and not surrender to evil, persevering in the study of the Bible, the living word. And the symbols of Christ: * **21-** The Jews did not kill Samson, but handed him over to the Gentiles to kill him. And the Jews handed Christ over to the Romans to crucify him * **22-** The power of Samson, which did not appear before the Jews, is a symbol of the mighty power of Christ and that he surrendered by His will * **23-** Samson surrendered to make great killings for the enemies of his people. Thus Christ surrendered by His will to make killings to Satan * **24-** The Jews condemned Samson and blamed him for

what he had done to their enemies for their salvation, and the Jews condemned Christ for all the good that He had done for them.

(Verse 14): **When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting against him. Then the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him; and the ropes that were on his arms became like flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds broke loose from his hands.**

Even if everyone leaves us, God can transform everything for salvation and give victory. * 25- And Samson cut the ropes himself, resembling Christ who rose by Himself and did not need, like Lazarus, someone to loosen him from his ties. Here is a picture of Christ who faced the enemy on the cross, and since He is the resurrection, neither death could catch Him nor hell could hinder Him. As with the fire of His divinity, He destroyed the two ropes of death and hell = **and the ropes that were on his arms became like flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds broke loose from his hands.**

(Verse 15): **He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, reached out his hand and took it, and killed a thousand men with it.**

a fresh jawbone of a donkey: That is, the jaw of a donkey, and it was soft. If it was dry, it would be shattered and broken easily, and the jawbone would have 3 or 4 teeth as if they were knives, and it could be used as a primitive weapon. * 26- Samson here, while holding the donkey, killing the enemies with it, refers to Christ, who seized man (who through sin lowered his level to the level of the irrational creation) to strike the evil forces with him. Note that the jaw is the jaw of a dead donkey, a sign of a person who died of sin. Beating 1000 men is a symbol of Satan, who is symbolized by a thousand evil men.

(Verse 16): **Then Samson said: "With the jawbone of a donkey, Heaps upon heaps, With the jawbone of a donkey I have slain a thousand men!"**

With the jawbone of a donkey, Heaps upon heaps: It means that by jawing the donkey, he piled up the Philistines, one pile, two piles, and three piles... Thus, he turned them into piles of dead. It is a praise of victory. In Hebrew, it appears that what Samson said was in the form of poetry. The word donkey is the same as the word heap. In Hebrew, Samson said (Hamour, Hamour, Hamorim), and this sentence also means that the Philistines fell like donkeys.

(Verse 17): **And so it was, when he had finished speaking, that he threw the jawbone from his hand, and called that place Ramath Lehi.**

When the area became heaps of the dead who were killed with the jawbone of the donkey, the area was called **Ramath Lehi** = meaning the heaps of the jaw.

(Verse 18): **Then he became very thirsty; so he cried out to the Lord and said, "You have given this great deliverance by the hand of Your servant; and now shall I die of thirst and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?"**

he became very thirsty: Christ on the cross said, "I thirst" This was with God's permission so that he would not be puffed up by his strength and think that with his strength, he achieved this victory. Rather, this was as a discipline for him, as in his praise, he did not attribute his victory to God but to himself. And now that he is about to die of thirst.. Where is his strength.. Now he remembered the Lord. **You have given this great deliverance by the hand of Your servant** = and this is the benefit of trials. Now, he attributes the work to God.

(Verse 19): **So God split the hollow place that is in Lehi, and water came out, and he drank; and his spirit returned, and he revived. Therefore he called its name En Hakkore, which is in Lehi to this day.**

So God split the hollow place that is in Lehi: This has two explanations:

1. Now the name of the area has become Lehi, concerning the incident. He called it "**Ramath Lehi**," and the word Lehi here is an abbreviation of the name "**Ramath Lehi**," God brought him water from a hollow place in a rock. If we understand that the rock refers to Christ *28-, the water coming out of it is a sign of the Holy Spirit Christ sent to the Church.

2. Or that God brought water out for him from the tooth growing out of the donkey's jaw, and this indicates that whoever believes in Christ, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.* 29- refers to the Holy Spirit (John 7:38). The two meanings are complementary to Christ's work with the Church. **En Hakkore** = the eye of the supplicant, and this new name is a reminder of Samson's supplication to God and God's response to him.

(Verse 20): **And he judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines.**

he judged Israel twenty years: He spent it in contests, but Samson appeared as a local judge in southern Judah.

Chapter 16

(Verses 1-3): **Now Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her. 2 When the Gazites were told, "Samson has come here!" they surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city. They were quiet all night, saying, "In the morning, when it is daylight, we will kill him." 3 And Samson lay low till midnight; then he arose at midnight, took hold of the doors of the gate of the city and the two gateposts, pulled them up, bar and all, put them on his shoulders, and carried them to the top of the hill that faces Hebron.**

Now Samson went to Gaza: He went to the largest of their cities, confident in his strength, not afraid, and went to an adulterous woman: **and saw a harlot there** = this mighty one who killed thousands is defeated by his lust. He was physically strong but weak in his lust. This fall for Samson is terrible. Indeed, all who were slain by her were strong men (Proverbs 7: 26). **then he arose at midnight** = perhaps he got up in response to the Spirit of God who was in him, who worked in him for repentance, so he realized that this place was not suitable for a Nazirite like him. What Samson did was a sin, but from a symbolic point of view, St. Augustine believes that it symbolizes what Christ did after his crucifixion * **30-** He rose, destroying the gates of the abyss, and ascended to heaven. Augustine likens the house of the harlot to hades, and enemies surround the house to seize Him. However, no one was able to hold Christ in hell, so He went out, tearing down the gates, that is, destroying the gates of hades forever. Then Samson ascended the mountain as Christ ascended to heaven. The enemies surrounding the house, like the guards around the tomb, could not prevent the resurrection, but they did not even see Christ.

(Verses 4-5): **Afterward it happened that he loved a woman in the Valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. 5 And the lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, "Entice him, and find out where his great strength lies, and by what means we may overpower him, that we may bind him to afflict him; and every one of us will give you eleven hundred pieces of silver."**

We saw Samson sin many times, and the Holy Spirit guides and leads him so that sin does not destroy him. His strength did not leave him because he responded to the call of the Holy Spirit. But in front of the man's insistence on resisting the Holy Spirit, the voice of the Spirit's reproach begins to decrease slowly, "do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God ... Do not quench the Spirit." This is what happened with Samson when he fell in love with Delilah (and the meaning of her name is spoiled or adored). Samson no longer responds to the voice of the Spirit within him, so he collapsed completely. This Delilah lived as an adulteress, loved by men, and finally, Samson came to fall in love with her, losing the glory of his Nazirite, being deprived of his insight, and becoming a mockery of the enemy. Christ sent us to the world as light and as salt, where we walk as ambassadors, but if we indulge in the world's evils and participate in them, we will become a mockery and ridicule of the world. Because of her love for money, Delilah was enticed by the lords of the Philistines with money to deliver Samson to their hands.

