

Judges 1:1 - 2:5

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[0:00] All right, well I told you we're in the process of transitioning, so we're going from the book of Joshua into the book of Judges, which doesn't seem like a major transition in that you just turn the page over, right?

You just flip a page of the Bible and there you go. Some Bibles, most Bibles that you would have have an introduction to them or kind of a short note. Some Bibles don't. Some just literally it's on the very next page and you just kind of flip the page over.

And historically we're not really transitioning a lot of time, but the book of Judges will cover a grand space of time for us. And we'll get to that in just a moment as we take time to introduce it.

But every time we come to this place of transitions, I think it's good just to kind of pause and consider and just allow you, not that I'm really fully prepared for this, but I told you I'd give you an opportunity.

If you have any questions you want to ask, then we would be open for that. So any, it doesn't have to be as it pertains to the book of Joshua or you go in the book of Judges. We'll have a lot of questions. Hopefully we'll answer those as we get to the text.

[1:01] But it's just always one of those built-in moments of pulse. So I'm going to ask, anybody have any questions they would like to ask? We'll try to seek an answer together. Anything pressing upon you.

I said I'd give you the opportunity tonight. So here's your opportunity. We need the Jeopardy! music playing in the background, don't we? Yeah. Anybody have anything that's just weighing on their mind or like, I need to know this?

Anything at all from your reading? I'm glad to hear. We've got it all figured out. Hello, Miss Mellie. You can come up here anytime you want to. She's making her way up the aisle.

That's okay. All right. Well, take your Bibles out. Go into the book of Judges then. If you haven't come upon any questions, I'll see if I can gather some up for you. Because in the first couple of chapters in the book of Judges, you'll be introduced in the book of Judges to Joshua dying.

Then all of a sudden, by the time you get to the end of that first chapter, Joshua's still alive. And then you get into the second chapter and Joshua's dead again. So he goes from being dead to living to being dead again. And if that doesn't cause us to stop and pause and consider what in the world is going on, then, you know, we've really got a good grasp of things.

[2:10] But that is quite all right. So tonight, we're going to look at Joshua chapter 1. We're going to get into the second chapter. That would be down to verse 5. So Joshua 1, 1 through Joshua 2, 5 by way of kind of introducing the book.

Because the introduction of the book of Joshua lasts for about the first three chapters. As some Bible scholars will tell you, chapters 1, 2, and 3 are introduction. Then the bulk of the message goes through chapter 4 to about chapter 17.

And then starting in chapter 18 to get to the end of the book, which would be the 21st chapter or so, is an illustration. So it introduces the problem to us. And then it defines the problem or describes it. And then it shows us an illustration of the problem. So at the very beginning of the book, we are introduced to how they got there. And then we find in the center of the book what it looks like when they were there. That is where we see this repetitive series of failures and judges being raised up and failures.

And we are introduced to six or seven, however you count it, events that kind of transpire in a downward spiral of what is going on within the nation of Israel.

[3:17] Just as a side note, even the judges themselves move from a south to north region. That is how they conquered the land, from the south to the north, right? So when you look at the judges and those that are raised up as deliverers, it goes southward to northward.

And you see this spiral of the downward fall of the nation. And then we have that really illustrated there for us at the end of the book as it pertains to the tribe of Dan. Two great illustrations.

The tribe of Dan, which has its own priesthood set up for itself as they take that young Levite from that house. And they go and, you know, take this whole city for themselves and set up their own priesthood.

And, you know, they do their own thing. And then you have the man who is traveling with his concubine. He comes and that man takes him into his house. And then his concubine is taken out in the middle of the night. He wakes up and he finds her dead.

And then we know what transpires following that. It is there in those two series of illustrations that we read that repeated phrase, In those days there was no king in Israel and every man did what was right in his own eyes.

[4 : 13] I have not preached from the book of Judges often, but I have preached a number of times one message in particular.

Not that it's the same message, but it really pertains, and I think the book of Judges speaks to that, of man's desperate need for a king. Man's desperate need for a king. And we see that because this is what it looks like when man has no king.

When man is allowed to be his own king and his own ruler. Man is allowed to be the one who is the ultimate authority and dictates and sets his own course. I think the book of Judges is so much more than just a snapshot of the historical period within the nation of Israel.

I believe the book of Judges really is a picture of what it looks like as man continues to progress and move forward. I have said it over and over again. I do not think that man is progressing. Rather, I think that man is digressing.

I think man is going downward, not going upward. This is why as we begin to look through archaeology and we begin to look through history, man scratches their head and tries to figure out how individuals ever built the things they built in the past without the tools we have in the present.

