

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OF JUDGES

Message Six

The Intrinsic Significance of the Book of Judges and the Apostasy of Israel in the Worshipping of God

Hymns:

Scripture Reading: Judg. 1:1; 2:1; 17:1-5; 18:1, 30-31;

2 Thes. 2:2-3; 2 Pet. 1:3-21; 2:1, 15

- Judg. 1:1 And after the death of Joshua, the children of Israel inquired of Jehovah, saying, Who will go up for us first against the Canaanites, in order to fight against them?
- Judg. 2:1 Then the Angel of Jehovah went up from Gilgal to Bochim. And He said, I caused you to go up out from Egypt, and I brought you into the land that I swore to your fathers. And I said, I will never break My covenant with you,
- Judg. 17:1 Now there was a man from the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Micah.
- Judg. 17:2 And he said to his mother, The eleven hundred pieces of silver that were taken from you, about which you uttered a curse and spoke it in my hearing—look, the silver is with me; I took it. And his mother said, Blessed of Jehovah be my son!
- Judg. 17:3 And he returned the eleven hundred pieces of silver to his mother; and his mother said, I do consecrate the silver to Jehovah from my hand to my son to make a sculptured idol and a molten image. Now therefore I will return it to you.
- Judg. 17:4 And when he returned the silver to his mother, his mother took two hundred pieces of silver and gave them to the founder, who made them into a sculptured idol and a molten image. And it was in the house of Micah.
- Judg. 17:5 And the man Micah had a house of gods; and he made an ephod and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons to become his priest.
- Judg. 18:1 In those days there was no king in Israel; and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought for themselves an inheritance to dwell in, for unto that day the lot had not fallen for them on an inheritance among the tribes of Israel.
- Judg. 18:30 And the children of Dan erected for themselves the sculptured idol; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, he and his sons, became priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.
- Judg. 18:31 Thus they set up the sculptured idol that Micah had made the whole time that the house of God was in Shiloh.
- 2 Thes. 2:2 That you be not quickly shaken in mind nor alarmed, neither by a spirit nor by word nor by a letter as if by us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.
- 2 Thes. 2:3 Let no one deceive you in any way, because it will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition,

- 2 Pet. 1:3 Seeing that His divine power has granted to us all things which relate to life and godliness, through the full knowledge of Him who has called us by His own glory and virtue,
- 2 Pet. 1:4 Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.
- 2 Pet. 1:5 And for this very reason also, adding all diligence, supply bountifully in your faith virtue; and in virtue, knowledge;
- 2 Pet. 1:6 And in knowledge, self-control; and in self-control, endurance; and in endurance, godliness;
- 2 Pet. 1:7 And in godliness, brotherly love; and in brotherly love, love.
- 2 Pet. 1:8 For these things, existing in you and abounding, constitute you neither idle nor unfruitful unto the full knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2 Pet. 1:9 For he in whom these things are not present is blind, being shortsighted, having forgotten the cleansing of his past sins.
- 2 Pet. 1:10 Therefore, brothers, be the more diligent to make your calling and selection firm, for doing these things you shall by no means ever stumble.
- 2 Pet. 1:11 For in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly and bountifully supplied to you.
- 2 Pet. 1:12 Therefore I will be ready always to remind you concerning these things, even though you know them and have been established in the present truth.
- 2 Pet. 1:13 And I consider it right, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by a reminder,
- 2 Pet. 1:14 Knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle is imminent, even as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.
- 2 Pet. 1:15 Moreover I will also be diligent that you may be able, after my exodus, to bring these things to mind at all times.
- 2 Pet. 1:16 For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we became eyewitnesses of that One's majesty.
- 2 Pet. 1:17 For He received from God the Father honor and glory, a voice such as this being borne to Him by the magnificent glory: This is My Son, My Beloved, in whom I delight.
- 2 Pet. 1:18 And this voice we heard being borne out of heaven while we were with Him in the holy mountain.
- 2 Pet. 1:19 And we have the prophetic word made more firm, to which you do well to give heed as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;
- 2 Pet. 1:20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of one's own interpretation;
- 2 Pet. 1:21 For no prophecy was ever borne by the will of man, but men spoke from God while being borne by the Holy Spirit.
- 2 Pet. 2:1 But there arose also false prophets among the people, as also among you there will be false teachers, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.
- 2 Pet. 2:15 Forsaking the straight way, they have gone astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness

I. We need to know the intrinsic significance of the book of Judges:

- A. Israel's inquiring of Jehovah in Judges 1:1-20 describes the beautiful scene of Israel's trusting in God; this marvelous picture of oneness with the Lord, prefiguring the organic union of God with His people, is a continuation of the oneness in the book of Joshua when the people of Israel first entered into the good land as described in Joshua 6—Num. 27:21; 1 Sam. 22:10; 23:9-10; 2 Sam. 2:1.

Judg. 1:1 And after the death of Joshua, the children of Israel inquired of Jehovah, saying, Who will go up for us first against the Canaanites, in order to fight against them?

Judg. 1:2 And Jehovah said, Judah shall go up. I have now given the land into his hand.

- Judg. 1:3 And Judah said to Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my lot, and we will fight against the Canaanites; and I will go also with you into your lot. And Simeon went with him.
- Judg. 1:4 So Judah went up, and Jehovah gave the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand; and they struck ten thousand of their men in Bezek.
- Judg. 1:5 And they found Adoni-bezek in Bezek and fought with him; and they struck the Canaanites and the Perizzites.
- Judg. 1:6 And Adoni-bezek fled; and they pursued after him and caught him, and they cut off his thumbs and his big toes.
- Judg. 1:7 And Adoni-bezek said, Seventy kings with their thumbs and their big toes cut off gleaned scraps under my table. As I have done, so God has repaid me. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died there.
- Judg. 1:8 And the children of Judah fought against Jerusalem, and they took it and struck it with the edge of the sword; and they set the city on fire.
- Judg. 1:9 And afterward the children of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites who inhabited the hill country and the Negev and the lowland.
- Judg. 1:10 Then Judah went against the Canaanites who dwelt in Hebron. (Now the name of Hebron was formerly Kiriath-arba.) And they struck Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmai.
- Judg. 1:11 And he went up from there to the inhabitants of Debir. (Now the name of Debir was formerly Kiriath-sepher.)
- Judg. 1:12 And Caleb said, Whoever strikes Kiriath-sepher and takes it, I will give to him Achsah my daughter as wife.
- Judg. 1:13 Then Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it; and he gave him Achsah his daughter as wife.
- Judg. 1:14 And when she came to him, she urged him to ask her father for the field. And she alighted from her donkey, and Caleb said to her, What do you want?
- Judg. 1:15 And she said to him, Give me a blessing, for you have given me land in the Negev; give me also springs of water. So Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.
- Judg. 1:16 And 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 is to the south of Arad. And they went and dwelt with the people.
- Judg. 1:17 Then Judah went with Simeon his brother and struck the Canaanites who inhabited Zephath; and they utterly destroyed it. And they called the name of the city Hormah.
- Judg. 1:18 And Judah took Gaza and its territory and Ashkelon and its territory and Ekron and its territory.
- Judg. 1:19 And Jehovah was with Judah. And they took possession of the hill country, but they could not dispossess the inhabitants of the valley, for they had chariots of iron.
- Judg. 1:20 And they gave Hebron to Caleb, as Moses had spoken; and he dispossessed the three sons of Anak from there.
- Josh. 6:1 Now Jericho was shut up so tight because of the children of Israel that no one went out and no one went in.
- Josh. 6:2 And Jehovah said to Joshua, See, I have given Jericho and its king and the mighty men of valor into your hand.
- Josh. 6:3 And you shall circle the city, all the men of war, going around the city one time. Thus shall you do for six days.
- Josh. 6:4 And seven priests shall carry seven trumpets of rams' horns before the Ark. Then on the seventh day you shall circle the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets.