(Verses 6-14): **So Delilah said to Samson, "Please tell me where your great strength lies, and with what you may be bound to afflict you." 7 And Samson said to her, "If they bind me with seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried, then I shall become weak, and be like any other man." 8 So the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried, and she bound him with them. 9 Now men were lying in wait, staying with her in the room. And she said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But he broke the bowstrings as a strand of yarn breaks when it touches fire. So the secret of his strength was not known. 10 Then Delilah said to Samson, "Look, you have mocked me and told me lies. Now, please tell me what you may be bound with." 11 So he said to her, "If they bind me securely with new ropes that have never been used, then I shall become weak, and be like any other man." 12 Therefore Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them, and said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" And men were lying in wait, staying in the room. But he broke them off his arms like a thread. 13 Delilah said to Samson, "Until now you have mocked me and told me lies. Tell me what you may be bound with." And he said to her, "If you weave the seven locks of my head into the web of the loom"— 14 So she wove it tightly with the batten of the loom, and said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But he awoke from his sleep, and pulled out the batten and the web from the loom.**

Delilah asked Samson about the secret of his strength 3 times because she thought, like the rulers of the Philistines, that Samson's strength was the result of magical action; if it was nullified, he would lose his strength. Samson knew her purpose from the first time, so he deceived her. But instead of leaving her, he continued to love her, for he became completely enslaved by his lust, and his lust blinded him, so that when her deception was revealed three times, they were not enough to open his eyes to flee from this place. **seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried** = that is seven ropes of flax or other plants. **a strand of yarn** = what falls from the flax when it is slit or carded to be spun and then used as filaments for lamps. **into the web of the loom** = the long threads that are used in the weaving machine. Note that the third time he approached the subject of his hair, the enslaved to his lust approaches his fall, little by little. The strange thing is that on the three occasions, the Palestinians attacked him, so did he not understand?! Therefore, sin blinds the eyes.... They have eyes but do not see, and ears but do not hear. We note that the secret of his strength is not in his hair but rather in the Spirit that is upon him, and the Spirit separated him because he was absorbed in his lust.

(Verse 15): **Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart is not with me? You have mocked me these three times, and have not told me where your great strength lies."**

How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart is not with me? What if Christ asked us this question? Therefore, we have to give the heart to God, the whole heart and confess everything before Him and ask Him to change us.

(Verses 16-17): **And it came to pass, when she pestered him daily with her words and pressed him, so that his soul was vexed to death, 17 that he told her all his heart, and said to her, "No razor has ever**

come upon my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaven, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man."

that his soul was vexed to death: As his soul bowed to the evil desires of his body, his soul vexed, drifting towards death. If our head is Christ, then shaving our heads is a sign that we have lost the grace of Christ. Whoever submits to the lusts of his flesh is deceived and deprived of grace

(Verses 18-21): **When Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, "Come up once more, for he has told me all his heart." So the lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought the money in their hand. 19 Then she lulled him to sleep on her knees, and called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. Then she began to torment him, and his strength left him. 20 And she said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" So he awoke from his sleep, and said, "I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself free!" But he did not know that the Lord had departed from him. 21 Then the Philistines took him and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza. They bound him with bronze fetters, and he became a grinder in the prison.**

Samson fell asleep on Delilah's knees, absorbed in his lusts, closing his ears to the voice of God's Spirit within him, only to wake up and find himself a prisoner in the hands of his enemies. Thus, for every human being, Satan makes him sleep reassured in his sin, feeling that he is safe until he loses all his dignity and strength and becomes a prisoner. For whoever leaves God, God will leave him. Let us understand that Samson believed that the power in him was from himself, so he fell and lost his strength. Therefore, let us know that our power comes from God and not our self-righteousness. Note what Samson said: **I will go out as before, at other times** = he thought that with his strength, he will overcome, but this time the Lord had left him. Therefore, the Bible did not say at this time, "the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him." Like Eve, Samson fell because he entered into a discussion and dialogue with Satan and did not close the door of dialogue with him, as Joseph did, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Note that they put out his eyes, but he had lost his spiritual insight due to his lust before. They tied him with chains because he had previously tied himself with chains of lust. They insulted his dignity, but he insulted himself with an adulteress before they insulted his dignity in front of everyone. They drove him like an animal to run the mill because he had lived in animal lust before. Perhaps while Samson was grinding, the children, but everyone mocking him, were cursing the moments he considered precious on Delilah's knees. This passing pleasure brought him down to a lesser degree than the animal, and perhaps we ought to remember the consequence of sin before we fall into it, as we will be bound with chains and disgrace. But let us remember that the doors of repentance are open to whoever wants, as how can we love Jesus and what Jesus died for, i.e., sin. Sin is the killer of Jesus, so let us leave it and choose Jesus. **and he became a grinder** = the work of animals, which is the ultimate humiliation for those terrified of his strength. Let us note that our enemy, Satan, mocks sinners severely when they lose the grace of Christ, and makes them like donkeys spinning in a mill, losing their sight, imprisoned and captivated. The disaster is that we lose being with the Lord.

(Verse 22): **However, the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaven.**

However, the hair of his head began to grow again: Once again, strength is not in hair, but while he is in prison, he started thinking of his former strength and regrets what he lost, like the prodigal son who remembered when he was with the pigs, the glory of his father's house. The fact that the book mentions that the hair on his head grows, indicates the thoughts of repentance and the decision of repentance that began to grow in his head and that he began to respond to the voice of the Holy Spirit's rebuke, so his strength began to return to him, just as the ring and the robe returned to the prodigal son.

(Verses 23-31): **Now the lords of the Philistines gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to rejoice. And they said: "Our god has delivered into our hands Samson our enemy!" 24 When the people saw him, they praised their god; for they said: "Our god has delivered into our hands our enemy, The destroyer of our land, And the one who multiplied our dead." 25 So it happened, when their hearts were merry, that they said, "Call for Samson, that he may perform for us." So they called for Samson from the prison, and he performed for them. And they stationed him between the pillars. 26 Then Samson said to the lad who held him by the hand, "Let me feel the pillars which support the temple, so that I can lean on them." 27 Now the temple was full of men and women. All the lords of the Philistines were there—about three thousand men and women on the roof watching while Samson performed. 28 Then Samson called to the Lord, saying, "O Lord God, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes!" 29 And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars which supported the temple, and he braced himself against them, one on his right and the other on his left. 30 Then Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" And he pushed with all his might, and the temple fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead that he killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life. 31 And his brothers and all his father's household came down and took him, and brought him up and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of his father Manoah. He had judged Israel twenty years.**