[5 : 18] We still haven't quite figured out how the Egyptians built the pyramids. We still don't know how Herod the Great developed underwater concrete and ran an aqueduct from the Mediterranean Sea in 4 B.C., which literally provided water to the city of Jerusalem until 1964.

We don't understand how that one aqueduct ran so much. We don't know how Hezekiah's tunnel was completed so quickly, how they barricaded it when people were out there. We don't understand how these things happened when they still had just as many hours of the day as we have now.

These are just things that we speak of, you know, what man can do with his own hands. Even some of the great thinkers throughout the ages seem to astound us. When you read some of the great writings of the past, and you begin to men were thinking about, men and women were thinking about and considering things and coming up with feasible answers to things that we still to this day wrestle with.

I do not believe that men is progressing. I don't think we're getting better. I believe we're digressing because we're moving further and further away from the Garden of Eden. And until we get to that point of complete redemption and salvation, we will follow the path that is found for us in the book of Judges.

That is, we will continue to go down and down and down. The great need, not the great need, the great answer for us, the great call to us is that much as in the book of Judges, as man is going down, God raises up a deliverer or a judge, a redeemer.

[6 : 39] God has raised up a redeemer and a deliverer for us. We're not looking for a multiplicity of them. Rather, we have the one who is Jesus Christ. Some have said you find great character traits in each of these judges.

Each judge would represent a trait that is found ultimately in our Savior. Each judge is fallible. They're not perfect. You understand it as we go through there.

Each judge has great traits, but each judge also has very prone weaknesses. We can take Samson as quite a, really, he is the pinnacle of that. He who is so empowered of the Lord God, who is a Nazarite, who is one who could slay the thousands and thousands and thousands and had such great strength.

And even at his death, he killed more than he did even in his life. So mildly used of God, but yet also so weak and so prone to sin and succumb to the greatest of temptations.

We see this over and over again. So when we get to the book of Judges, we need to understand these things. This is not just something like, oh man, look at what happened back then. Really, I

think this is one of the books that we can look at and say, this is what's happening now.

[7 : 53] And I think that we can look at that in a lot of things. And I believe this is why God recorded this book for us here. It is a book of transition. We go from the victories of Joshua to the stumblings and ultimate defeats of Judges.

And it sets us up for the reign of the kings that we will find recorded for us in 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Chronicles and as we move forward, right? Even 1 and 2 Kings.

And it sets us up not just for the reign of the kings, but what's going to happen during the reign of the kings and ultimately the Babylonian captivity. It is pointing to the captivity that is soon to come because this is a major epic in the nation of Israel's history which defines for us how they got there. When we get to the divided kingdom after Solomon's reign and we wonder how in the world did this ever take place? How did the people so united when they left Egypt, so united when they came to the promised land, now look so divided?

And we understand that by going back to the book of Judges and we see the problem that man has. So we'll read the first chapter and down to the fifth verse of the second chapter and we really introduce it to ourselves.

[9 : 05] The Word of God says, Now it came about after the death of Joshua that the sons of Israel inquired of the Lord, saying, Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites to fight against them? The Lord said, Judah shall go up.

Behold, I have given the land into his hand. Then Judah said to Simeon, his brother, Come up with me into the territory, allotted me that we may fight against the Canaanites, and I in turn will go with you into the territory allotted you.

So Simeon went with him, and Judah went up, and the Lord gave the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hands, and they defeated ten thousand men of Bezek, and they found Adonai Bezek and Bezek and fought against him, and they defeated the Canaanites and the Perizzites.

But Adonai Bezek fled, and they pursued him and caught him and cut off his thumbs and big toes. Adonai Bezek said, Seventy kings with their thumbs and big toes cut off used to gather up scraps under my table, as I have done, so God has repaid me.

So they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died there. Then the sons of Judah fought against Jerusalem and captured it, and struck it with the edge of the sword and set the city on fire. And afterward the sons of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites, living in the hill country and in the Negev and in the lowland.

[10 : 11] So Judah went against the Canaanites, who lived in Hebron. Now the name of Hebron formerly was Kiritharabah. And they struck Shishai and Ahimon and Talmai, and then from there went against the inhabitants of Debir.

Now the name of Debir was formerly Kirith Shefer. And Caleb said, this one should sound very familiar to you because we've already read this account in the book of Joshua. And Caleb said, The one who attacks Kirith Shefer and captures it, I will give him my daughter Aksah for a wife.