- Josh. 6:5 And when they give off the blast of the ram's horn and you hear the trumpet sound, all the people shall shout with a great shout. And the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people shall go up, each straight ahead.
- Josh. 6:6 So Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, Take up the Ark of the Covenant, and let seven priests carry seven trumpets of rams' horns before the Ark of Jehovah.
- Josh. 6:7 And he said to the people, Pass on and circle the city, and let the armed men pass on before the Ark of Jehovah.
- Josh. 6:8 Then when Joshua had spoken to the people, the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets of rams' horns before Jehovah passed on and blew the trumpets; and the Ark of the Covenant of Jehovah went after them.
- Josh. 6:9 And the armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets; and the rearguard went after the Ark, the trumpets continually blowing.
- Josh. 6:10 And Joshua commanded the people, saying, You shall not shout, nor let your voice be heard, nor let a word go forth from your mouth, until the day I say to you, Shout! Then you shall shout.
- Josh. 6:11 So he had the Ark of Jehovah circle the city, going around it one time. And they came into the camp and lodged in the camp.
- Josh. 6:12 And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the Ark of Jehovah.
- Josh. 6:13 And the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets of rams' horns went before the Ark of Jehovah, continually blowing the trumpets; and the armed men went before them, and the rearguard went after the Ark of Jehovah, the trumpets continually blowing.
- Josh. 6:14 And they circled the city on the second day one time and returned to the camp. This they did for six days.
- Josh. 6:15 Then on the seventh day they rose early, at the break of dawn, and circled the city in the same manner seven times. Only on that day did they circle the city seven times.
- Josh. 6:16 And at the seventh time the priests blew the trumpets, and Joshua said to the people, Shout! For Jehovah has given you the city.
- Josh. 6:17 And the city shall be devoted to Jehovah for destruction, it and all that is in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in her house, because she hid the messengers we sent.
- Josh. 6:18 But as for you, keep yourselves from what has been devoted to destruction, lest you devote yourselves to destruction by taking of what has been devoted and you make the camp of Israel something devoted to destruction and bring trouble to it.
- Josh. 6:19 But all the silver and the gold and the vessels of bronze and iron, these are holy to Jehovah; they shall come into the treasury of Jehovah.
- Josh. 6:20 So the people shouted and the trumpets were blown; and when the people heard the trumpet sound, the people shouted with a great shout, and the wall fell down flat. And the people went up into the city, each straight ahead, and they captured the city.
- Josh. 6:21 And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city with the edge of the sword: both men and women, young and old, and oxen and sheep and donkeys.
- Josh. 6:22 And Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, Go to the house of the harlot, and bring out from there the woman and all that belongs to her, as you swore to her.
- Josh. 6:23 And the young men who had been spies went and brought out Rahab and her father and her mother and her brothers and all that belonged to her; all her family they brought out and set outside the camp of Israel.
- Josh. 6:24 And they burned the city with fire and all that was in it; but the silver and the gold and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put in the treasury of the house of Jehovah.

- Josh. 6:25 And Joshua preserved Rahab the harlot and her father's house and all that belonged to her, and she has dwelt within Israel to this day; for she hid the messengers whom Joshua had sent to spy out Jericho.
- Josh. 6:26 Then at that time Joshua charged the people with an oath, saying, Cursed be the man before Jehovah who rises up to rebuild this city Jericho! At the cost of his firstborn son shall he lay its foundation, and at the cost of his youngest son shall he set up its gates.
- Josh. 6:27 So Jehovah was with Joshua, and reports of him were in all the land.
- Num. 27:21 And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, and he shall inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before Jehovah. At his word shall they go out and at his word they shall come in, both he and all the children of Israel with him, even the whole assembly.
- 1 Sam. 22:10 And he inquired of Jehovah for him and gave him provisions, and he gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.
- 1 Sam. 23:9 But when David learned that Saul was planning evil against him, he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring the ephod here.
- 1 Sam. 23:10 And David said, O Jehovah the God of Israel, Your servant has heard for certain that Saul is seeking to come to Keilah in order to destroy the city on my account.
- 2 Sam. 2:1 And after this David inquired of Jehovah, saying, Shall I go up into one of the cities of Judah? And Jehovah said to him, Go up. And David said, Where shall I go up? And He said, To Hebron.

B. According to the full scope of the Old Testament, at Mount Sinai God married Israel—Exo. 20:6, footnote 2:

Exo. 20:6 Yet showing lovingkindness to thousands of generations of those who love² Me and keep My commandments.

Exo. 20:6 footnote 2: The mentioning of love here indicates that God's intention in giving His law to His chosen people was that they become His lovers (Deut. 6:5; Matt. 22:35-38; Mark 12:28-30). In bringing His people out of Egypt and giving His law to them, God was courting them, wooing them, and seeking to win their affection. Jeremiah 2:2; 31:32; and Ezek. 16:8 indicate that the covenant enacted at the mountain of God through the giving of the law (24:7-8; 34:27-28) was an engagement covenant, in which God betrothed the children of Israel to Himself (cf. 2 Cor. 11:2). The Ten Commandments, especially the first five, gave the terms of the engagement between God and His people. The highest function of the law is to bring God's chosen people into oneness with Him, as a wife is brought into oneness with her husband (cf. Gen. 2:24; Rev. 22:17). In order for God and His people to be one, there must be a mutual love between them (John 14:21, 23). The love between God and His people unfolded in the Bible is primarily like the affectionate love between a man and a woman (Jer. 2:2; 31:3). As God's people love God and spend time to fellowship with Him in His word, God infuses them with His divine element, making them one with Him as His spouse, the same as He is in life, nature, and expression (Gen. 2:18-25 and notes). See note 8¹, pars. 2 and 3, in ch. 19.

The entire Bible is a divine romance, a record of how God courts His chosen people and eventually marries them (Gen. 2:21-24; S.S. 1:2-4; Isa. 54:5; 62:5; Jer. 2:2; 3:1, 14; 31:32; Ezek. 16:8; 23:5; Hosea 2:7, 19; Matt. 9:15; John 3:29; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-32; Rev. 19:7; 21:2, 9-10; 22:17). When we as God's people enter into a love relationship with God, we receive His life, just as Eve received the life of Adam (Gen. 2:21-22). It is this life that enables us to become one with God and makes Him one with us. We keep the law not by exercising our mind and will (cf. Rom. 7:18-25) but by loving the Lord as our Husband and thereby partaking of His life and nature to become one with Him as His enlargement and expression.

1. In His concept and desire, God wanted to be a Husband to Israel, and He wanted Israel to be a wife to Him, living in the most intimate contact with Him in this marvelous marriage union.
2. In writing the books of history, Samuel put Judges after Joshua to show us the kind of life Israel lived toward her Husband.
3. As unveiled in Judges, Israel did not have a heart to be the wife of Jehovah; rather, she forsook God as her Husband and went about as a harlot after other gods and worshipped them—2:11-13, 17; 3:7; 8:33; 10:6; cf. Jer. 11:13; Ezek. 16:25-26; Hosea 1:2; 2:2.