The lords of the Philistines thought that their god Dagon was the one who handed Samson over to them (Dagon, whose upper half is human and the lower half in the form of a fish). God allowed Samson to be handed over to the hands of the Philistines, to be disciplined, and to be counted among the men of faith (Hebrews 11: 32), and for his death to be more painful to the Philistines than his life. In their celebration of their god and offering him sacrifices, they brought Samson to play like a jester. But Samson's repentance had brought him back to God, so God returned to him, and his strength returned to him. It was Samson's prayer (verse 28). It is repentance, remorse, and longing for his previous service. Now Samson knew that God is the secret of his strength, and he no longer went out to revolt, relying on himself. Rather, he now prayed that God would give him strength. Discipline yielded repentance, and repentance yielded spiritual insight that was lost because of lust. Samson pretended to be tired in front of the boy holding his hand and told him to let him touch the pillars, and this boy was leading him to

dance and play. Samson stretched his hands * **31**- As Christ stretched His arms on the cross. And just as Samson defeated his enemies by his death, thus did Christ. ***32**- Samson's sufferings became destruction for his persecutors (verse 30). Christ, with his death, shattered the kingdom of death. The house of the god Dagon symbolizes the kingdom of Satan. Thus Christ, with His death, turned the kingdom of Satan upside down, just as Samson overturned the temple of Dagon while he was in it, breaking it and destroying all the lords of the Philistines. There is a difference, as Samson died praying for revenge, and Christ died praying for forgiveness, but we can say that Christ asked for forgiveness for humans and revenge on Satan. Samson's death is not considered suicide, as he did not seek death for himself out of desperation, but rather the death of enemies, for he is like one who goes to war. We note that there are two pillars of the structure of Dagon, and there are two pillars upon which the kingdom of Satan rests, namely greed and pleasures (1 Timothy 6: 10). For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil + (Proverbs 7: 26). And all who were slain by her were strong men. When Samson's people came to bury him and take his body, the Philistines did not dare to stop them after the destruction that happened to them.

Reflections on the Story of Samson

1) Perhaps the whole story of Samson is an application of the riddle that he said, "And out of the strong came something sweet." There are many wrong actions of Samson, but we see God transforms them for the good of his people. If we make a mistake, we lose materially and spiritually. But if we offer sincere repentance, then God alone can bring out sweetness from the strong = i.e., turn losses into good for the repentant. So this proverb, " And out of the strong came something sweet " applies only to God.

2) It becomes obvious from the story of Samson a clear interpretation of what the Lord Christ said: " Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light. "... It is light because Christ carries with us, rather He carries us and helps us, and without Him, we can do nothing (John 15: 5). A yoke is a stick that binds two animals together to drag a waterwheel, for example. Thus, Christ asks that we associate with Him by carrying out his commandments, and He will help.

On the other hand, if Samson had been associated with a woman of the Jewish daughters, he would have formed a holy family with whom he rejoices. This woman may be less beautiful than Delilah, but this is the easy burden (to marry a woman of God's people according to God's commandment), and the heavy burden is getting away from God's commandments and submission to lust. Samson was associated with the beautiful Delilah (which represents liberation from the commandment), so he carried heavy burdens: 1. His wisdom was absent, so he revealed his secret; 2. His enemies defeated him. 3. He was enslaved to them; 4. He lost his sight; 5. He became a mockery of his enemies. 6. Finally, he died.

Let's compare now between the easy yoke and heavy load.

Chapter 17

Chapters (17-21) probably took place before the rise of the judges to show the misery of the situation before the presence of the judges and to show that the situation was much better with the judges. We see in these chapters a picture of the people's deviation, and even the Levites, towards worship that is a mixture of worshipping God and worshipping idols. And we see a picture of the extent of moral corruption that the people have reached regarding unspeakable lust and violence.

(Judges 17, 18): The statue of Micah.

(Judges 19-20-21): The Levite and his concubine.

(Verses 1-6): **Now there was a man from the mountains of Ephraim, whose name was Micah. 2 And he said to his mother, "The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from you, and on which you put a curse, even saying it in my ears—here is the silver with me; I took it." And his mother said, "May you be blessed by the Lord, my son!" 3 So when he had returned the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, his mother said, "I had wholly dedicated the silver from my hand to the Lord for my son, to make a carved image and a molded image; now therefore, I will return it to you." 4 Thus he returned the silver to his mother. Then his mother took two hundred shekels of silver and gave them to the silversmith, and he made it into a carved image and a molded image; and they were in the house of Micah. 5 The man Micah had a shrine, and made an ephod and household idols; and he consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest. 6 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.**

Micah stole 1,100 shekels of silver from his wealthy mother. His mother did not know who the thief was and that he was her son, so she cursed him. Micah was afraid when he heard her cursing the thief. Undoubtedly, this is a positive point in Micah, as he realizes that money without a blessing is worth nothing. Therefore, Micah confessed to stealing and brought the silver to his mother, and this is another positive point in Micah. The mother wanted to justify her curse to the thief by saying she had vowed the amount to the Lord. Or she vowed if she found the amount to give to the Lord. The mother refused to receive the money and asked to make a carved image and a molded image and handed it to her son Micah to put in his house in a sacred place to offer worship to God, perhaps to forgive him for his theft and to remove the curse from him and make his house holy. So Micah made **a carved image** = made of wood and coated with silver. **a molded image** = all of silver. Perhaps these statues were in the form of calves, as Jeroboam made it later. We notice that they worshiped God in the form of statues. But this kind of worship then opened the door to pagan worship, i.e. the worship of gods other than God. **The man Micah had a shrine and made an ephod** = the priests' garments. **household idols** = are Assyrian statues used as gods for each family. **and he consecrated one of his sons** = this is an expression taken from the Book of Leviticus and means the priest's dedication, that is, making the person a priest of God, dedicated to this work. Micah's family is obviously a religious family, but their way of worship revealed the widespread ignorance and spiritual blindness among them:

1. The carved and molded statues and household idols are rejected worship and against the Ten Commandments. This story represents the first violation of this kind after the era of Joshua.
2. Note his saying in verse 5: **shrine** = he worships God, but other gods are worshiped with him. We see here, then, that paganism began to creep into the people of God.
3. Micah appointed a priest from among his children, contrary to the law of the Lord, that the priest must be a Levite and a descendant of Aaron. He established worship in his house outside the tent of meeting, which is against the law. That is why the book says, " My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." They want to please God but do not know how to please Him. They cling to the outward appearances of worship without its essence.
4. We note that the mother vowed the entire amount to God, but at the time of implementation, she gave only 200 shekels. And she kept the rest to herself.

The book explains this chaos in (verse 6): **In those days there was no king in Israel.** If these behaviours are issued by the pious, what would then the matter be with the general public?

NB:

Micah set up a god out of his silver and set up a priest according to his whim, and to this day, many people established many gods, worshipings, and priests according to their whims, " whose god is their belly" (Philippians 3: 19).