Othnil, the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, captured it. So he gave him his daughter Aksah for a wife. Then it came about that when she came to him, that she persuaded him to ask her father for a field.

Then she alighted from her donkey, and Caleb said to her, What do you want? She said to him, Give me a blessing. Since you have given me the land of the Negev, give me also springs of water. So Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

The descendants of the Canaanites, Moses' father-in-law, went up from the city of Palms with the sons of Judah to the wilderness of Judah, which is in the south of Arad. And they went and lived with the people.

[11 : 18] Then Judah went with Simeon, his brother, and they struck the Canaanites living in Zephath and utterly destroyed it. So the name of the city was called Hormah. And Judah took Gaza with its territory, Ashkelon with its territory, and Ekron with its territory.

Now start paying attention. Now the Lord was with Judah, and they took possession of the hill country, but they could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley because they had iron chariots. Then he gave Hebron to Caleb, as Moses had promised, and drove out from there the three sons of Anak.

But the sons of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who live in Jerusalem. So the Jebusites have lived with the sons of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day. Likewise, the house of Joseph went

up against Bethel, and the Lord was with them.

The house of Joseph spied out Bethel. Now the name of the city was formerly Luz. And the spies who saw a man coming out of the city, and they said to him, Please show us the entrance to the city, and we will treat you kindly.

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 free. The man went into the land of the Hittites and built a city and named it Luz, which is its name to this day.

[12 : 26] But Manasseh did not take possession of Beth Shem and its villages, or Tanakh and its villages, nor the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, or the inhabitants of Ablim and its villages, or the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages, so the Canaanites persisted in living in the land.

It came about when Israel became strong that to put the Canaanites to forced labor, but they did not drive them out completely. Ephraim did not drive out the Canaanites who were living in Gezer, so the Canaanites lived in Gezer among them.

Zebulun did not drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, or the inhabitants of Nahalal, so the Canaanites lived among them and became subject to forced labor. Asher did not drive out the inhabitants of Akil, or the inhabitants of Sidon, or Ahalop, or Akzib, or Helba, or Afik, or of Rehobo.

So the Asherites lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land, for they did not drive them out. Naphtali did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shemash, or the inhabitants of Beth Anath, but lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land, and the inhabitants of Beth Shemash, and Beth Anath became forced labor for them.

Then the Amorites forced the sons of Dan into the hill country, for they did not allow them to come down to the valley. Yet the Amorites persisted in living in Mount Harris, and Ajlon, and in Shalchim.

[13 : 45] But when the power of the house of Joseph grew strong, they became forced labor. The border of the Amorites ran from the ascent of Akrabim, from Selah, and upward. Now the angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bocum, and said, I brought you up out of Egypt, and led you into the land which I have sworn to your fathers, and I said, I will never break my covenant with you.

And as for you, you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land. You shall tear down their altars, but you have not obeyed me. What is this you have done? Therefore I also said, I will not drive them out before you, but they will become as thorns in your sides, and their gods will be a snare to you.

When the angel of the Lord spoke these words to all the sons of Israel, the people lifted up their voices and wept. So they named that place Bocum, and there they sacrificed to the Lord.

Again, I have to apologize for my nice, good southern tongue that butchers these names, but here we see in our text, Introduction to the Book of Judges. I want you to see this evening, and I know I'm throwing a lot of information at you very quickly, but I want you to see this evening the degrading nature of compromise.

The degrading nature of compromise, because the reality is in the Book of Judges, what we see is the compromise of God's people, and where that compromise takes them. And it introduces it to us very quickly here in the first chapter and into the fifth chapter, this degrading nature of compromise, that if we just give up a little bit, then maybe it won't go too far.

[15 : 09] The reality is that every little we give up always goes further. Sin will always take us further than we expect, is the great old saying, and it always costs more and requires more than we're ever willing to pay.

And compromise is much the same thing. It is falling short of complete and faithful obedience, and it is not going to the extent of what God has called us to do. And therefore, we see this degrading nature of compromise that runs throughout the Book of Judges.

The truths that we have displayed for us here are true to this particular passage, but they will be truths that are also portrayed throughout the book. So we hold on to these as an introduction to this book.

Now, the one thing you need to understand, and I know we introduced it this way, Joshua is dead here in the first verse, and then we're going to go to this very next. In verse 6 in chapter 2, it says that when Joshua had dismissed the people, all of a sudden Joshua's back alive, and then we go to the next verse, and Joshua dies again.

So we're asking ourselves, is he dead, is he alive, or is he dead? We understand that in the telling of history in the mind of the Jewish people, chronology is not that important. They do not concern themselves with being chronologically accurate.