- Judg. 2:11 And the children of Israel did what was evil in the sight of Jehovah and served the Baals.
- Judg. 2:12 And they forsook Jehovah, the God of their fathers, who brought them out from the land of Egypt; and they followed after other gods from among the gods of the peoples who surrounded them; and they worshipped them and provoked Jehovah to anger.
- Judg. 2:13 And they forsook Jehovah and served Baal and the Ashtaroth.
- Judg. 2:17 Yet they did not listen to their judges either, but they went about as harlots after other gods and worshipped them. They turned aside quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, the way of obeying the commandments of Jehovah; this they did not do.
- Judg. 3:7 And the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and they forgot Jehovah their God and served the Baals and the Asherahs.
- Judg. 8:33 And as soon as Gideon died, the children of Israel turned again and went as harlots after the Baals. And they made Baal-berith their god.
- Judg. 10:6 Then the children of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah. And they served the Baals and the Ashtaroth and the gods of Aram and the gods of Sidon and the gods of Moab and the gods of the children of Ammon and the gods of the Philistines, and they forsook Jehovah and did not serve Him.
- Jer. 11:13 For according to the number of your cities are your gods, O Judah, and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem you have set up altars to that shameful thing, altars to burn incense to Baal.
- Ezek. 16:25 At the head of every street you built your elevation and caused your beauty to be abhorred; and you spread your legs to everyone who passed by and multiplied your fornications.
- Ezek. 16:26 You also committed fornication with the sons of Egypt, your neighbors, great of flesh, and multiplied your fornications to provoke Me to anger.
- Hosea 1:2 At the beginning of Jehovah's speaking to Hosea, Jehovah said to Hosea, Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotries / And children of harlotries, / For the land is entirely given over to harlotry, / And thus departs from Jehovah.
- Hosea 2:2 Contend with your mother; contend. / For she is not My wife, / And I am not her Husband. / And let her turn away her harlotries from her face, / And her adulteries from between her breasts,

C. After the account of Judah and Caleb in Judges 1:1-20, Israel's history as recorded in this book is full of the rottenness and corruption of a harlot:

- Judg. 1:1 And after the death of Joshua, the children of Israel inquired of Jehovah, saying, Who will go up for us first against the Canaanites, in order to fight against them?
- Judg. 1:2 And Jehovah said, Judah shall go up. I have now given the land into his hand.

Judg. 1:3 And Judah said to Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my lot, and we will fight against the Canaanites; and I will go also with you into your lot. And Simeon went with him.

Judg. 1:4 So Judah went up, and Jehovah gave the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand; and they struck ten thousand of their men in Bezek.

Judg. 1:5 And they found Adoni-bezek in Bezek and fought with him; and they struck the Canaanites and the Perizzites.

Judg. 1:6 And Adoni-bezek fled; and they pursued after him and caught him, and they cut off his thumbs and his big toes.

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Judg. 1:8 And the children of Judah fought against Jerusalem, and they took it and struck it with the edge of the sword; and they set the city on fire.

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Judg. 1:15 And she said to him, Give me a blessing, for you have given me land in the Negev; give me also springs of water. So Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

Judg. 1:16 And 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 is to the south of Arad. And they went and dwelt with the people.

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Judg. 1:19 And Jehovah was with Judah. And they took possession of the hill country, but they could not dispossess the inhabitants of the valley, for they had chariots of iron.

Judg. 1:20 And they gave Hebron to Caleb, as Moses had spoken; and he dispossessed the three sons of Anak from there.

1. Whereas Joshua is the book of Israel's history full of marvelous victories over the inhabitants of Canaan in the presence of Jehovah, Judges is the book of Israel's history full of miserable defeats under their enemies in the forsaking of Jehovah.

2. This is the intrinsic significance of the book of Judges.

D. The content of Judges consists of the children of Israel trusting in God, forsaking God, being defeated by their enemies, repenting to God in their misery, being delivered through the judges, and again becoming corrupted; this

became a cycle repeated seven times in Judges—1:1-2; 2:11—3:11.

- Judg. 1:1 And after the death of Joshua, the children of Israel inquired of Jehovah, saying, Who will go up for us first against the Canaanites, in order to fight against them?
- Judg. 1:2 And Jehovah said, Judah shall go up. I have now given the land into his hand.
- Judg. 2:11 And the children of Israel did what was evil in the sight of Jehovah and served the Baals.
- Judg. 2:12 And they forsook Jehovah, the God of their fathers, who brought them out from the land of Egypt; and they followed after other gods from among the gods of the peoples who surrounded them; and they worshipped them and provoked Jehovah to anger.
- Judg. 2:13 And they forsook Jehovah and served Baal and the Ashtaroth.
- Judg. 2:14 Then the anger of Jehovah burned against Israel, and He delivered them into the hands of plunderers; and they plundered them. And He sold them into the hand of their enemies around them, and they were no longer able to stand before their enemies.
- Judg. 2:15 Whenever they went out, the hand of Jehovah was against them for evil, as Jehovah had spoken and as Jehovah had sworn to them; and they were greatly distressed.
- Judg. 2:16 And Jehovah raised up judges, and they saved them out of the hands of those who plundered them.
- Judg. 2:17 Yet they did not listen to their judges either, but they went about as harlots after other gods and worshipped them. They turned aside quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, the way of obeying the commandments of Jehovah; this they did not do.
- Judg. 2:18 And when Jehovah raised up judges for them, Jehovah was with the judge, and He saved them from the hand of their enemies throughout all the days of the judge; for Jehovah would be moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and crushed them.
- Judg. 2:19 But when the judge died, they turned and acted more corruptly than their fathers by following after other gods in order to serve them and worship them; they did not cease from any of their practices or from their stubborn way.
- Judg. 2:20 And the anger of Jehovah burned against Israel; and He said, Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers and they do not listen to My voice,
- Judg. 2:21 I for My part will no longer dispossess from before them any of the nations that Joshua left when he died,
- Judg. 2:22 In order to test Israel through them as to whether or not they will keep the way of Jehovah by walking in it, as their fathers kept it.
- Judg. 2:23 So Jehovah left these nations, not dispossessing them quickly, and did not deliver them into the hand of Joshua.
- Judg. 3:1 And these are the nations that Jehovah left in order that through them He might test Israel (that is, all who had not known all the battles of Canaan)
- Judg. 3:2 But only so that the generations of the children of Israel might learn to know war, at least those who had not previously known the battles:
- Judg. 3:3 The five lords of the Philistines and all the Canaanites and the Sidonians and the Hivites who dwelt on Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal-hermon to the entrance of Hamath.
- Judg. 3:4 And they were for the testing of Israel, to know whether they would listen to the commandments of Jehovah, which He commanded their fathers through Moses.
- Judg. 3:5 And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites.
- Judg. 3:6 And they took their daughters as their wives and gave their own daughters to their sons, and they served their gods.

- Judg. 3:7 And the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and they forgot Jehovah their God and served the Baals and the Asherahs.
- Judg. 3:8 Therefore the anger of Jehovah burned against Israel, and He sold them into the hand of Cushan-rishathaim the king of Mesopotamia. And the children of Israel served Cushan-rishathaim eight years.
- Judg. 3:9 Then the children of Israel cried out to Jehovah, and Jehovah raised up a savior for the children of Israel, who saved them, that is, Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.
- Judg. 3:10 And the Spirit of Jehovah came upon him, and he judged Israel. And he went out to battle, and Jehovah delivered Cushan-rishathaim the king of Aram into his hand; and his hand prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim.
- Judg. 3:11 And the land had rest forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

II. Judges 2:1 speaks of the Angel of Jehovah—5:23; Num. 22:22:

- Judg. 2:1 Then the Angel of Jehovah went up from Gilgal to Bochim. And He said, I caused you to go up out from Egypt, and I brought you into the land that I swore to your fathers. And I said, I will never break My covenant with you,
- Judg. 5:23 Curse Meroz, says the Angel of Jehovah; / Bitterly curse its inhabitants. / For they did not come to the aid of Jehovah, / To the aid of Jehovah against the mighty.
- Num. 22:22 And God's anger was kindled because he was going, and the Angel of Jehovah took His stand in the way as an adversary against him. Now he was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him.

A. The Angel of Jehovah is God Himself in His Divine Trinity serving His elect as a Servant—cf. Heb. 1:14.

Heb. 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth for service for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

B. The embodiment of the Triune God is Christ, and Christ is the Angel of Jehovah, who took care of Israel as Jehovah in action in the Old Testament—Exo. 3:2, footnote 1.

Exo. 3:2 And the Angel of Jehovah¹ appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a thornbush. And when he looked, there was the thornbush, burning with fire; but the thornbush was not consumed.

