

We had that trip up in Canada. We were on a missions trip up there. We had about 50 or 60 high school kids driving all night long. On top of that, somewhere outside Cleveland on Highway 95, we had to pull over and rebuild one of the engines of the bus, putting new bearings in it. Remember that, Steve? Max Grey, what a trip, what a job that was. But anyway, those were times that God did some great things, and we appreciate Him for it.

I. Introduction to the Book of Judges

The Book of Judges has 21 chapters, 18,976 words, and 618 verses. As we look at the Book of Judges, as with every book in the Old Testament, you want to remember what we talked about earlier in 1 Corinthians chapter 10: that all the things in the Old Testament are for our own samples and for our examples. We want to remember that everything in the Old Testament illustrates New Testament principles. I cannot get that across to you enough. If you can just learn that one concept and carry it with you, you will learn a lot of things about the Bible.

There are a number of ways that God teaches you the Bible. In the men's study, you are meeting on Saturday morning, and I have talked with many of you about this, and many of you already know this: God will use the individual words. When God put the Bible together and allowed the Bible to be put together, He put in exactly what He wanted to have. When He preserved the Word of God, He preserved it through the men translating it, and in translating, preserved the exact words that He wants you to have, because the words in the Bible are the key to the Bible. Most scholars in the world will never understand that, but that is all right. So you will find that the words in the Bible, two of the greatest words that you will ever find in the Bible, are two of the smallest words that teach you more than you will ever know: simply the words "as" and the words "like." Every time you have learned the word "as," you see the word "like," God is trying to show you something.

He uses types: men who portray different things. I have told you before, in the Old Testament, there are 18 types of men who foreshadow the Antichrist. In the Old Testament, there are 21 types of men who foreshadow the Lord Jesus Christ. In their storylines and what they accomplish in their life, where they are from, what they do, how they die, the events of their lives, you will find a profile of the man that they typify. In the Antichrist types, you will find a complete composite of the man of sin. In the types of Christ, you will find a composite of the Lord Jesus Christ in almost every aspect.

Another way that God teaches the Bible is by association. God will put two things that are alike together, and He will put them right together, and that is where your word "as" and "like" comes in. God will show you by association. One of the greatest ways, and I might add one of the easiest ways that God chose to do it, is by contrast. God will take something that is the opposite of something else, and they will stand for two extreme principles, one right, one wrong, and He will put them together in the Bible to show you by that great contrast what He wants you to see in principle form. You are going to find that sometimes He will put one or two together;

sometimes He will put four or five books together that will show a contrast that will give you incredible information about what you are beginning to study.

The last book we studied was Joshua. I showed you how, in the Book of Joshua, they come into the land, the Promised Land. We define the Promised Land now as understanding that the Promised Land is a picture of your maturity in Christ. It is a picture not of death, not of you dying and going to heaven, but rather you crossing over from the wilderness into the newness of life in a land where you live every day by the promises of God. It is a picture of your spiritual maturity.

With that in mind, the next book we are going to look at today is the Book of Judges. Where the Book of Joshua on one end shows you the extreme of doing what is right and living by the promises of God, and shows you how to do it and gives you the great victories, the other book, Judges, forms the contrast of everything that you could do wrong. Between the Book of Joshua and the Book of Judges, I do not know of two other books in all the Bible that, just by their association and their contrast, show you more biblical principles about your everyday life and the things that you struggle with in every aspect than these two books.

Joshua shows you how God will take care of you in every circumstance and situation of life if you will exercise courage. We talked about it when we studied it: courage to believe the Word of God, courage to obey the Word of God, courage to rest in the Word of God. If you will do that in your life, the Bible says, as He told the nation of Israel, nobody on the face of this planet will stop you from being and doing what God wants you to be.

On the other hand, the Book of Judges shows you what happens when a church, a country, or an individual—and all these contrasts will fit any configuration you want to put it in—you will find that the Book of Judges shows by contrast what happens when a man or a woman, a church, a country, takes a stand against the Bible, leaves the Word of God, and goes after all the other gods, all the other philosophies of life, all the other religions. Where one shows you the blessings of God, the other one shows you the damnation. Damnation in the Bible is not always just used for dying and going to hell. There is a damnation that the Christian experiences of the corruption of the flesh, and the Book of Judges shows you by contrast what happens when you do not keep the Word of God and you forsake the Word of God. By this contrast, the Book of Judges teaches several great New Testament principles.

II. New Testament Principles Taught in Judges

Now I am going to give you these principles first, and then I am going to come through and give you the outline. The outline is really easy; it is one of the simplest outlines in the Bible. But I want to look at what it teaches first because it is absolutely paramount that you learn these things. So, let us ask God's blessing as we get into His Word.

Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We love You. We thank You for all that You do for us. Lord, we ask You now, Father, to take care of us today in Your Word. Teach us. We thank You, Father, for the events that have happened already today, for the outpouring of love and the outpouring, Lord, of appreciation and everything, Father, that this family has done in our

church. We thank You for each one here today, for their love for You, for Your Word of God, for their friendship to me and my wife and my family, and how that we have chosen together in these last days to be laborers together for You. I pray, Father, in every endeavor, that we will always stand for the truth and it will be found faithful on the old paths when Jesus comes back. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

There are several things that I want you to see.

1. The Law of Human CollapseThe first principle that it teaches is what is called in the Bible, the law of human collapse. We talked about some of these last week because I used a little bit out of the Book of Judges, but I want to get into more depth so you understand how it all goes together in its entirety and its consistency. You are going to find that there are seven laws that everything runs by; they are all laws found in the Bible. One of those laws is the law of human collapse. Scientists see it when they study the order of the universe and the order of our planet. Sociologists see it when they study the patterns of life and the patterns of man. The weatherman sees it when he studies the meteorology effects of this earth. Everybody sees it. It is called the second law of thermodynamics from the scientific world. If you want to get real techno, it is called the law of enthalpy. It simply says this: you are not better today than you were yesterday; you are worse. Your house is not any better today; it is worse today than it was yesterday. Everything in this universe runs down. Nothing runs up. Evolution teaches that man started out and is moving up. That is against the law of second thermodynamics that every scientist in this world ascribes to, that nothing starts and runs up. It all starts right and runs down. Everything deteriorates with time. Nothing gets better. You do not get better. I do not get better. Your house is not better. Your car is not better. Everything in this world is running down.The law of human collapse simply means that man, left to himself, will fall into a pattern. That pattern is so clear down through history that you could not miss it. I have taken a lot of these complicated things in my own life, in my own time, so I can understand them, and I have broken them down. I put all history, it runs like this:It starts with a man.It goes to a movement.It goes to a machine.And then the fourth stage, it becomes a monument.You say, "What do you mean by that?" I mean, that is the law of human collapse. Everything in this world runs down. We can have the greatest meeting that you have ever been part of. God could come down and speak to your heart and rip your heart out and just burden you and show you and put you on fire for God. You could sit in that seat and you could just say to God, "God, this is the greatest service I have ever been in my life. You have spoken to me so much. You have given me so much." In some place in our lives, we all could probably go back to some place like that where God really met with you and He really did a work in your life. When you get up off your knees, or you get out of your seat, you had committed in your heart that, boy, you were going to take a stand for God and do what was right, and God, this, that, and you have got the whole thing down. Let me tell you something: 30 seconds after you are up and out that door, that concept and commitment begins to deteriorate. I am telling you. The next day, it is even more deteriorated. That is why so many of us find ourselves right back in the same situation that we were, because we do not understand the law of human collapse.You look at the great organizations. I use the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army was the greatest organization at the end of the Philadelphia

church age, probably the world has ever seen as an organized organization outside the local church. It started with a man. It always does: William Booth. William Booth came to the point where he had a burden. He wanted to reach the lost. He did it in a unique way of going out with the downtrodden and putting it together where he reached out to a part of society that nobody was reaching to, and probably won millions and millions and millions of people to Christ. He started a movement called the Salvation Army. After his death, somebody else takes it over, and somebody else gets it. Then they form a little group. Then they form a corporation. Then they form this. Then they form that. It turns into a machine. A fast, slick Madison Avenue where you have got to do this and you have got to do that. They get all kinds of ideas. The founder's main basic concept of winning, just winning people to Christ, gets lost. You know what the Salvation Army is today? It is a monument. They do not believe in salvation. They believe in social status, or they are involved in social issues. I am not saying that they are not important. What I am saying is that is not what the old man started it to be. It went through the progression of man, movement, machine, and into a monument. That is exactly the way churches go. I came out of the Canton Baptist Temple. Canton Baptist Temple was started by a guy by the name of Harold Henniger. Harold Henniger is one of the original boys from J. Frank Norris. I used to hear him tell stories about the old man Frank down in Texas. J. Frank Norris broke from the Southern Baptist Convention because of their apostasy. He started the only Bible college on the face of this planet in the 1940s and the 50s that believed the King James Bible was the Word of God and had a sign, which I have seen pictures of on his building, that ran all the way around his building. His building was like four blocks by four blocks by four blocks. The only Bible college in the world teaching the Authorized 1611 as the absolute and unfailing Word of God. He had that on his building back in the 40s and the 50s. He was an incredible guy. He trained every man that made up the fundamentalist movement, which we are from. Harold Henniger started the Canton Baptist Temple back in the middle 40s. My mom and dad started going there during World War II. I came along in 1950. I went there all my life until I got out of fellowship with God. But I watched that church go from the fact that a man started out believing that Bible was the Word of God. In 1975, one of the greatest controversies they were having in that church was with another man, most of you know Mel Sabaka, who believed the King James Bible was the Word of God, and the pastor and every man on that staff and half the people in that church from point A to point B no longer believed the Bible. Now what happened? Somebody said, "I do not understand that." It is easy: man, movement, machine, monument. The law of human collapse will affect you in everything that you do. You need to understand that. I am going to give you the answer to the law of human collapse in just a minute. But you need to understand that left to yourself, you will deteriorate in every way: physically, spiritually, emotionally. You will fall apart. The system is man, movement, machine, and monument. Harold Henniger started out a man, trained in the Word of God. He started out with, and then he produced a movement. He built a church, and in the process of the 30 or 40 years of building that church, he got educated. He had people come in, and he went into scholarship, and he forgot the old paths, and he got a new concept, and he did not have enough courage to stand up to his buddies, and everybody else around the country was doing it, so he did it. You know what the church is today? It is a monument. The most