[16:19] Okay? They're more concerned about the events that led them to that place that they are at, or the happenings that allowed them to get to this place. So there's always this overlapping of chronology.

Even throughout the Book of Judges, though we are introduced to this excessive number of judges that moves in a very clear southward to northward ascent, a lot of these judges are not given forward to us in a chronological order.

Now, I like to see things systematically laid out. I like to see things kind of in a timeline, if you will. And I want to see how they operate in straightforward thinking. And much that is recorded for us in the history of Israel is just not that way.

Because God is not as concerned in the recording of his word of when things particularly happened. But the reality is that when God looks at time, he does not see it defined by bookends, right?

All time at one seeing. He sees all things at one time. And he is concerned to show us how they got to this point, how they got to this degrading nature in which we meet them at the end of the book.

[17:21] So we are introduced to some of the things in the first chapter of what happened immediately following his death. But it is overlapping in things that had happened before he died, much like Caleb in declaring, whoever takes this city, I will give my daughter to them.

This is almost word for word verbatim what is recorded for us in the book of Joshua. You can open up the book of Joshua and read the same thing. And it is important that we meet Othniel in the first chapter because the very, very first judge that we will meet when the nation of Israel finally succumbs to bell worship is Othniel.

He is the very first one we will meet. And it is important that we meet him in the first chapter of the introduction because now we know how he got there, right? We know how he is in this southern part of the land of Israel, how he came to be because of his promise of his father-in-law Caleb. And he received this daughter. And now all of a sudden he is in this place of prominence because they have a land that possesses springs, both the lower and the upper springs. And Othniel seems to be a very prominent person. And he will be the first deliverer and judge that we are introduced to in the book of Judges.

So we don't need to let the order of things kind of mess with us. We just need to see the grand picture of what God is pointing, how they got to this place. We have this overlapping of things that took place immediately following Joseph's death, but it is connected to things that took place, I mean not Joseph, Joshua's death, but it's connected to things which took place before Joshua died.

[18:38] Because this didn't just happen because Joshua died. This was something that was already in motion. The nation had begun to compromise long before Joshua died. That's why we have the charge in Joshua chapter 24, that the people would choose that day.

And remember how he told them to put away the gods among them, right? To choose which God they would serve. The compromise does not happen immediately. It is a slow fade. And we see that it degrades us in nature.

It always, always, always takes us further down. What we find in the book of Judges are four great things that I want you to see, and I won't take a long time to flesh them out because we're introducing it this evening.

First, we see that this is a time of uncertainty. It is a time of uncertainty. It says, Now it came about after the death of Joshua. And this should all of a sudden heighten us to what we find the book of Joshua itself closing with in Joshua chapter 24, verse 31.

And the very verse that is repeated in the second chapter of verse 7 of this book, Judges 2, verse 7. It says, The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, who had seen all the good work of the Lord which he had done for Israel.

[19:53] And much like in the land of Egypt, there arose a Pharaoh who did not know Joseph. There is going to arise a generation who does not know Joshua, nor the things which God done among Joshua.

So we see that these events really are a time of uncertainty. And the reason they're a time of uncertainty is because this is after Joshua passes from the scene. You need to know, the book of Judges covers a time span of about 350 to 400 years.

The nation of Israel's history can very easily be broken up into 400-year increments. We have God calls Abram from the land of the early Chaldeans. He sojourns among the land, and his descendants are there.

About 400 years after Abraham's calling, they go down to Egypt. They're in Egypt for about 400 years. After 400 years, God delivers them, and he brings them into the Promised Land. Once they get into the Promised Land, after about 400 years, they go into Babylonian captivity, and there's just this progression, right?

And then about 400 years later, we have the coming of Christ. We see this neat order because God, by the way, is a God of order. I think order is a thing that God is fond of because he creates things.

[20 : 57] He's not a God of chaos. He's a God of order. But he's not putting these things in just neat little packages so that we can understand them. But he is showing us this is something that takes place.

Friend, listen to me. We are reading events in one book that lasted longer than we can even wrap our mind around. This is what happens when man degrades.

This is about, it is just shy of a 400-year time span from when they came into the land and they received their inheritance to the lifting up of probably Saul, right after Saul.

Because we have to ask ourselves, who authors this book? We don't know with the definitive answer, but historically Samuel has been seen as the author of the book of Judges. And the reason is, is because it says that the Jebusites were still living in Jerusalem.