Exo. 3:2 footnote 1: The title the Angel of Jehovah refers mainly to Christ, the Son of God, as the One sent by God (cf. John 8:42) to save His people from their situation of suffering (cf. Judg. 6:12-22; 13:3-22). According to vv. 2 and 6, the Angel of Jehovah, the sent One, was Jehovah Himself, the sending One (cf. Zech. 2:6-11), and Jehovah is the Triune God (vv. 6, 15). For the purpose of calling and sending Moses, God, the sending One, appeared to him as the sent One (cf. John 20:21). See Acts 7:30-31 and notes.

C. For Christ to be the Angel of Jehovah means that God has appointed and commissioned Himself in His Divine Trinity to act in caring for His people.

D. Because Israel did not act as a proper wife, the very Jehovah who was the Husband, the Head, and the King of Israel became a Servant to His wife:

1. Jehovah came to her not as a Husband, Head, or King but as the Angel of Jehovah, who was sent by Jehovah—Zech. 2:9-11.

- Zech. 2:9 For I am now waving My hand over them, and they will be plunder for those who served them; and you will know that Jehovah of hosts has sent Me.
- Zech. 2:10 Give a ringing shout and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for now I am coming, and I will dwell in your midst, declares Jehovah.
- Zech. 2:11 And many nations will join themselves to Jehovah in that day and will become My people; and I will dwell in your midst, and you will know that Jehovah of hosts has sent Me to you.

2. Since Israel did not regard Jehovah as the Head, He became a Servant to serve her; His word to Israel in Judges 2:1-3 was not a rebuke or a command but the admonition of a servant.

- Judg. 2:1 Then the Angel of Jehovah went up from Gilgal to Bochim. And He said, I caused you to go up out from Egypt, and I brought you into the land that I swore to your fathers. And I said, I will never break My covenant with you,
- Judg. 2:2 And you shall not make a covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars. But you did not listen to My voice. What is this that you have done?
- Judg. 2:3 Therefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they will be like thorns in your sides, and their gods will be a snare to you.

III. Judges 17 and 18 reveal the apostasy of Israel in the worshipping of God:

- Judg. 17:1 Now there was a man from the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Micah.
- Judg. 17:2 And he said to his mother, The eleven hundred pieces of silver that were taken from you, about which you uttered a curse and spoke it in my hearing—look, the silver is with me; I took it. And his mother said, Blessed of Jehovah be my son!
- Judg. 17:3 And he returned the eleven hundred pieces of silver to his mother; and his mother said, I do consecrate the silver to Jehovah from my hand to my son to make a sculptured idol and a molten image. Now therefore I will return it to you.
- Judg. 17:4 And when he returned the silver to his mother, his mother took two hundred pieces of silver and gave them to the founder, who made them into a sculptured idol and a molten image. And it was in the house of Micah.
- Judg. 17:5 And the man Micah had a house of gods; and he made an ephod and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons to become his priest.
- Judg. 17:6 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did that which was right in his own eyes.
- Judg. 17:7 And there was a young man from Bethlehem in Judah, of the family of Judah, who was a Levite; and he was a sojourner there.
- Judg. 17:8 And the man left the city Bethlehem in Judah to dwell wherever he could find a place. And he came to the hill country of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, as he made his way.
- Judg. 17:9 And Micah said to him, Where do you come from? And he said to him, I am a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, and I am traveling in order to dwell wherever I can find a place.
- Judg. 17:10 And Micah said to him, Stay with me, and be a father and a priest to me; and I will give you ten pieces of silver a year and an array of clothing and your food. So the Levite went with him.
- Judg. 17:11 And the Levite was content to stay with the man; and the young man was to him like one of his sons.
- Judg. 17:12 And Micah consecrated the Levite; and the young man became his priest and was in the house of Micah.
- Judg. 17:13 Then Micah said, Now I know that Jehovah will prosper me, because the Levite has become my priest.
- Judg. 18:1 In those days there was no king in Israel; and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought for

- themselves an inheritance to dwell in, for unto that day the lot had not fallen for them on an inheritance among the tribes of Israel.
- Judg. 18:2 So the children of Dan sent from their family five men from among all of them, men of valor, from Zorah and Eshtaol, to spy out the land and search it out. And they said to them, Go and search out the land. And they came to the hill country of Ephraim, to the house of Micah; and they lodged there.
- Judg. 18:3 When they were near the house of Micah, they recognized the voice of the young Levite man, so they turned aside there and said to him, Who brought you here? And what are you doing in this place? And what do you have here?
- Judg. 18:4 And he said to them, Such and such has Micah done for me; and he has hired me to be his priest.
- Judg. 18:5 And they said to him, Inquire now of God that we may know if our way on which we are going will be prosperous.
- Judg. 18:6 And the priest said to them, Go in peace; your way on which you are going is before Jehovah.
- Judg. 18:7 Then the five men left and came to Laish. And they saw the people who were in it, dwelling securely after the manner of the Sidonians, quiet and secure; for there was no one in the land who possessed authority and might humble them in anything; and they were far from the Sidonians and had nothing to do with anyone.
- Judg. 18:8 And they came to their brothers at Zorah and Eshtaol; and their brothers said to them, What can you say?
- Judg. 18:9 And they said, Arise; and let us go up against them. For we have seen the land, and it is very good. So do you sit still? Do not be slow about going and entering the land to possess it.
- Judg. 18:10 When you go, you will come to a secure people; and the land is very spacious. God has indeed delivered it into your hand, a place where nothing on earth is lacking there.
- Judg. 18:11 So six hundred men girded with weapons of war set out from there, from the family of Dan, from Zorah and Eshtaol.
- Judg. 18:12 And they went up and encamped in Kiriath-jearim in Judah. Because of this, that place is called Mahaneh-dan to this day; it is there behind Kiriath-jearim.
- Judg. 18:13 And they passed from there into the hill country of Ephraim and came to the house of Micah.
- Judg. 18:14 Then the five men who had gone to spy the land of Laish answered and said to their brothers, Do you know that in these houses there are an ephod and teraphim and a sculptured idol and a molten image? Now therefore consider what you should do.
- Judg. 18:15 And they turned aside there and came to the house of the young Levite man, the house of Micah; and they asked him concerning his welfare.
- Judg. 18:16 And the six hundred men of the children of Dan, girded with their weapons of war, stood at the entrance of the gate.
- Judg. 18:17 And the five men who had gone to spy the land went up and entered there to seize the sculptured idol and the ephod and the teraphim and the molten image. And the priest stood at the entrance of the gate with the six hundred men girded with weapons of war.
- Judg. 18:18 And when these men entered the house of Micah and seized the sculptured idol and the ephod and the teraphim and the molten image, the priest said to them, What are you doing?
- Judg. 18:19 And they said to him, Quiet down; put your hand over your mouth, and go with us and be a father and a priest to us. Is it better for you to be a priest for the house of one man or for you to be a priest for a tribe and family in Israel?
- Judg. 18:20 And the priest's heart was glad; and he took the ephod and teraphim and the sculptured idol, and went into the midst of the people.
- Judg. 18:21 And they turned and departed; and they put the little ones and the livestock and the goods before them.
- Judg. 18:22 When they were some distance from the house of Micah, the men who were in the houses that were near the house of Micah were gathered together; and they overtook the children of Dan.
- Judg. 18:23 And they called out to the children of Dan. And they turned and faced them and said to Micah, What is bothering you, that you have been gathered together?

