

NOTES (5) “GOD AS THE DIVINE WARRIOR”- (JUDGES)

WHERE ARE WE NOW? After conquering and settling most of Canaan (there are still Rephaim in Gaza; Gath; Ashdod - and this is no surprise to God), Joshua dies. Now what?

And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals...(Judges 2:11).

*‘I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations Joshua left when he died, in order **to test** Israel by them, whether they will take care to walk in the way of the LORD as their fathers did, or not.’ (Judges 2:22)*

We’ve seen ‘a test’ presented before. Where? (hint: it’s crouching; waiting to devour you...)

There are some good judges...and there are also some “meh” to “poor” judges...

DEBORAH: God sold Israel into the hand of Canaan (Baal) who reigned in Hazor (Bashan)

- the king oppressed the Israelites cruelly for 20 years; 900 chariots of iron; image of *Og*
- Barak (head of Israelite army): “I won’t go up there unless you (Deborah) come with me.”
- Deborah: “I’ll go with you, but you won’t get the glory - a woman will...”
- JAEL: Puts a tent peg through Sisera’s temple (‘the seed of the woman will crush the head’)
- Song of Deborah (Judges 5); Song of Moses (Exodus 15)
- Epic salvation at the hand of God, the Divine Warrior.

EPIC SALVATION BY GOD FOR HIS PEOPLE

- eg. Pharaoh+ gods of Egypt; eg. Og + gods of Bashan; eg. Deborah + 900 iron chariots
- God as the divine warrior; fighting for Israel’s salvation and his Edenic Vision that will ultimately bless the nations. Israel as his imagers!
- The Exodus is the ancient Israelite understanding of what salvation is;
- Isaiah + Ezekiel etc prophecy that an exodus is coming that will dwarf the salvation from Egypt, Og, Hazor etc.
- Jesus: the True Judge, has come to provide salvation, once and for all, for Israel *and* the nations in bondage to other gods.

GIDEON: *Israel did evil and God gave them over to the Midianites (6:5—; Saudi Arabia)*

- flashback to Numbers 25; Balaam + Balak + Moabites; image of Israelite man + Midianite woman in bed with a spear through the both of them; non-negotiable *cherem* for any/all in Israel who had begun to “whore with the daughters of Moab” at Shittite.

- Midianites are described as locusts devouring the land as far as Gaza; their camels are like the sand on the seashore, not able to be counted. Overwhelming.
- The angel of the LORD appears to Gideon. "I am the God who brought your people out of Israel"; Gideon makes a meal for the angel (Abraham; Genesis 15) and 'fire consumes it up to heaven' (Abraham; Moses)
- 22,000 men down to 300 men (w/pots, torches, trumpets- Abraham; Joshua)
- Gideon defeats Mideonites (Ishmaelites); "I will not rule over you"; but he takes their gold earrings and builds an ephod (idol); and "*all Israel whored after it and it became a snare to Gideon and his family*"

JEPHTHAH (Judges 11) *Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and God gave them into the hands of the Ammorites - and they 'crushed and oppressed' the Israelites for 18 years (10:6-8)*

- Jephthah; from Gilead; son of a prostitute; surrounds himself with 'worthless fellows'; a mighty fighter; goes up against Ammonites.
- Ammorite's god is Molech, which means "King"; otherwise known as Milkon or Chemosh, and he has a taste for human blood
- *Whoever gives his seed to Molech, I will cut him off. (Lev. 20:1-4)*
- Plot: Ammorites want 'their land' back - but it was never theirs. Jephthah explains (11:13 -)
- "*Will you not possess what Chemosh - your god - gave you to possess?*" (Judges 11:23-24, see also Design pattern re: allotment of nations)
- Jephthah defeats Ammonites; makes (Ammorite/Molech) vow to Yahweh.
- Ending: An Israelite judge offers 'his seed' in the manner of Molech.
- What is the meaning: Jephthah the Israelite judge didn't know Yahweh.

THE ALLOTMENT OF THE NATIONS @ Babel; Israel as Yahweh's portion

- the 'peoples' allotted to 'b'nai elohim'; God takes Israel as his allotment; Deut. 32:8-9; 4:19-20; Psalm 82 is judging those God has set in place to righteous rule the nations
- God's Edenic Vision is for Israel to be the means by which the nations are 'brought in' and blessed; "the fullness of the Gentiles" (Paul, Romans 5)

"WORTHLESS MEN":

- Who are the "Worthless Men" in the Hebrew Bible? And what must be done if they are found in your midst?
- Deuteronomy 13:6-20; A 'worthless man' is someone who seduces an Israelite to worship other elohim; he is an abomination; devoted to destruction; *cherem*; Genesis 3

- Eli's sons; 1 Samuel 2:12 (Shiloh; Jeremiah 7:12-20; Psalm 78:60; destroyed by fire...)
- Levite and his concubine; Judges 19; Gibeah image of Sodom and Gamorrah
- End of Judges, the 'worthless men' are Benjamites! Nothing like *this* has ever been done in Israel!
- What must be done? Destruction (*cherem*) of the tribe of Benjamin. 400 remain (a remnant)

What does the book of Judges mean? What would it have meant to the ancient Israelite? What were the biblical writers intending to convey? What does it mean for the people of God today?

What does the book of Judges *not* mean? It does *not* mean, 'Be like Jael!' Drive that tent peg right into the king of Canaan's temple. Be like Deborah! Go up against 900 iron chariots like a boss. Be like Gideon! Drive out the hoards and hoards of Mideonites who devour the land before you. That's not what it means.

What it means at the very least: GOD IS RIGHTFUL KING. It means that God's people are going to be tested on the reg and we shouldn't be surprised by it. And the test might be a mighty hoard bearing down on you, but more likely it's going to be the seduction by the 'worthless fellows' in your midst - that crouching voice that entices you *away* from loyalty to the true King, and to the edenic work he intends for you in this world.

Why or How could we ever be enticed away from GOD'S edenic work? BECAUSE IT'S HARD! Love your neighbor. Forgive your enemy. Overcome evil with good. Bless those who curse you. Give of what you have been given generously. Wait patiently. Speak compassionately. Seek peace. Deal gently and mercifully. Let God defend you. Trust that God will make a way for you. God is King - there is no other.

What is that edenic work? Multiply; steward; rule righteously; always in the presence of God.

Remember *your* exodus, which is Jesus crucified and resurrected (the seed of the woman has crushed the head of the serpent) who has put the principalities and powers of worthless gods to shame. (Colossians 2)

Where do you feel the temptation of 'the test'? Envy. A temptation to justify the murdering your sister in your heart (Gen 4). To live forever (Gen 6) Rain for our crops, fertility for our future (Baal; Asherah)? Influence at the gates? "Give us this man so I might *know* him"

Who is a 'worthless fellow' in your life? What voice is seducing you away to worship the gods of this age? What are the gods of this age? What needs to be devoted to destruction?

“Fear not, daughter of Zion, behold your King is coming, seated on a donkey colt” - John 12 (Zechariah 9:9)

And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS (Revelations 19:16)