Okay? It says that we read that. The Jebusites to this day, they're living in Jerusalem. Now we know that the Jebusites inhabited Jerusalem until David became king. Once David became king, he took the city of Jerusalem and it became his kind of center of operation, right?

[22 : 03] He made it the capital city. But there's also that phrase, in those days there was no king in Israel. So many see this, if you look at the text, as pointing to a time when there was no king.

Yet now there is a king, but it's before the capture of Jerusalem, which would put us during the reign of Saul. Which means more than likely this is Samuel who is authoring this book and showing us how they got to the point where they had to ask for a king.

Because that matters. How did we get to the point that after 400 years did the people cry out and say, we need a king? Well, this is how we got there. It is this slow downward spiral.

This slow downward grade of compromise. One compromise after another compromise after another compromise. In a time of uncertainty. Because what we find in the book of Judges, while there are a number of deliverers that are mentioned to us, they are very short-lived.

They do not live long. Right? We meet Othniel. Then we meet all these other deliverers. And then we finally meet Samson. And, you know, they don't live long.

[23 : 04] Maybe they have a 40-year authority. But they're also local deliverers. They're not over the entire nation. They're just in one locale, if you will. They're delivering one group of people.

What we find is for 400 years, there's no one single individual who's raised up that are leading God's people. You say, well, no wonder they got there. Well, that's the problem.

They were not supposed to have one single individual. This was supposed to be a time of what is called theocratic reign. That is, God was to be their king. It was a theocracy. A theocratic reign or a theocracy is when God, Theo, is king.

God brought them into a land and he told them, I will be your king. And I will reign over you. And you will follow me. But what happens is that man, in his own efforts, in his own desires, falls woefully short.

Because it's a time of uncertainty. Because we're always looking for somebody. Not the one who reigns over us. Now, they were okay as long as there was somebody.

[24 : 14] As long as that judge lived. Everybody did what was right. As soon as he dies, they go down again. As long as that judge lives, everything's right. And as soon as he dies, he goes down again. Right? They're good as long as somebody is there.

But when that person is removed, they fall apart. It's a time of uncertainty where God says, I want you to look to me and to me alone. And man says, well, I can't search to you alone.

I don't really know what God looks like. I don't know. You know, they have a hard time wrapping their mind around that. And it's much like when Christ is to be our Lord and Savior.

Friend, listen to me. He is Lord of our lives if there's somebody there or if there's not somebody there. I'll tell you a perfect example of this. You can see a very strong and a very vibrant church who's had a pastor that's been there for a long time.

And God has used that man in his ministry. And God has been wonderful through his work and his dealing with his people. And it is amazing to me that the moment that individual lives, it's like the king has been removed and people fall away.

[25 : 18] Because their whole commitment to the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, has revolved around the presence of that individual. And this is exactly what we see in the book of Judges.

As long as there was a Joshua, then there was God is king. But when Joshua is moved, all of a sudden we don't know. Because now it is a matter of personal devotion rather than person following.

And it begins this downward spiral. It's a time of uncertainty in which we don't know how we should do. We don't know how we should walk. We don't have someone telling us.

Now we can't claim that because we have Christ. We have the fullness of the revelation of God. We have this from Genesis to Revelation. We know exactly what God expects of us. We see it declared to us in the Gospels.

And yet to this day, we still have time with that. Give man 400 years and then we see where he goes. And it's exactly what happens. It's a time of uncertainty.

[26 : 23] Not only is it a time of uncertainty, because uncertainty will always lead us to compromise. When we're not sure what we should do. And we're not fostering this personal commitment to the Lord our God.

And we're not fostering this personal devotion to Him. But rather that one individual has been removed who is not spurring us on anymore. And the responsibility now lies in our lap. And when we fail to assume that responsibility, and that leads us to a position of uncertainty.

Uncertainty will always lead us to the second thing, which is a time of unwillingness. Because if we're not certain about something, we definitely will not be willing to do it.

And we see this unwillingness really played out for us in the first chapter there, when we have this mentioning of what is often referred to as the second round of conquest. We meet it very quickly when they ask who should go up first, and Judah should go get their land.

And Judah says to Simeon, why don't you come with me? Now this is natural. And if you go look at the back of your Bibles and you see that map, you will see that the tribe of Simeon's inheritance is within the inhabitants of Judah.

[27 : 25] So there's this Judah region. And within the land of Judah, Simeon is there. It's like the hole of a donut, right? So they're literally, we're protecting you on all sides, so you're going to go with us in the battle. By the way, this is the lost tribe of Israel, Simeonites, right?