- Judg. 18:24 And he said, You have taken away my gods that I have made, along with the priest, and have gone off. And what do I still have? How then can you say to me, What is bothering you?
- Judg. 18:25 And the children of Dan said, Do not let your voice be heard among us, lest men of fierce temper fall on you and you lose your life and the lives of your household.
- Judg. 18:26 And 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.
- Judg. 18:27 So they took that which Micah had made and the priest that had been his, and came to Laish, to a people quiet and secure; and they struck them with the edge of the sword and burned the city with fire.
- Judg. 18:28 And there was no one to deliver it; for it was far from Sidon, and they had nothing to do with anyone. Now it was in the valley that is by Beth-rehob. And they rebuilt the city and dwelt in it.
- Judg. 18:29 And they called the name of the city Dan, according to the name of Dan their father who had been born to Israel. However the name of the city was Laish formerly.
- Judg. 18:30 And the children of Dan erected for themselves the sculptured idol; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, he and his sons, became priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.
- Judg. 18:31 Thus they set up the sculptured idol that Micah had made the whole time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

A. Apostasy means to leave the way of God and to take another way to follow things other than God, and it is to do things for the self under the name of Jesus Christ and under the cloak of worshipping God—Acts 9:2; 18:26; 2 Pet. 2:2, 15, 21; Jude 11; Judg. 18:30-31.

- Acts 9:2 And asked for letters from him to Damascus for the synagogues, so that if he found any who were of the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.
- Acts 18:26 And this man began to speak boldly in the synagogue. And when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him to themselves and expounded the way of God to him more accurately.
- 2 Pet. 2:2 And many will follow their licentiousness, because of whom the way of the truth will be reviled.
- 2 Pet. 2:15 Forsaking the straight way, they have gone astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness
- 2 Pet. 2:21 For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them.
- Jude 11 Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain and have rushed out in the error of Balaam for reward and have perished in the rebellion of Korah.
- Judg. 18:30 And the children of Dan erected for themselves the sculptured idol; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, he and his sons, became priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.
- Judg. 18:31 Thus they set up the sculptured idol that Micah had made the whole time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

B. “The man Micah had a house of gods; and he made an ephod and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons to become his priest”—17:5:

- Judg. 17:5 And the man Micah had a house of gods; and he made an ephod and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons to become his priest.

1. The house of Micah as a house of gods, with its idols (as replacements of Christ), its ephod (representing the authority of God), and its hired priest (representing the

clergy-laity system, vv. 7-13), portrays the apostate situation related to the worship of God among Christians today.

Judg. 17:7 And there was a young man from Bethlehem in Judah, of the family of Judah, who was a Levite; and he was a sojourner there.

Judg. 17:8 And the man left the city Bethlehem in Judah to dwell wherever he could find a place. And he came to the hill country of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, as he made his way.

Judg. 17:9 And Micah said to him, Where do you come from? And he said to him, I am a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, and I am traveling in order to dwell wherever I can find a place.

Judg. 17:10 And Micah said to him, Stay with me, and be a father and a priest to me; and I will give you ten pieces of silver a year and an array of clothing and your food. So the Levite went with him.

Judg. 17:11 And the Levite was content to stay with the man; and the young man was to him like one of his sons.

Judg. 17:12 And Micah consecrated the Levite; and the young man became his priest and was in the house of Micah.

Judg. 17:13 Then Micah said, Now I know that Jehovah will prosper me, because the Levite has become my priest.

2. Micah's mother offered something to God, but her offering was mixed with the leaven of idolatry (vv. 1-4); the same mixture and apostate situation exists in Christianity.

Judg. 17:1 Now there was a man from the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Micah.

Judg. 17:2 And he said to his mother, The eleven hundred pieces of silver that were taken from you, about which you uttered a curse and spoke it in my hearing—look, the silver is with me; I took it. And his mother said, Blessed of Jehovah be my son!

Judg. 17:3 And he returned the eleven hundred pieces of silver to his mother; and his mother said, I do consecrate the silver to Jehovah from my hand to my son to make a sculptured idol and a molten image. Now therefore I will return it to you.

Judg. 17:4 And when he returned the silver to his mother, his mother took two hundred pieces of silver and gave them to the founder, who made them into a sculptured idol and a molten image. And it was in the house of Micah.

3. We may apply the picture of Micah's "house of gods" (v. 5) to the situation of Christianity.

Judg. 17:5 And the man Micah had a house of gods; and he made an ephod and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons to become his priest.

4. Today's Christianity has many "houses of Micah"; the Roman Catholic Church, the state churches, the denominations, and many of the independent groups are "houses of Micah," full of idols as replacements of Christ.

C. "The children of Dan erected for themselves the sculptured idol," and they "set up the sculptured idol that Micah had made the whole time that the house of God was in Shiloh"—18:30-31:

Judg. 18:30 And the children of Dan erected for themselves the sculptured idol; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, he and his sons, became priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.

Judg. 18:31 Thus they set up the sculptured idol that Micah had made the whole time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

1. The apostasy with Dan was the setting up of a divisive center of worship—17:9-10; 18:27-31; 1 Kings 12:26-31.

Judg. 17:9 And Micah said to him, Where do you come from? And he said to him, I am a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, and I am traveling in order to dwell wherever I can find a place.

Judg. 17:10 And Micah said to him, Stay with me, and be a father and a priest to me; and I will give you ten pieces of silver a year and an array of clothing and your food. So the Levite went with him.

Judg. 18:27 So they took that which Micah had made and the priest that had been his, and came to Laish, to a people quiet and secure; and they struck them with the edge of the sword and burned the city with fire.

Judg. 18:28 And there was no one to deliver it; for it was far from Sidon, and they had nothing to do with anyone. Now it was in the valley that is by Beth-rehob. And they rebuilt the city and dwelt in it.

Judg. 18:29 And they called the name of the city Dan, according to the name of Dan their father who had been born to Israel. However the name of the city was Laish formerly.

Judg. 18:30 And the children of Dan erected for themselves the sculptured idol; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, he and his sons, became priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.

Judg. 18:31 Thus they set up the sculptured idol that Micah had made the whole time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

1 Kings 12:26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now the kingdom will return to the house of David.

1 Kings 12:27 If this people go up to make sacrifices in the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem, the heart of this people will return to their lord, to Rehoboam the king of Judah; and they will slay me and return to Rehoboam the king of Judah.

1 Kings 12:28 And the king took counsel and made two calves of gold. And he said to them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!

1 Kings 12:29 And he set one in Bethel, and he put the other one in Dan.

1 Kings 12:30 And this thing became a sin; and the people went to worship the one as far as Dan.

1 Kings 12:31 And he made a house of high places and appointed priests from among the people who were not from the sons of Levi.

2. Dan fought as a young lion to gain more land (signifying Christ), but after being successful and victorious, he became proud, individualistic, and independent—Deut. 33:22; Josh. 19:47; Judg. 18:27-31.

Deut. 33:22 And concerning Dan he said, Dan is a lion's whelp / That leaps forth from Bashan.

Josh. 19:47 When the territory of the children of Dan was lost to them, the children of Dan went up and fought against Leshem; and they took it and struck it with the edge of the sword; and they took possession of it and inhabited it; and they called Leshem Dan, according to the name of Dan their father.

Judg. 18:27 So they took that which Micah had made and the priest that had been his, and came to Laish, to a people quiet and secure; and they struck them with the edge of the sword and burned the city with fire.

Judg. 18:28 And there was no one to deliver it; for it was far from Sidon, and they had nothing to do with anyone. Now it was in the valley that is by Beth-rehob. And they rebuilt the city and dwelt in it.

Judg. 18:29 And they called the name of the city Dan, according to the name of Dan their father who had been born to Israel. However the name of the city was Laish formerly.