(Verses 7-13): **Now there was a young man from Bethlehem in Judah, of the family of Judah; he was a Levite, and was staying there. 8 The man departed from the city of Bethlehem in Judah to stay wherever he could find a place. Then he came to the mountains of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, as he journeyed. 9 And Micah said to him, "Where do you come from?" So he said to him, "I am a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, and I am on my way to find a place to stay." 10 Micah said to him, "Dwell with me, and be a father and a priest to me, and I will give you ten shekels of silver per year, a suit of clothes, and your sustenance." So the Levite went in. 11 Then the Levite was content to dwell with the man; and the young man became like one of his sons to him. 12 So Micah consecrated the Levite, and the young man became his priest, and lived in the house of Micah. 13 Then Micah said, "Now I know that the Lord will be good to me, since I have a Levite as priest!"**

Here we find another sign of ignorance, as we see Micah appointing a priest for him from among the Levites, and this is another violation. But whoever established gods for him according to his whims and appointed his son as a priest, it is not strange for him to appoint this Levite as a priest, but rather he considers this a sign of God's approval?! Extreme ignorance of God's law from Micah and from Levi. The priest should be the son of Aaron and offer his sacrifices in the tent of meeting only and not in front of statues. The Levites forgot their service, went out looking for money, and accepted that anyone would hire them. They took care of their stomachs, leaving the service of the Lord. Perhaps the Levites did this due to the people neglecting worship, so the treasuries of the house of the Lord were emptied, forcing

this Levite to look for someone to hire him. We find that Micah still had some knowledge left. When he found a Levite, he preferred him over his son, so he knew that the priest should be a Levite. The Levite was from the tribe of Judah (**a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah**) = perhaps because he lived for a while in Judah and perhaps because his mother was from Judah. Micah asked him to be a father to him: Micah said to him: **Dwell with me, and be a father and a priest to me** = meaning a priest, guide and preacher. The Levite rejoiced at Micah's offer, indicating the corruption of all, even the Levites, who ignored the divine law. And in (verse 13): **the Lord will be good to me** = although certainly, God rejects all these ideas that indicate ignorance.

Chapter 18

In the previous chapter, we saw corruption at the level of individuals, and we see here that corruption is at the level of tribes. The tribe of Dan wanted to establish a god and a priest for themselves, even if by force.

(Verses 1-2): **In those days there was no king in Israel. And in those days the tribe of the Danites was seeking an inheritance for itself to dwell in; for until that day their inheritance among the tribes of Israel had not fallen to them. 2 So the children of Dan sent five men of their family from their territory, men of valor from Zorah and Eshtaol, to spy out the land and search it. They said to them, "Go, search the land." So they went to the mountains of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, and lodged there.**

there was no king in Israel: After Joshua's death, they did not have a king. And they refused, with their paganism, that God should be king over them, so they went astray because there is neither a ruler nor a counsellor. At this time, the tribe of Dan felt that the land of their inheritance was too narrow for them, and the Canaanites were harassing them in their land.

(Verses 3-4): **While they were at the house of Micah, they recognized the voice of the young Levite. They turned aside and said to him, "Who brought you here? What are you doing in this place? What do you have here?" 4 He said to them, "Thus and so Micah did for me. He has hired me, and I have become his priest."**

they recognized the voice of the young Levite: Perhaps because the young levite was in Bethlehem of Judah and there were relations between Dan and Judah. Perhaps they knew him from his dialect or heard him serve, so they knew that he was a priest, and perhaps this Levite, in his wanderings looking for someone to hire him, passed through Dan, and they knew him there.

(Verse 5): **So they said to him, "Please inquire of God, that we may know whether the journey on which we go will be prosperous."**

It is strange that they ask this young levite to ask the Lord for them, and they do not ask the high priest in Shiloh where the high priest has the Urim and Thummim. They have turned away from the Lord and His temple.

(Verse 6): **And the priest said to them, "Go in peace. The presence of the Lord be with you on your way."**

The priest's answer is honest, in the sense of "God keep your way," more than anything else. We did not hear that he entered and prayed, and the Lord answered in any way.

(Verses 7-11): **So the five men departed and went to Laish. They saw the people who were there, how they dwelt safely, in the manner of the Sidonians, quiet and secure. There were no rulers in the land who might put them to shame for anything. They were far from the Sidonians, and they had no ties with anyone. 8 Then the spies came back to their brethren at Zorah and Eshtaol, and their brethren said to them, "What is your report?" 9 So they said, "Arise, let us go up against them. For we have seen the land, and indeed it is very good. Would you do nothing? Do not hesitate to go, and enter to possess the land. 10 When you go, you will come to a secure people and a large land. For God has given it into your hands, a place where there is no lack of anything that is on the earth." 11 And six hundred men of the family of the Danites went from there, from Zorah and Eshtaol, armed with weapons of war.**

There were no rulers in the land who might put them to shame for anything: There was no king nor heir to the king to harm people by demanding taxes or waging wars. **Laish** = also called Lasham, is in the far north of Palestine. The meaning of the spies' words is that they found the city very weak from a military point of view, as there is no king (and spiritually, he who does not have God ruling over his heart and lives in false security like the people of Laish is exposed to Satan's attack on him).

(Verses 12-13): **Then they went up and encamped in Kirjath Jearim in Judah. (Therefore they call that place Mahaneh Dan to this day. There it is, west of Kirjath Jearim.) 13 And they passed from there to the mountains of Ephraim, and came to the house of Micah.**

They went up and camped in the village of **Jearim**, which is one of the four villages of the Gibeonites (Joshua 9: 17). On the border of Judah and Benjamin (Joshua 15: 9, 10 + 18: 14, 15). And it is called the village of Baal from the inheritance of Judah. They settled in the village for quite some time until it was called **Mahaneh Dan**. **There it is, west of Kirjath Jearim** = so they resided on the borders of the village west of it.

(Verses 14-20): **Then the five men who had gone to spy out the country of Laish answered and said to their brethren, "Do you know that there are in these houses an ephod, household idols, a carved image, and a molded image? Now therefore, consider what you should do." 15 So they turned aside there, and came to the house of the young Levite man—to the house of Micah—and greeted him. 16 The six hundred men armed with their weapons of war, who were of the children of Dan, stood by the entrance of the gate. 17 Then the five men who had gone to spy out the land went up. Entering there, they took the carved image, the ephod, the household idols, and the molded image. The priest stood at the entrance of the gate with the six hundred men who were armed with weapons of war. 18 When**

these went into Micah's house and took the carved image, the ephod, the household idols, and the molded image, the priest said to them, "What are you doing?" 19 And they said to him, "Be quiet, put your hand over your mouth, and come with us; be a father and a priest to us. Is it better for you to be a priest to the household of one man, or that you be a priest to a tribe and a family in Israel?" 20 So the priest's heart was glad; and he took the ephod, the household idols, and the carved image, and took his place among the people.

The spies told the rest of the tribe that there were statues, teraphim, and a priest in Micah's house. And the men of the tribe of Dan decided to usurp all to establish a priestly cult in their new place in Laish, which they would occupy. It is strange how these men think, as how they usurp the gods, and they insult the priest, saying to him, "**Be quiet**" and then add, saying, "**be a father and a priest to us**" How can the blessing be through usurpation? Usurpation of both the gods and the priest? It is strange that the priest agreed, but rather his heart was glad that he would become a priest for a tribe instead of being a priest for one man's house. This is not surprising for this priest, who is not a priest, but only a Levite, since he was originally a usurper of the priesthood, and he was looking for someone to hire him, and now he found someone to pay more. This is a painful picture of formal worship without spirit or depth, whether from the people or from this Levite who found what satisfies his ambitions. We note in (verses 16, 17) that the men of the tribe of Dan stood at Micah's door talking to the Levite to divert his mind from what the rest of their men were doing, who entered to steal the gods so that Micah would not notice. Then they took him.

(Verse 21): **Then they turned and departed, and put the little ones, the livestock, and the goods in front of them.**

It is customary for men to go to war without their wives and children, but here we find the men of the tribe of Dan, confident of the weakness of Laish and of being able to possess it, they have taken with them their wives, children, and baggage.