They're not the LDS Church. They're also not a tribe in Africa. They are people who are absorbed into the people of Judah. There are people who are historically raised up and said, we're the lost tribe.

There is no lost tribe in Scripture. It's just absorbed into it, right? We see that. So we see them here kind of being absorbed into the people of Judah, and we see them throughout the history happening because they were small in number, which, by the way, was a direct result of their sin at Shechem, along with their brother Levi, who, you know, went out and sued the men right after they had been circumcised.

And that's exactly their cursing. Levi would be dispersed among them, and the Simeonites would be absorbed within them. The Bible has all of a sudden become clear and true to us. So anyhow, we see Judah going up, and they go to this thing.

But I want you to see what verse 19 says. And verse 19 tells us, Now the Lord was with Judah, and they took possession of the hill country. Pay attention to this word because the words are different in the original language.

[28 : 33] That's why they're different in our English Bibles, right? And again, I know I'm throwing a lot of information at you, but we normally do introductions. Look at what it says. But they could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley.

The word there is they could not drive them out. Now the reason they could not drive them out, we are told, because they had iron chariots. Probably they had iron wheels on their wooden chariots. Now this should not have been a reason for them to be enabled to do it, because God had told them that no one would be able to stand before them.

But for some reason or another, we meet some people that the inhabitants of Judah, or the people of Judah, could not drive out. And that's where we start. And then there are a listing of eight other

tribes.

And every one of them says this. They did not drive them out. They did not drive them out. It doesn't say they could not. The word is different in the original language. The inhabitants of Judah could not drive them out.

Everybody else, friend, listen to me, chose not to drive them out. They did not drive them out. They did not drive them out. They did not drive them out.

[29 : 42] Here we are met with the unwillingness of God's people. They were unwilling to do what God had commanded them to do. These people don't look that bad.

I think we have enough land. God had declared that they would be the instruments of judgment upon the inhabitants of the land in Canaan. And when they had the opportunity, they did not do it. That's compromise. And we cannot say it's because of a lack of strength. Because on two occurrences in this text, in chapter 1, we find that they did not drive them out, yet they subjected them to forced labor.

However, if you are strong enough to subject them to forced labor, then you are strong enough to drive them out. But they said, you know what?

I kind of like having them here to do my extra work. I kind of like having them here as my servants. And rather than driving them out, it would be better to allow them to hang around and to do what I don't want to do.

[30 : 40] Because, see, listen, compromise always starts when God's people fail to remove the enemy. And when we're unwilling to drive out the things which God has clearly told us to drive out, we are already on the slippery slope of compromise.

And we're going to eventually get to where these people get. They did not drive them out. It wasn't because they could not do it. It's because they weren't willing to do it.

There are enemy fortresses in our own mind. There are the presence of the enemy within us. That is not that we can't do it. We just won't do it. And some of them, we think that we can allow them to remain, and we will use them when we want to use them.

Friend, listen to me. That is an unwillingness to live in complete obedience, which will eventually take us down the degrading path of compromise. When we don't remove what God tells us to remove, and we allow it to stay, we're on a downward spiral.

It's exactly what we see. Because over and over and over again, we see that they did not, they did not, they did not, they did not. And we see this happening.

[31 : 56] And before you know it, that which we were to rule over soon becomes to rule over us. And we see it with the tribe of Dan.

Dan was called to be one of God's instruments of pushing out the inhabitants of the land. They were to rule with authority and power. And since they failed to rule, that which they were to rule over began to rule over them.

Then the Amorites forced the sons of Dan into the hill country. All of a sudden, rather than God's people forcing the Amorites out, the Amorites are forcing God's people somewhere else. Because when the people of God fail to address the issues at hand and allow it to remain, that which we think we have dominion over very, very quickly has dominion over us.

And it begins to force us into a place we were not willing to go. And unwillingness is a great step of compromise. Since they were uncertain, all of a sudden they began to be unwilling.

And when they began to be unwilling, they were already on the path of compromise that would lead them to the great tragedies which we see being laid out for us at the end of the book of Judges. In which they almost completely annihilate one of their own tribes.

[33 : 09] They're doing some of the most horrendous, as Adrian Rogers calls it, one of the most horrendous displays of sin among man. We don't quite understand it. And to be just quite honest, it is hard to read those last chapters of the book of Judges.

Because there are events happening which we wish were not recorded for us in Scripture. Well, how did we get there? They were unwilling to address the issues at the first. And when you don't address the issues at the first, you always have to deal with them later on.