- Judg. 18:30 And the children of Dan erected for themselves the sculptured idol; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, he and his sons, became priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.
- Judg. 18:31 Thus they set up the sculptured idol that Micah had made the whole time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

3. What the Danites gained made them proud and independent, unwilling to submit to what the Lord had ordained—vv. 1-31; Deut. 12:5, 8:

- Judg. 18:1 In those days there was no king in Israel; and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought for themselves an inheritance to dwell in, for unto that day the lot had not fallen for them on an inheritance among the tribes of Israel.
- Judg. 18:2 So the children of Dan sent from their family five men from among all of them, men of valor, from Zorah and Eshtaol, to spy out the land and search it out. And they said to them, Go and search out the land. And they came to the hill country of Ephraim, to the house of Micah; and they lodged there.
- Judg. 18:3 When they were near the house of Micah, they recognized the voice of the young Levite man, so they turned aside there and said to him, Who brought you here? And what are you doing in this place? And what do you have here?
- Judg. 18:4 And he said to them, Such and such has Micah done for me; and he has hired me to be his priest.
- Judg. 18:5 And they said to him, Inquire now of God that we may know if our way on which we are going will be prosperous.
- Judg. 18:6 And the priest said to them, Go in peace; your way on which you are going is before Jehovah.
- Judg. 18:7 Then the five men left and came to Laish. And they saw the people who were in it, dwelling securely after the manner of the Sidonians, quiet and secure; for there was no one in the land who possessed authority and might humble them in anything; and they were far from the Sidonians and had nothing to do with anyone.
- Judg. 18:8 And they came to their brothers at Zorah and Eshtaol; and their brothers said to them, What can you say?
- Judg. 18:9 And they said, Arise; and let us go up against them. For we have seen the land, and it is very good. So do you sit still? Do not be slow about going and entering the land to possess it.
- Judg. 18:10 When you go, you will come to a secure people; and the land is very spacious. God has indeed delivered it into your hand, a place where nothing on earth is lacking there.
- Judg. 18:11 So six hundred men girded with weapons of war set out from there, from the family of Dan, from Zorah and Eshtaol.
- Judg. 18:12 And they went up and encamped in Kiriath-jearim in Judah. Because of this, that place is called Mahaneh-dan to this day; it is there behind Kiriath-jearim.
- Judg. 18:13 And they passed from there into the hill country of Ephraim and came to the house of Micah.
- Judg. 18:14 Then the five men who had gone to spy the land of Laish answered and said to their brothers, Do you know that in these houses there are an ephod and teraphim and a sculptured idol and a molten image? Now therefore consider what you should do.
- Judg. 18:15 And they turned aside there and came to the house of the young Levite man, the house of Micah; and they asked him concerning his welfare.
- Judg. 18:16 And the six hundred men of the children of Dan, girded with their weapons of war, stood at the entrance of the gate.
- Judg. 18:17 And the five men who had gone to spy the land went up and entered there to seize the sculptured idol and the ephod and the teraphim and the molten image. And the

- priest stood at the entrance of the gate with the six hundred men girded with weapons of war.
- Judg. 18:18 And when these men entered the house of Micah and seized the sculptured idol and the ephod and the teraphim and the molten image, the priest said to them, What are you doing?
- Judg. 18:19 And they said to him, Quiet down; put your hand over your mouth, and go with us and be a father and a priest to us. Is it better for you to be a priest for the house of one man or for you to be a priest for a tribe and family in Israel?
- Judg. 18:20 And the priest's heart was glad; and he took the ephod and teraphim and the sculptured idol, and went into the midst of the people.
- Judg. 18:21 And they turned and departed; and they put the little ones and the livestock and the goods before them.
- Judg. 18:22 When they were some distance from the house of Micah, the men who were in the houses that were near the house of Micah were gathered together; and they overtook the children of Dan.
- Judg. 18:23 And they called out to the children of Dan. And they turned and faced them and said to Micah, What is bothering you, that you have been gathered together?
- Judg. 18:24 And he said, You have taken away my gods that I have made, along with the priest, and have gone off. And what do I still have? How then can you say to me, What is bothering you?
- Judg. 18:25 And the children of Dan said, Do not let your voice be heard among us, lest men of fierce temper fall on you and you lose your life and the lives of your household.
- Judg. 18:26 And 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.
- Judg. 18:27 So they took that which Micah had made and the priest that had been his, and came to Laish, to a people quiet and secure; and they struck them with the edge of the sword and burned the city with fire.
- Judg. 18:28 And there was no one to deliver it; for it was far from Sidon, and they had nothing to do with anyone. Now it was in the valley that is by Beth-rehob. And they rebuilt the city and dwelt in it.
- Judg. 18:29 And they called the name of the city Dan, according to the name of Dan their father who had been born to Israel. However the name of the city was Laish formerly.
- Judg. 18:30 And the children of Dan erected for themselves the sculptured idol; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, he and his sons, became priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.
- Judg. 18:31 Thus they set up the sculptured idol that Micah had made the whole time that the house of God was in Shiloh.
- Deut. 12:5 But to the place which Jehovah your God will choose out of all your tribes to put His name, to His habitation, shall you seek, and there shall you go.
- Deut. 12:8 You shall not do according to all that we do here today, each man doing all that is right in his own eyes;
- a. Because Dan was successful, he became proud and individualistic; he cared only for himself, not for others—33:22; Judg. 18:27-31.
- Deut. 33:22 And concerning Dan he said, Dan is a lion's whelp / That leaps forth from Bashan.
- Judg. 18:27 So they took that which Micah had made and the priest that had been his, and came to Laish, to a people quiet and secure; and they struck them with the edge of the sword and burned the city with fire.
- Judg. 18:28 And there was no one to deliver it; for it was far from Sidon, and they had nothing to do with anyone. Now it was in the valley that is by Beth-rehob. And they rebuilt the city and dwelt in it.

Judg. 18:29 And they called the name of the city Dan, according to the name of Dan their father who had been born to Israel. However the name of the city was Laish formerly.

Judg. 18:30 And the children of Dan erected for themselves the sculptured idol; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, he and his sons, became priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.

Judg. 18:31 Thus they set up the sculptured idol that Micah had made the whole time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

b. The source of Dan's apostasy was in not caring for the other tribes; not caring for other parts of the Body is the source of apostasy.

4. Nothing throughout the history of Israel was more sinful or more damaging to God's people than Dan's apostasy in setting up a divisive center of worship—Gen. 49:16-18; Deut. 33:22; Judg. 18:1, 30-31.

Gen. 49:16 Dan will judge his people, / As one of the tribes of Israel.

Gen. 49:17 Dan will be a serpent in the way, / A viper on the path, / That bites the horse's heels, / So that his rider falls backward.

Gen. 49:18 I have waited for Your salvation, O Jehovah.

Deut. 33:22 And concerning Dan he said, Dan is a lion's whelp / That leaps forth from Bashan.

Judg. 18:1 In those days there was no king in Israel; and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought for themselves an inheritance to dwell in, for unto that day the lot had not fallen for them on an inheritance among the tribes of Israel.

Judg. 18:30 And the children of Dan erected for themselves the sculptured idol; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, he and his sons, became priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.

Judg. 18:31 Thus they set up the sculptured idol that Micah had made the whole time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

5. Every divisive center is set up for someone's self-interest; such a practice causes not only division but also competition—vv. 1, 13-31; Gen. 49:16-18; Deut. 33:22:

Judg. 18:1 In those days there was no king in Israel; and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought for themselves an inheritance to dwell in, for unto that day the lot had not fallen for them on an inheritance among the tribes of Israel.

Judg. 18:13 And they passed from there into the hill country of Ephraim and came to the house of Micah.

Judg. 18:14 Then the five men who had gone to spy the land of Laish answered and said to their brothers, Do you know that in these houses there are an ephod and teraphim and a sculptured idol and a molten image? Now therefore consider what you should do.

Judg. 18:15 And they turned aside there and came to the house of the young Levite man, the house of Micah; and they asked him concerning his welfare.

Judg. 18:16 And the six hundred men of the children of Dan, girded with their weapons of war, stood at the entrance of the gate.

Judg. 18:17 And the five men who had gone to spy the land went up and entered there to seize the sculptured idol and the ephod and the teraphim and the molten image. And the priest stood at the entrance of the gate with the six hundred men girded with weapons of war.

Judg. 18:18 And when these men entered the house of Micah and seized the sculptured idol and the ephod and the teraphim and the molten image, the priest said to them, What are you doing?