(Verses 22-26): **When they were a good way from the house of Micah, the men who were in the houses near Micah's house gathered together and overtook the children of Dan. 23 And they called out to the children of Dan. So they turned around and said to Micah, "What ails you, that you have gathered such a company?" 24 So he said, "You have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and you have gone away. Now what more do I have? How can you say to me, 'What ails you?'" 25 And the children of Dan said to him, "Do not let your voice be heard among us, lest angry men fall upon you, and you lose your life, with the lives of your household!" 26 Then the children of Dan went their way. And when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back to his house.**

An unfortunate picture of religiosity, we find Micah thinking that his gods who protect him have been stolen, and thus there is no longer anyone to protect him, but he has lost everything = **Now what more do I have?**

(Verses 27-29): **So they took the things Micah had made, and the priest who had belonged to him, and went to Laish, to a people quiet and secure; and they struck them with the edge of the sword and burned the city with fire. 28 There was no deliverer, because it was far from Sidon, and they had no ties with anyone. It was in the valley that belongs to Beth Rehob. So they rebuilt the city and dwelt there. 29 And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born to Israel. However, the name of the city formerly was Laish.**

God allowed the Danites to destroy the Canaanites of Laish because the cup of Laish's sins was full. At the same time, the cup of Dan's sins was beginning to fill up.

(Verse 30): **Then the children of Dan set up for themselves the carved image; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.**

Unfortunately, after they set up the new Dan on the ruins of the old Dan, instead of thanking God, they set up a carved image. They represent those who died in baptism and rose with Christ, and instead of living their life for the One who died for them and rose and gave them this new life, they return to offer their life to sin or lust and be for them as a carved image or idol to be worshiped.

Note:

This Dan became the northernmost part of Israel while Beersheba was the southernmost part of Israel. Therefore, the expression from Dan to Beersheba referred to all of Israel. **Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh** = the way it is written in Hebrew **the son of Gershom** is not normal linguistically, so that was intended to say something. Jonathan is the Levite who was appointed as a priest by Micah and taken by the tribe of Dan. And if we understand that the word Gershom means "the stranger" or "the alien," then there is an explanation for that by saying that the verse means like this.... [And Jonathan was the son of the stranger, the son of Manasseh]. However, some copies of the Bible mention the verse like this: "And Jonathan was the son of Gershom, the son of Moses" (review the Bible with reference). By this, what is meant is that this Levite Jonathan is a descendant of Gershom, the son of Moses, which is the correct interpretation. The word the son of Gershom indicates that he is a descendant of Gershom, the son of Moses. This Jonathan established a priesthood in the tribe of Dan, and because he was a descendant of Moses, Jeroboam probably relied on this when he established one of his two temples in Dan and the other in Bethel.

until the day of the captivity of the land: This sentence can have one of two meanings:

1. The Captivity of the Land meant the captivity of Assyria to the land of Israel, meaning that the worship that this Levite established had its strength until the Assyrians captured the land of Israel. It is logical that it weakened in the days of David and Solomon, and it may have been a secret cult in their days, but it took on an official character when Jeroboam supported it with the temple he established in Dan.

2. What is meant by the captivity of the land is the day when the Philistines took the ark captive, and this can be understood in the light of (verse 31).

(Verse 31): **So they set up for themselves Micah's carved image which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.**

It means that the worship of Dan was as old as the worship of Shiloh.

Chapter 19

This chapter reveals the hideous state of moral corruption to which God's people have fallen. These events probably occurred shortly after Joshua's death because Phinehas was the high priest (Judges 20: 28). Saying when there was no king (Judges 19: 1) also means that there was no judge for Israel.

(Verse 1): **And it came to pass in those days, when there was no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite staying in the remote mountains of Ephraim. He took for himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah.**

Concubine: The concubine was a legitimate wife, but to a lesser extent than the ordinary wife, as she was often a slave bought at a price and sometimes a prisoner of war. **the remote mountains of Ephraim** = at the foot of the mountain. Or on the side of a mountain in a remote area.

(Verse 2): **But his concubine played the harlot against him, and went away from him to her father's house at Bethlehem in Judah, and was there four whole months.**

The concubine committed adultery and was afraid of her Levi husband, so she fled to her father's house.

(Verses 3-11): **Then her husband arose and went after her, to speak kindly to her and bring her back, having his servant and a couple of donkeys with him. So she brought him into her father's house; and when the father of the young woman saw him, he was glad to meet him. 4 Now his father-in-law, the young woman's father, detained him; and he stayed with him three days. So they ate and drank and lodged there. 5 Then it came to pass on the fourth day that they arose early in the morning, and he stood to depart; but the young woman's father said to his son-in-law, "Refresh your heart with a morsel of bread, and afterward go your way." 6 So they sat down, and the two of them ate and drank together. Then the young woman's father said to the man, "Please be content to stay all night, and let your heart be merry." 7 And when the man stood to depart, his father-in-law urged him; so he lodged there again. 8 Then he arose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart, but the young woman's father said, "Please refresh your heart." So they delayed until afternoon; and both of them ate. 9 And when the man stood to depart—he and his concubine and his servant—his father-in-law, the young woman's father, said to him, "Look, the day is now drawing toward evening; please spend the night. See, the day is coming to an end; lodge here, that your heart may be merry. Tomorrow go your way early, so that you may get home." 10 However, the man was not willing to spend that night; so he rose and departed, and came opposite Jebus (that is, Jerusalem). With him were the two saddled donkeys; his concubine was also with him. 11 They were near Jebus, and the day was far spent; and the servant said to his master, "Come, please, and let us turn aside into this city of the Jebusites and lodge in it."**

The Levite forgave his concubine and went to comfort her and take her back. As her father rejoiced at her husband's forgiveness and that her reconciliation with her husband covered his daughter's sin, he exaggerated the hospitality towards his son-in-law and offered him more than the days of traditional hospitality. At sunset on the fifth day, the Levite insisted on traveling with his concubine. **With him were the two saddled donkeys** = for him and his concubine.

(Verses 12-14): **But his master said to him, "We will not turn aside here into a city of foreigners, who are not of the children of Israel; we will go on to Gibeah." 13 So he said to his servant, "Come, let us draw near to one of these places, and spend the night in Gibeah or in Ramah." 14 And they passed by and went their way; and the sun went down on them near Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin.**

The Levite did not want to spend the night in Jebus since they were pagans. He would have better done as the pagans would not have done to him, worse than what his Benjaminian brothers did. Let us note that if the people of God become corrupt, they become worse than the pagans, "If the salt loses its flavor, it is trampled underfoot."

(Verse 15): **They turned aside there to go in to lodge in Gibeah. And when he went in, he sat down in the open square of the city, for no one would take them into his house to spend the night.**

The strangers used to sit in the city square until someone invited them to stay overnight, as the system of hotels was not known. God commanded us to entertain strangers, but no one hosted him.