And that's exactly what happened. Since they were not certain as to what they should do other than, well, I don't know, maybe I get to make my own decision. And man gets to make his own decision. And all of a sudden, man making his own decision is unwilling to live in complete obedience.

And unwilling to live in complete obedience leads us to the third thing. It's a time of unbelief. It's a time of unbelief. Because unwillingness soon becomes unbelief.

This is now the angel of the Lord. By the way, this is a Christophany or a theophany. This is a picture of God in the Old Testament coming and interacting with man. I believe it's a Christophany because only in Christ do we have God speaking to man.

[34 : 14] So here's a Christophany. The angel of the Lord came up to the people at Gilgal, came up from Gilgal to Bochum. And he said to them, so he speaks with some authority, right? And they worship him. So this is why we know it's a Christophany.

This is not just some normal angel. This is Christ in the Old Testament. This is his presence. He says, I brought you up out of the land of Egypt. I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land in which I have sworn to your fathers.

And I said, I will never break my covenant with you. And as for you, you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land. You shall tear down their altars. But look at what it says. But you have not obeyed me. What is this you have done?

It has now become a time of unbelief. They knew exactly what it is God had told them to do. They had it recorded for them. You remember the stones at Shechem? It was written on these stones, right? The blessings and the curses.

And there was this declaration here. Anybody that so wanted to could walk up and read it. The reason they plastered the stones and they wrote the law on the stones is so that it would be evident to all that they didn't have to have an individual.

[35 : 13] They didn't have to have one single person. Anybody that so desired could walk up there and read what God expected of them. And here God says, you know what you're supposed to do, but you haven't done it.

What is this thing you have done? The reality is now this is a time of unbelief. They don't believe what God has commanded them to do. And that belief is just the very next step in compromise.

And we see this over and over and over again in the book of Judges. The people sin because of unbelief. They worship false gods, and then all of a sudden they're redeemed, and then they go back into worshipping false gods.

God becomes a God of convenience to them. When times are bad and things are falling apart, then we will believe in him and cry out to him. God in his mercy and his kindness and his grace delivers them and redeems them and restores them time and time again.

And yet as soon as that bad time is over and as soon as that individual dies, they go right back into it. That is not biblical belief. That is not what we would call salvific belief or salvific faith.

[36 : 18] That is a belief of convenience, which means when I need him, I'll believe in him. When I don't need him, I won't even think about him. And that's exactly what takes place in the book of Judges. And that is absolute unbelief.

One thing that you will notice when we go through the book of Judges, every great tragic event which leads the people to cry out to God, it says, and the Lord brought upon them, or the Lord brought them captive, or the Lord.

Every great tragedy which leads the people to cry out to them, pay attention to this, is attributed to the direct result of God's work. He does it. He brings them to the place where they call out.

He brings them to the place where they realize they need someone other than themselves. He brings them to the place where they will cry out for a Savior, and then he sends that Savior. This is biblically consistent, by the way.

Salvation is not a result of us seeking him, but him making things so miserable in our lives that we cry out to him, right? It is his work. He is the instigator. He is the originator. He is the one who begins this because they are living in utter unbelief.

[37 : 28] They don't really believe what God has commanded them to do, and we see that because of the repetitive fall time after time after time again.

If they believed the promises of God, would we find them hacking up a concubine and sending it throughout the nation and declaring war upon their own people? If they believed in God, would they say, well, we've almost killed the whole tribe of Benjamin.

We need to find wives for the few men who live. I tell you what, let's just steal them from our own brothers. That's not belief, right? And that's exactly what they did.

They say, oh, fathers, don't raise Cain when your daughter gets taken away. Just let it go. Look away like it didn't happen because if you knew it happened, all of a sudden you'd become guilty. That's disbelief. And that's exactly what we get at the end of the book.

Why? Because in those days there was no king in Israel and every man did what was right in his own eyes. And the sad reality is what's right in man's eyes is unbelief.

[38 : 28] And we see that. And finally, in the degrading nature of compromise, because uncertainty leads to unwillingness, unwillingness leads to unbelief, and unbelief leads to this last thing.

It is a time of unrepentant sin. It is a time of unrepentant sin. So God declares to him. He says, what is this you have done? And he says there, in verse 3 of the second chapter, therefore are also said, I will not drive them out before you, but they will become as thorns in your sides, and their gods will be a snare to you.

And when the angel of the Lord spoke these words to all the sons of Israel, the people lifted up their voices and wept. So they named that place and woke him, and there they sacrificed to the Lord.

Oh, they cried.