- Judg. 18:19 And they said to him, Quiet down; put your hand over your mouth, and go with us and be a father and a priest to us. Is it better for you to be a priest for the house of one man or for you to be a priest for a tribe and family in Israel?
- Judg. 18:20 And the priest's heart was glad; and he took the ephod and teraphim and the sculptured idol, and went into the midst of the people.
- Judg. 18:21 And they turned and departed; and they put the little ones and the livestock and the goods before them.
- Judg. 18:22 When they were some distance from the house of Micah, the men who were in the houses that were near the house of Micah were gathered together; and they overtook the children of Dan.
- Judg. 18:23 And they called out to the children of Dan. And they turned and faced them and said to Micah, What is bothering you, that you have been gathered together?
- Judg. 18:24 And he said, You have taken away my gods that I have made, along with the priest, and have gone off. And what do I still have? How then can you say to me, What is bothering you?
- Judg. 18:25 And the children of Dan said, Do not let your voice be heard among us, lest men of fierce temper fall on you and you lose your life and the lives of your household.
- Judg. 18:26 And 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.
- Judg. 18:27 So they took that which Micah had made and the priest that had been his, and came to Laish, to a people quiet and secure; and they struck them with the edge of the sword and burned the city with fire.
- Judg. 18:28 And there was no one to deliver it; for it was far from Sidon, and they had nothing to do with anyone. Now it was in the valley that is by Beth-rehob. And they rebuilt the city and dwelt in it.
- Judg. 18:29 And they called the name of the city Dan, according to the name of Dan their father who had been born to Israel. However the name of the city was Laish formerly.
- Judg. 18:30 And the children of Dan erected for themselves the sculptured idol; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, he and his sons, became priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.
- Judg. 18:31 Thus they set up the sculptured idol that Micah had made the whole time that the house of God was in Shiloh.
- Gen. 49:16 Dan will judge his people, / As one of the tribes of Israel.
- Gen. 49:17 Dan will be a serpent in the way, / A viper on the path, / That bites the horse's heels, / So that his rider falls backward.
- Gen. 49:18 I have waited for Your salvation, O Jehovah.
- Deut. 33:22 And concerning Dan he said, Dan is a lion's whelp / That leaps forth from Bashan.

a. The tabernacle was in Shiloh, and the graven image was in Dan—Josh. 18:1.

Josh. 18:1 And the whole assembly of the children of Israel gathered together at Shiloh, and they set up the Tent of Meeting there; and the land was subdued before them.

b. “They set up the sculptured idol.. .the whole time that the house of God was in Shiloh”—Judg. 18:31; 1 Sam. 1:3.

Judg. 18:31 Thus they set up the sculptured idol that Micah had made the whole time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

1 Sam. 1:3 And this man went up from his city year by year to worship and to sacrifice to Jehovah of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, priests of Jehovah, were there.

6. In the history of Christianity there have been many “Dans,” who were not willing to

submit to others but set up another center of worship—Judg. 18:1, 13-31.

- Judg. 18:1 In those days there was no king in Israel; and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought for themselves an inheritance to dwell in, for unto that day the lot had not fallen for them on an inheritance among the tribes of Israel.
- Judg. 18:13 And they passed from there into the hill country of Ephraim and came to the house of Micah.
- Judg. 18:14 Then the five men who had gone to spy the land of Laish answered and said to their brothers, Do you know that in these houses there are an ephod and teraphim and a sculptured idol and a molten image? Now therefore consider what you should do.
- Judg. 18:15 And they turned aside there and came to the house of the young Levite man, the house of Micah; and they asked him concerning his welfare.
- Judg. 18:16 And the six hundred men of the children of Dan, girded with their weapons of war, stood at the entrance of the gate.
- Judg. 18:17 And the five men who had gone to spy the land went up and entered there to seize the sculptured idol and the ephod and the teraphim and the molten image. And the priest stood at the entrance of the gate with the six hundred men girded with weapons of war.
- Judg. 18:18 And when these men entered the house of Micah and seized the sculptured idol and the ephod and the teraphim and the molten image, the priest said to them, What are you doing?
- Judg. 18:19 And they said to him, Quiet down; put your hand over your mouth, and go with us and be a father and a priest to us. Is it better for you to be a priest for the house of one man or for you to be a priest for a tribe and family in Israel?
- Judg. 18:20 And the priest's heart was glad; and he took the ephod and teraphim and the sculptured idol, and went into the midst of the people.
- Judg. 18:21 And they turned and departed; and they put the little ones and the livestock and the goods before them.
- Judg. 18:22 When they were some distance from the house of Micah, the men who were in the houses that were near the house of Micah were gathered together; and they overtook the children of Dan.
- Judg. 18:23 And they called out to the children of Dan. And they turned and faced them and said to Micah, What is bothering you, that you have been gathered together?
- Judg. 18:24 And he said, You have taken away my gods that I have made, along with the priest, and have gone off. And what do I still have? How then can you say to me, What is bothering you?
- Judg. 18:25 And the children of Dan said, Do not let your voice be heard among us, lest men of fierce temper fall on you and you lose your life and the lives of your household.
- Judg. 18:26 And 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.
- Judg. 18:27 So they took that which Micah had made and the priest that had been his, and came to Laish, to a people quiet and secure; and they struck them with the edge of the sword and burned the city with fire.
- Judg. 18:28 And there was no one to deliver it; for it was far from Sidon, and they had nothing to do with anyone. Now it was in the valley that is by Beth-rehob. And they rebuilt the city and dwelt in it.
- Judg. 18:29 And they called the name of the city Dan, according to the name of Dan their father who had been born to Israel. However the name of the city was Laish formerly.
- Judg. 18:30 And the children of Dan erected for themselves the sculptured idol; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, he and his sons, became priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.
- Judg. 18:31 Thus they set up the sculptured idol that Micah had made the whole time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

7. The best way to be safeguarded from falling into apostasy is to care for the entire Body and the Lord's unique testimony in the Lord's one work—1 Cor. 10:17; 12:12, 27.

1 Cor. 10:17 Seeing that there is one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all partake of the one bread.

1 Cor. 12:12 For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.

1 Cor. 12:27 Now you are the Body of Christ, and members individually.

D. There is a strong prophecy in the Bible that before the Lord's coming back there will be a great apostasy among His people—2 Thes. 2:3:

2 Thes. 2:3 Let no one deceive you in any way, because it will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition,

1. The day of the Lord's coming will not come unless the apostasy comes first—vv. 2-3.

2 Thes. 2:2 That you be not quickly shaken in mind nor alarmed, neither by a spirit nor by word nor by a letter as if by us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

2 Thes. 2:3 Let no one deceive you in any way, because it will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition,

2. This apostasy will be a falling away from the straight way of God's economy as revealed in the Scriptures—1 Tim. 1:4; Eph. 1:10; 3:9.

1 Tim. 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.

Eph. 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;

Eph. 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,

3. Even today there is a tendency among some Christians to leave the straight way of the New Testament—2 Pet. 2:15.

2 Pet. 2:15 Forsaking the straight way, they have gone astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness

E. The background and burden of 2 Peter is apostasy—a deviation from the right track of God's truth—2:1:

2 Pet. 2:1 But there arose also false prophets among the people, as also among you there will be false teachers, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.

1. The apostasy distracted the believers from the economy of God by leading them into the human logic of puzzling philosophies—Col. 2:8.

Col. 2:8 Beware that no one carries you off as spoil through his philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ;

2. The teachings of the apostates did not lead the believers to partake of the tree of life, which gives life, but to participate in the tree of knowledge, which brings in death—Gen. 2:9, 16-17; 2 Cor. 11:2-3, 12-15.