(Verses 16-17): **Just then an old man came in from his work in the field at evening, who also was from the mountains of Ephraim; he was staying in Gibeah, whereas the men of the place were Benjamites. 17 And when he raised his eyes, he saw the traveler in the open square of the city; and the old man said, "Where are you going, and where do you come from?"**

an old man: Who hosted the Levite and his concubine? An old man who still has the piety of those who lived in the days of Moses and Joshua. **came in from his work in the field** = so he is a poor man. **he was staying in Gibeah** = he came to work as a wage laborer all day in the fields, and because he is a stranger, he feels for the strangers. He is a strange man **whereas the men of the place were Benjamites** = for the man was not from the tribe of Benjamin. That is, the book accuses the tribe of Benjamin of being without chivalry or magnanimity.

(Verses 18-21): **So he said to him, "We are passing from Bethlehem in Judah toward the remote mountains of Ephraim; I am from there. I went to Bethlehem in Judah; now I am going to the house of the Lord. But there is no one who will take me into his house, 19 although we have both straw and fodder for our donkeys, and bread and wine for myself, for your female servant, and for the young man who is with your servant; there is no lack of anything." 20 And the old man said, "Peace be with**

you! However, let all your needs be my responsibility; only do not spend the night in the open square." 21 So he brought him into his house, and gave fodder to the donkeys. And they washed their feet, and ate and drank.

to the house of the Lord: In other translations, "to my home" (refer to the Bible with references), and so it came in the Septuagint. Perhaps the Levite intended to go to his house but first passed by the house of the Lord in Shiloh. Often, the word my house in Hebrew refers simultaneously to the house of YHWH.

(Verses 22-23): **As they were enjoying themselves, suddenly certain men of the city, perverted men, surrounded the house and beat on the door. They spoke to the master of the house, the old man, saying, "Bring out the man who came to your house, that we may know him carnally!" 23 But the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, "No, my brethren! I beg you, do not act so wickedly! Seeing this man has come into my house, do not commit this outrage.**

Unfortunately, this story comes from the people of God, and it is a repetition of what the people of Sodom and Gomorrah did (the people of Benjamin sought the man first, not the woman). God has his ways of punishing the wicked, so while the fire was a punishment for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, here, the people of the tribes combined were the tool that exterminated the tribe of Benjamin but also burned their cities with fire.

(Verse 24): **Look, here is my virgin daughter and the man's concubine; let me bring them out now. Humble them, and do with them as you please; but to this man do not do such a vile thing!"**

Here we notice a strange thing in the principles of these people, when generosity in hosting a stranger takes priority over the dignity and chastity of women. This reveals the men's underestimation of women at that time and their disregard for the sin of adultery.

(Verse 25): **But the men would not heed him. So the man took his concubine and brought her out to them. And they knew her and abused her all night until morning; and when the day began to break, they let her go.**

The Levite took out his concubine for them to do evil with her to save his host's virgin daughter.

(Verses 26-27): **Then the woman came as the day was dawning, and fell down at the door of the man's house where her master was, till it was light. 27 When her master arose in the morning, and opened the doors of the house and went out to go his way, there was his concubine, fallen at the door of the house with her hands on the threshold.**

Lust was this woman's sin, as she committed adultery from behind her man, so lust was also her punishment, as sin has its punishment in itself. This woman should have died because of her adultery, but no one killed her, as her husband underestimated the sin of adultery and forgave her. There was no king in Israel, and the husband did not care. But there is a God who cares, punishes and takes revenge.

(Verse 28): **And he said to her, "Get up and let us be going." But there was no answer. So the man lifted her onto the donkey; and the man got up and went to his place.**

The act of this Levite is also strange, for here he is calling his concubine to get up = **Get up and let us be going** as if nothing had happened all night. He slept all night or hid himself in cowardice and threw his wife out for evil, and she lay down with her hands on the threshold as if crying out for help to her sleeping man.

(Verses 29-30): **When he entered his house he took a knife, laid hold of his concubine, and divided her into twelve pieces, limb by limb, and sent her throughout all the territory of Israel. 30 And so it was that all who saw it said, "No such deed has been done or seen from the day that the children of Israel came up from the land of Egypt until this day. Consider it, confer, and speak up!"**

The man did with the body of his concubine a brutal act because of his anger, and he did this to provoke Israel to take revenge for him from Benjamin, and indeed everyone was stirred against Benjamin.

Chapter 20

(Verse 1): **So all the children of Israel came out, from Dan to Beersheba, as well as from the land of Gilead, and the congregation gathered together as one man before the Lord at Mizpah.**

from Dan to Beersheba: That is, all of Israel from its northernmost point to its southernmost part. **before the Lord** = the house of the Lord in Shiloh. **Mizpah** = 3 miles from Gibeah.

(Verses 2-4): **And the leaders of all the people, all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand foot soldiers who drew the sword. 3 (Now the children of Benjamin heard that the children of Israel had gone up to Mizpah.) Then the children of Israel said, "Tell us, how did this wicked deed happen?" 4 So the Levite, the husband of the woman who was murdered, answered and said, "My concubine and I went into Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin, to spend the night.**

the leaders: Everyone went up to war except Jabesh Gilead (Judges 21: 8).

(Verses 5-9): **And the men of Gibeah rose against me, and surrounded the house at night because of me. They intended to kill me, but instead they ravished my concubine so that she died. 6 So I took hold of my concubine, cut her in pieces, and sent her throughout all the territory of the inheritance of Israel, because they committed lewdness and outrage in Israel. 7 Look! All of you are children of Israel; give your advice and counsel here and now!" 8 So all the people arose as one man, saying, "None of us will go to his tent, nor will any turn back to his house; 9 but now this is the thing which we will do to Gibeah: We will go up against it by lot.**

They intended to kill me: He was ashamed to mention what the people of Gibeah asked (to know him carnally). He said they wanted to do to me as they did to my concubine, and he summed up the words by saying, "Kill me."

(Verse 10): **We will take ten men out of every hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, a hundred out of every thousand, and a thousand out of every ten thousand, to make provisions for the people, that when they come to Gibeah in Benjamin, they may repay all the vileness that they have done in Israel."**

They chose 10% of their number to take the job supplying the army, as they were on the verge of war.

(Verses 11-13): **So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, united together as one man. 12 Then the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying, "What is this wickedness that has occurred among you? 13 Now therefore, deliver up the men, the perverted men who are in**

Gibeah, that we may put them to death and remove the evil from Israel!" But the children of Benjamin would not listen to the voice of their brethren, the children of Israel.

The law commanded killing such sinful men and burning their city with fire (Deuteronomy 13: 14-17). But the children of Benjamin refused to surrender their evil men. The Benjaminites should have listened to God's law and stood in the line of holiness, not favouring their brothers more than God. "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me." For God's honor should take priority over family relationships. The Benjaminites were skilled in war (1 Chronicles 12: 2), so they imagined that they would be able to fight the whole group. But their calculations were wrong.

Because they did not care about God's law, the loss was great. It is amazing that Benjamin alone challenges all the tribes of Israel, along with the high priest and the ark of the covenant. The men of Benjamin were 26,000, while the men of Israel were 400,000. Rather, the Benjaminites were not defending the right of God, so how would God help them? They were actually defending the wicked. Most likely, they were all on the same level of wickedness as the people of Gibeah, and such wicked people are arrogant, and pride blinds their eyes which will lead to their destruction.