Well, that's great. You may pardon my hardness of heart, but crocodile tears mean nothing without a changed life. They weren't crying over the presence of sin.

They were crying over the reality that God was going to make them pay for their sin. Their tears are not a direct result of the fact that they have broken covenant with God.

[39 : 36] Their tears are a result of what God has declared. I'm going to leave them here. I'm not going to work on your behalf anymore. That's what led them to remorse. The remorse was the consequences, not the presence. If we're broken over the consequences of our sin, we call that being mankind, right?

Man does not like unpleasant consequences. What God calls us to be broken over is the reality that led us to the consequences, to be broken over our sin. Because here's the thing.

Would we shed tears over it if we could sin and get away with it? Or do we just cry about it when we're caught in it? Because, see, repentance is a broken heart over something that you could sin and get away with, even though in the end, ultimately, there is no getting away with it.

It is not mourning and weeping over that which we have been caught in. And this is what we understand. Again, repentance is a change.

Unrepentance is crying and remaining the same. And that's exactly what we find the people doing. We know they're unrepentant. You know why? Because we're going to keep reading in the second chapter there and we'll find out that even though God said that he's going to leave them there as thorns and their gods will be a hindrance to them, and we read on, next thing you know, they're going to be worshiping the God of Baal.

[40 : 51] So they weren't crying and mourning over the reality that, oh man, we have wronged God. They were crying over the reality that God knew that they had done wrong and all of a sudden he wasn't going to make it easy on them anymore.

Unrepentance is not being broken over the reality that we're going to have to pay for what we did. Unrepentance is being broken over the reality that we are who we are. That's what repentance is. Repentance is being broken over the fact that we have broke covenant with God and we have messed up and our sins have got us to this place and we must come to him as a redeemer not to get us out of our tragedy, but to get us out of who we are in reality.

And we see that this is a time of unrepentant sin. The sin just progressively gets worse. This shouldn't surprise us because after so many thousands of years, friend, listen to me, we live in a time of unrepentant sin where right is no longer right, wrong is okay, and the worst is even better. We live in a time of so little remorse, so little brokenness, so little repentance. Don't need to change. We just need to keep pushing on, right? We live in a time where man only gets upset if the consequences come and he doesn't look to his sin as being a result of those consequences.

[42 : 14] Rather, he just looks to something else. Repentance says, woe is me, not how unpleasant are these circumstances. And we see this and we see it recorded for us in the book of Judges because it shows us the degrading nature of compromise, not just of what happened when the nation of Israel compromised, but what happens when we compromise.

When we fail to address the issues that God calls us to address, when we fail to remove the things he's called us to remove, when we fail to face head-on the things he's called us to face head-on, and when we're unwilling to walk fully with him, we should not be surprised when all of a sudden we

find ourselves in an unrepentant state and we find ourselves walking in the same place that we see in the end of the book of Judges.

Maybe not on display for all to see, but in our heart of hearts we know that we're there because this is who we are. Without a king, this is who we are.

I still believe the great title that God gave me so many years ago that the book of Judges is all about man's desperate need for a king.

The good news is we have a king. The question is are we living faithfully to him? We are not the captain of our own ship, the center of our own course.

[43 : 48] We are people who desperately need a king. I was preaching a series of revivals and that's when God gave me that so many years ago. I was preaching at Longview Baptist Church actually in Unionville, Brother Jonathan Osterhaus.

And that's when I first came upon S.M. Lockridge's That's My King. Love that message. I don't know how many times I've listened to that message. And I used that clip to introduce that particular message.

Probably one of the least expected introductions to the message is I just had Brother Jonathan Osterhaus play That's My King.

And then we got right into the book of Judges and looked at man's desperate need for a king. And we need to be reminded of that. We have a king. We need to know who he is and we need to live our lives under his lordship and rulership for his glory and not ours.

Let's pray and then we'll be dismissed. Lord, I thank you so much for this evening. Thank you for the opportunity and the ability to gather together.

[44 : 59] I thank you, Lord, for your word. Pray, Lord, that you would lead us as we go through the book of Judges that you would give us wisdom, discernment, and understanding. Lord, we pray that you would help us to be people of full commitment, not wavering compromise.

Lord, help us to be people who walk faithfully with you. Lord, may we learn from the accounts of the past and may it be the great motivation for the present. Lord, we pray that you would lead us throughout this week.

You would be glorified in the steps that we take. You would be magnified in all that we do. And we ask it all in Christ's most wonderful and awesome name. Amen.

Guys, I know we're closing a little bit different, but I do appreciate your time. so, so, so, Thank you.