- Gen. 2:9 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- Gen. 2:16 And Jehovah God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden you may eat freely,
- Gen. 2:17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, of it you shall not eat; for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.
- 2 Cor. 11:2 For I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God; for I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.
- 2 Cor. 11:3 But I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your thoughts would be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity toward Christ.
- 2 Cor. 11:12 But what I do, I also will do, that I may cut off the opportunity of those desiring an opportunity, that in the thing in which they boast, they may be found even as we.
- 2 Cor. 11:13 For such ones are false apostles, deceitful workers, transfiguring themselves into apostles of Christ.
- 2 Cor. 11:14 And no wonder, for Satan himself transfigures himself into an angel of light.
- 2 Cor. 11:15 Therefore it is no great thing if also his ministers transfigure themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

3. The antidotes used by Peter in dealing with apostasy are the provision of life and the revelation of truth—2 Pet. 1:3-21:

- 2 Pet. 1:3 Seeing that His divine power has granted to us all things which relate to life and godliness, through the full knowledge of Him who has called us by His own glory and virtue,
- 2 Pet. 1:4 Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.
- 2 Pet. 1:5 And for this very reason also, adding all diligence, supply bountifully in your faith virtue; and in virtue, knowledge;
- 2 Pet. 1:6 And in knowledge, self-control; and in self-control, endurance; and in endurance, godliness;
- 2 Pet. 1:7 And in godliness, brotherly love; and in brotherly love, love.
- 2 Pet. 1:8 For these things, existing in you and abounding, constitute you neither idle nor unfruitful unto the full knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2 Pet. 1:9 For he in whom these things are not present is blind, being shortsighted, having forgotten the cleansing of his past sins.
- 2 Pet. 1:10 Therefore, brothers, be the more diligent to make your calling and selection firm, for doing these things you shall by no means ever stumble.
- 2 Pet. 1:11 For in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly and bountifully supplied to you.
- 2 Pet. 1:12 Therefore I will be ready always to remind you concerning these things, even though you know them and have been established in the present truth.
- 2 Pet. 1:13 And I consider it right, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by a reminder,
- 2 Pet. 1:14 Knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle is imminent, even as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.
- 2 Pet. 1:15 Moreover I will also be diligent that you may be able, after my exodus, to bring these things to mind at all times.
- 2 Pet. 1:16 For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we became eyewitnesses of that One's majesty.

- 2 Pet. 1:17 For He received from God the Father honor and glory, a voice such as this being borne to Him by the magnificent glory: This is My Son, My Beloved, in whom I delight.
- 2 Pet. 1:18 And this voice we heard being borne out of heaven while we were with Him in the holy mountain.
- 2 Pet. 1:19 And we have the prophetic word made more firm, to which you do well to give heed as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;
- 2 Pet. 1:20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of one's own interpretation;
- 2 Pet. 1:21 For no prophecy was ever borne by the will of man, but men spoke from God while being borne by the Holy Spirit.

a. In verses 3 through 11 Peter used the provision of the divine life for the proper Christian life to inoculate against the apostasy.

- 2 Pet. 1:3 Seeing that His divine power has granted to us all things which relate to life and godliness, through the full knowledge of Him who has called us by His own glory and virtue,
- 2 Pet. 1:4 Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.
- 2 Pet. 1:5 And for this very reason also, adding all diligence, supply bountifully in your faith virtue; and in virtue, knowledge;
- 2 Pet. 1:6 And in knowledge, self-control; and in self-control, endurance; and in endurance, godliness;
- 2 Pet. 1:7 And in godliness, brotherly love; and in brotherly love, love.
- 2 Pet. 1:8 For these things, existing in you and abounding, constitute you neither idle nor unfruitful unto the full knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2 Pet. 1:9 For he in whom these things are not present is blind, being shortsighted, having forgotten the cleansing of his past sins.
- 2 Pet. 1:10 Therefore, brothers, be the more diligent to make your calling and selection firm, for doing these things you shall by no means ever stumble.
- 2 Pet. 1:11 For in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly and bountifully supplied to you.

b. In verses 12 through 21 he used the revelation of the divine truth to inoculate against the heresy in the apostasy—2:1, footnote 3.

- 2 Pet. 1:12 Therefore I will be ready always to remind you concerning these things, even though you know them and have been established in the present truth.
- 2 Pet. 1:13 And I consider it right, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by a reminder,
- 2 Pet. 1:14 Knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle is imminent, even as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.
- 2 Pet. 1:15 Moreover I will also be diligent that you may be able, after my exodus, to bring these things to mind at all times.
- 2 Pet. 1:16 For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we became eyewitnesses of that One's majesty.

- 2 Pet. 1:17 For He received from God the Father honor and glory, a voice such as this being borne to Him by the magnificent glory: This is My Son, My Beloved, in whom I delight.
- 2 Pet. 1:18 And this voice we heard being borne out of heaven while we were with Him in the holy mountain.
- 2 Pet. 1:19 And we have the prophetic word made more firm, to which you do well to give heed as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;
- 2 Pet. 1:20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of one's own interpretation;
- 2 Pet. 1:21 For no prophecy was ever borne by the will of man, but men spoke from God while being borne by the Holy Spirit.
- 2 Pet. 2:1 But there arose also false prophets among the people, as also among you there will be false teachers, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies³, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.
- 2:1 footnote 3: The Greek word means choices of opinion (of doctrine) different from that usually accepted, "self-chosen doctrines, alien from the truth" (Alford). Such doctrines cause division and produce sects. This word is used also in Acts 5:17; 15:5; 24:5, 14; 26:5; 28:22; 1 Cor. 11:19; and Gal. 5:20; and in Titus 3:10 in the adjective form, heretical (there rendered factious). Here it denotes the false and heretical doctrines brought in by the false teachers, the heretics. Such doctrines are like those of today's modernism.

4. Because today's Christianity is filled with apostasy, the Lord needs a recovery—the recovery of life and truth—John 1:4; 8:12; 10:10b; 14:6; Rev. 2:4, 15.

- John 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.
- John 8:12 Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall by no means walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.
- John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly.
- John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.
- Rev. 2:4 But I have one thing against you, that you have left your first love.
- Rev. 2:15 In the same way you also have some who hold in like manner the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

F. Today, in a time of apostasy, we need to testify the full revelation of the pure Word of God and to fight for the deeper truths revealed in the Word of God, including:

1. The revelation concerning the eternal economy of God—Eph. 1:10; 3:9.

- Eph. 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;
- Eph. 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,

2. The revelation concerning the Divine Trinity—2 Cor. 13:14; Rev. 1:4-5.

- 2 Cor. 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- Rev. 1:4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is coming, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,
- Rev. 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and has released us from our sins by His blood

3. The revelation concerning the person and work of the all-inclusive Christ—Col. 2:9, 16-17; 3:11.

- Col. 2:9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,
- Col. 2:16 Let no one therefore judge you in eating and in drinking or in respect of a feast or of a new moon or of the Sabbath,
- Col. 2:17 Which are a shadow of the things to come, but the body is of Christ.
- Col. 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.

4. The revelation concerning the consummated life-giving Spirit—John 7:39; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rev. 22:17.

- John 7:39 But this He said concerning the Spirit, whom those who believed into Him were about to receive; for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.
- 1 Cor. 15:45 So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul"; the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.
- Rev. 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him who hears say, Come! And let him who is thirsty come; let him who wills take the water of life freely.

5. The revelation concerning the eternal life of God—John 3:15-16.

- John 3:15 That everyone who believes into Him may have eternal life.
- John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that everyone who believes into Him would not perish, but would have eternal life.

6. The revelation concerning the Body of Christ, which is the church of God—Eph. 1:22-23; 1 Cor. 12:12-13, 27; 10:32.

- Eph. 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,
- Eph. 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
- 1 Cor. 12:12 For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.
- 1 Cor. 12:13 For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit.
- 1 Cor. 12:27 Now you are the Body of Christ, and members individually.
- 1 Cor. 10:32 Do not become a stumbling block, both to Jews and to Greeks and to the church of God;