(Verses 14-17): **Instead, the children of Benjamin gathered together from their cities to Gibeah, to go to battle against the children of Israel. 15 And from their cities at that time the children of Benjamin numbered twenty-six thousand men who drew the sword, besides the inhabitants of Gibeah, who numbered seven hundred select men. 16 Among all this people were seven hundred select men who were left-handed; every one could sling a stone at a hair's breadth and not miss. 17 Now besides Benjamin, the men of Israel numbered four hundred thousand men who drew the sword; all of these were men of war.**

The Benjaminites showed skill in war, and they relied on this, so they became arrogant and perished.

(Verses 18-28): **Then the children of Israel arose and went up to the house of God to inquire of God. They said, "Which of us shall go up first to battle against the children of Benjamin?" The Lord said, "Judah first!" 19 So the children of Israel rose in the morning and encamped against Gibeah. 20 And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin, and the men of Israel put themselves in battle array to fight against them at Gibeah. 21 Then the children of Benjamin came out of Gibeah, and on that day cut down to the ground twenty-two thousand men of the Israelites. 22 And the people, that is, the men of Israel, encouraged themselves and again formed the battle line at the place where they had put themselves in array on the first day. 23 Then the children of Israel went up and wept before the Lord until evening, and asked counsel of the Lord, saying, "Shall I again draw near for battle against the children of my brother Benjamin?" And the Lord said, "Go up against him." 24 So the children of Israel approached the children of Benjamin on the second day. 25 And Benjamin went out against them from Gibeah on the second day, and cut down to the ground eighteen thousand more of**

the children of Israel; all these drew the sword. 26 Then all the children of Israel, that is, all the people, went up and came to the house of God and wept. They sat there before the Lord and fasted that day until evening; and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord. 27 So the children of Israel inquired of the Lord (the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days, 28 and Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days), saying, "Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of my brother Benjamin, or shall I cease?" And the Lord said, "Go up, for tomorrow I will deliver them into your hand."

These verses raise an important question as the tribes of Israel asked the Lord twice, yet they were defeated twice, and 40,000 perished, so why?

1. In (verse 26) we find the tribes praying, weeping, humbling themselves before God, fasting and offering sacrifices. And Israel hears God's promise this time, **for tomorrow I will deliver them into your hand**. This is the secret of being defeated twice, then defeating them the third time.
2. In the first and second times, they relied on their strength, and their question to God was after they had decided everything. They decided on war, and their question was who among us would ascend first, and their question was not whether they would ascend or not. Their question was a matter of completing the formalities.
3. They were confident in their strength and the small number of Benjamin. This is the same error of the tribe of Benjamin, who were confident in their fighting capabilities (verse 16). Pride is the beginning of the fall.
4. God wants to discipline Benjamin, but at the same time, He wants the rest of His people to be perfect and holy. God disciplined the tribes first by allowing them to be broken and defeated, so they would be humbled and invalidate their pride, and begin to depend on the Lord as a secret for their strength, and through their humility, God will be in their midst (Isaiah 57: 15), and if God is with them, He will be the secret of their victory.
5. We note that the tribes moved to avenge the Levite and the death of his concubine, but they did not move to eliminate the paganism that had spread among them (Chapters 17, 18). It was better for them to move to strike the pagans, but paganism had begun to spread among all, followed by the sins of physical adultery. Therefore the tribes did not care to fix the deteriorating situation, as everyone had fallen. They moved here only because their feelings were shaken by what this Levite did when he cut his concubine's body, while they did not move out of jealousy for the honor of God and the preservation of His commandments. Therefore, God had to discipline them to first purify the tool He would use to discipline the tribe of Benjamin. God allowed their defeat to purify them and teach them humility, so they did not hear in the first or second time, **for tomorrow I will deliver them into your hand**. God's intention was directed in both times to purify them first through the tribe of Benjamin and then to use them while they were sanctified against sinful Benjamin.
6. Victory was in the third time, while death and defeat were in the first and second times. Thus, the resurrection was on the third day, and was preceded by death for two days. The third day refers to our

enjoyment of the power of the resurrection of the Lord Christ. There is no victory against sin, nor victory over the powers of darkness, except by enjoying the power of the Lord in us.

7. Before we can enjoy the resurrection and the power of resurrection, we must pass through death and the cross, the cross of our passions and desires, to be purified. And just as 40,000 of Israel died on both occasions, we should strive to suppress and enslave the flesh and kill the lusts of the flesh in us first.

(Verses 29-48): **Then Israel set men in ambush all around Gibeah. 30 And the children of Israel went up against the children of Benjamin on the third day, and put themselves in battle array against Gibeah as at the other times. 31 So the children of Benjamin went out against the people, and were drawn away from the city. They began to strike down and kill some of the people, as at the other times, in the highways (one of which goes up to Bethel and the other to Gibeah) and in the field, about thirty men of Israel. 32 And the children of Benjamin said, "They are defeated before us, as at first." But the children of Israel said, "Let us flee and draw them away from the city to the highways." 33 So all the men of Israel rose from their place and put themselves in battle array at Baal Tamar. Then Israel's men in ambush burst forth from their position in the plain of Geba. 34 And ten thousand select men from all Israel came against Gibeah, and the battle was fierce. But the Benjamites did not know that disaster was upon them. 35 The Lord defeated Benjamin before Israel. And the children of Israel destroyed that day twenty-five thousand one hundred Benjamites; all these drew the sword. 36 So the children of Benjamin saw that they were defeated. The men of Israel had given ground to the Benjamites, because they relied on the men in ambush whom they had set against Gibeah. 37 And the men in ambush quickly rushed upon Gibeah; the men in ambush spread out and struck the whole city with the edge of the sword. 38 Now the appointed signal between the men of Israel and the men in ambush was that they would make a great cloud of smoke rise up from the city, 39 whereupon the men of Israel would turn in battle. Now Benjamin had begun to strike and kill about thirty of the men of Israel. For they said, "Surely they are defeated before us, as in the first battle." 40 But when the cloud began to rise from the city in a column of smoke, the Benjamites looked behind them, and there was the whole city going up in smoke to heaven. 41 And when the men of Israel turned back, the men of Benjamin panicked, for they saw that disaster had come upon them. 42 Therefore they turned their backs before the men of Israel in the direction of the wilderness; but the battle overtook them, and whoever came out of the cities they destroyed in their midst. 43 They surrounded the Benjamites, chased them, and easily trampled them down as far as the front of Gibeah toward the east. 44 And eighteen thousand men of Benjamin fell; all these were men of valor. 45 Then they turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon; and they cut down five thousand of them on the highways. Then they pursued them relentlessly up to Gidom, and killed two thousand of them. 46 So all who fell of Benjamin that day were twenty-five thousand men who drew the sword; all these were men of valor. 47 But six hundred men turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon, and they stayed at the rock of Rimmon for four months. 48 And the men of Israel turned back against the children of Benjamin, and struck them down with the edge of the sword—from every city, men and beasts, all who were found. They also set fire to all the cities they came to.**

This plan is the same as the plan of "Joshua" against "Ai." Israel plotted an ambush surrounding Gibeah, where Israel appeared in front of Benjamin to draw him out of the city. When Benjamin began striking like the previous two days, some of Israel set off to the highways, that is, the highways that lead to Bethel, and the other to the field of Gibeah. An ambush was hidden in Baal Tamar and the wilderness of Gibeah. These set off behind the city and stormed it and struck it with the edge of the sword and set it on fire, and then the other ambush came out, and from the Benjaminites fell 25,000 men, 18,000 in war + 5,000 in the roads + 2000 at the rock of Rimmon = the total is 25,000 and the exact number of dead is 25,100 and 600 fled man to the rock of Rimmon. The men of the tribe of Benjamin were 26,700 people, of whom 25,100 were killed and 600 fled. So, there are 1,000 men left, who were killed in the battles of the first two days, when Benjamin conquered Israel. Refer to verses (14, 15) of Benjamin 26,000 + Gibeah 700. And look at the result of the sin, for all of those who died because of it.. all who were slain by her were strong men, and we notice that verse 36 is the beginning of detailing what was said before.

And ten thousand select men from all Israel came against Gibeah, and the battle was fierce. But the Benjamites did not know that disaster was upon them:

That is, there is an ambush behind them. Archeology has proven that the city was completely burned by fire at that time.

Chapter 21

(Verse 1): **Now the men of Israel had sworn an oath at Mizpah, saying, "None of us shall give his daughter to Benjamin as a wife."**

This oath means a judgment to completely destroy the tribe of Benjamin. It is definitely a wrong oath.

(Verse 2): **Then the people came to the house of God, and remained there before God till evening. They lifted up their voices and wept bitterly,**

wept bitterly: Their souls became bitter, as 26,100 of Benjamin perished, and 40,030 of Israel perished. Even the remaining 600 of Benjamin cannot marry because of their oath, and this means the complete disappearance of one tribe of Israel.

(Verses 3-9): **and said, "O Lord God of Israel, why has this come to pass in Israel, that today there should be one tribe missing in Israel?" 4 So it was, on the next morning, that the people rose early and built an altar there, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. 5 The children of Israel said, "Who is there among all the tribes of Israel who did not come up with the assembly to the Lord?" For they had made a great oath concerning anyone who had not come up to the Lord at Mizpah, saying, "He shall surely be put to death." 6 And the children of Israel grieved for Benjamin their brother, and said, "One tribe is cut off from Israel today. 7 What shall we do for wives for those who remain, seeing we have sworn by the Lord that we will not give them our daughters as wives?" 8 And they said, "What one is there from the tribes of Israel who did not come up to Mizpah to the Lord?" And, in fact, no one had come to the camp from Jabesh Gilead to the assembly. 9 For when the people were counted, indeed, not one of the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead was there.**

(Verses 10-12): **So the congregation sent out there twelve thousand of their most valiant men, and commanded them, saying, "Go and strike the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead with the edge of the sword, including the women and children. 11 And this is the thing that you shall do: You shall utterly destroy every male, and every woman who has known a man intimately." 12 So they found among the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead four hundred young virgins who had not known a man intimately; and they brought them to the camp at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan.**

They warned every city that would not participate in the war against Benjamin. But this is monstrous to kill men, women, and children, except for virgin girls.

(Verses 13-14): **Then the whole congregation sent word to the children of Benjamin who were at the rock of Rimmon, and announced peace to them. 14 So Benjamin came back at that time, and they**

gave them the women whom they had saved alive of the women of Jabesh Gilead; and yet they had not found enough for them.

They had previously asked what we should do for the remaining 600 (verse 7). Now, after the killing of Jabesh Gilead, they found a solution by marrying the remaining 600 virgins from Jabesh-Gilead to revive the tribe again. This link between Jabesh Gilead and the tribe of Benjamin explains the sympathy of the people of Jabesh Gilead with the bodies of King Saul and his sons after that, and even Saul's defence of Jabesh Gilead against the Ammonites (Jabesh Gilead is from the tribe of Gad).

(Verse 15): **And the people grieved for Benjamin, because the Lord had made a void in the tribes of Israel.**

It is as though Israel is like a complete garment from which one part was torn:

We notice several mistakes in this story:

- 1- Benjamin's pride when he did not surrender the wicked of Gibeah and his decision to fight all the tribes.
2. Israel's pride in going to war without consulting God.
3. The pride of Israel in their brutal punishment of Jabesh Gilead. And before that, in the destruction of the entire tribe of Benjamin, their oath in the non-marriage of their daughters to a Benjamini with. Perhaps if they had asked God, He would have guided them in many ways in which they would punish the wicked and not destroy an entire tribe and then regret it. They had a high priest asking God, and God answered him with Urim and Tamim.
4. Setting up an altar other than the altar of the tent of Shiloh (verse 4).
5. This is in addition to the spread of paganism and impurity in Israel.

(Verses 16-18): **Then the elders of the congregation said, "What shall we do for wives for those who remain, since the women of Benjamin have been destroyed?" 17 And they said, "There must be an inheritance for the survivors of Benjamin, that a tribe may not be destroyed from Israel. 18 However, we cannot give them wives from our daughters, for the children of Israel have sworn an oath, saying, 'Cursed be the one who gives a wife to Benjamin.'"**

There must be an inheritance for the survivors of Benjamin: There must be heirs to the survivors of the tribe of Benjamin.

(Verses 19-24): **Then they said, "In fact, there is a yearly feast of the Lord in Shiloh, which is north of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goes up from Bethel to Shechem, and south of Lebonah." 20 Therefore they instructed the children of Benjamin, saying, "Go, lie in wait in the vineyards, 21 and watch; and just when the daughters of Shiloh come out to perform their dances, then come out from the vineyards, and every man catch a wife for himself from the daughters of Shiloh; then go to the land of Benjamin. 22 Then it shall be, when their fathers or their brothers come to us to complain, that we will say to them, 'Be kind to them for our sakes, because we did not take a wife for any of them in the war; for it is not as though you have given the women to them at this time, making yourselves guilty of your oath.'" 23 And the children of Benjamin did so; they took enough wives for their number from those who danced, whom they caught. Then they went and returned to their inheritance, and they rebuilt the cities and dwelt in them. 24 So the children of Israel departed from there at that time, every man to his tribe and family; they went out from there, every man to his inheritance.**

Because the oath they took was wrong, here they are trying to find a way out of the bottleneck by having the 200 wifeless Benjamins kidnap 200 girls from the dancers at the feast. Wouldn't it have been better not to swear at all!! So Jesus asked us not to swear.

And the meaning of what was said in verse 22 **at this time** = that is, you did not give them your daughters at the time they asked for, but rather they kidnapped them against your will, so you did not break your oath, but rather they took the daughters.... and this is fraud.

(Verse 25): **In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.**

In those days there was no king in Israel: With this phrase, the book ends as if the purpose of the book is to explain that the reason for all this corruption is that there is no king. And the human heart tends to permissiveness and sinful freedom and to work according to his desires without control. But whoever has Christ ruling on his heart does not become corrupt, but Christ the King gives him to understand the meaning of true freedom.