gigantic facility you have ever seen in your life that spans six city blocks with 1,400 or 1,500 people in it. Most of them are over 60 years old. When he retired because of his health, they could not find a pastor. They went for five or six years without any pastor. You know why? Nobody could agree on what they wanted to look for, and they could not find anybody who had the education that they were looking for to pastor a church. I use that as an example because that is the example all over the country today.

2. **God's Injection**The second thing, not only is the law of human collapse there, but it teaches that if God does not inject Himself into man or man's history or man's life, that law of human collapse will absolutely be absolute. In other words, you have to have God injecting Himself in your life on a daily basis. You have to. That is why if you do not do that and you do not stay true to the Book and you do not stay true to His Word, you will collapse spiritually. That is why it is so important to get preached to. That is why it is so important to stay in your Bible. That is why God ordained and gave the concept of the local church, that men and women could come and God could inject Himself into you. Now the problem with that is that many, many years ago, preachers stopped injecting the Word of God into you, and now they inject themselves into you. But that was the plan, and that will still work. When you come here, you will get the Book.
3. **God Leaving Man Alone**The third thing, the most terrible thing that can happen to any man or any country or any church is for God to leave him alone. In your place and in my life, the worst thing that could happen to you or any church or any country is for God to back off and not touch that church or individual anymore and leave him to his own devices. At that point, the law of human collapse takes over, and that man, woman, church, country, nation, whatever the case may be, will wind up with a reprobate mind and will wind up in deep apostasy. That is what is wrong with the Laodicean church. The Laodicean church age is the church that God has spewed out of His mouth. He has nothing to do with them. Therefore, they are left to their own devices. That is why you see all the stuff that you see today. That is what has happened to the nation of Israel. The nation of Israel dumped God, forgot God, and they are in a deep apostasy today, even more than they were in the Old Testament, because God has left them alone. I am not saying He is not orchestrating the scenes behind the scenes. I am saying God is not injecting Himself into Israel anymore until they get into the tribulation period and do what they have got to do because they crucified Christ. I am saying that God is not in 99.99% of the church. We will get to that in a minute. The worst thing that can happen to an unsaved man is for you to quit getting tracts, for somebody to quit witnessing to you. You do not like it, but that might be the only thing that is keeping you from going to the dredges of apostasy and sin in this world. I will tell you something, do not think for a second that cannot happen to a Christian. 1 Corinthians chapter 5 says that here is a man that would not get right with God. The Bible says that they turned a saved man, they turned him over to the devil that his flesh may be consumed and his soul and his spirit would be saved in the day of the Lord. Here is a man that will not do what is right. He will not repent of his sin. Therefore, he is turned over to the same man. You know what that means? It means God takes His hand off of him. That means everything has been tried. Everything has been tried to work with. He will not. So God backs off. Everybody backs off, and the devil has him. Rough.

4. Dependence on LeadershipThe next thing that it teaches is that God's people, both in the Old Testament and New Testament, are totally dependent on leadership. Totally. They are totally dependent on their leadership to keep them in the Bible. There has never been any nation of people more dependent on their leadership than the nation of Israel. You give them a good one, they will do anything in the world. You give them a bad one, they were right in the mix of it. Christians are the same way. You give them a good one, they will do what is right. You give them a bad one, they will follow right in line. I do not know what it is. I do not know why. I do not know why people lack such intestinal fortitude today to be able to stand up and take a stand against what is wrong in Christianity, other than the fact they do not know what they are doing. But I am telling you, it is true of countries. You look at Germany, you give them a good leader like Martin Luther, and they won all of Europe to Christ and changed the course and the face of the world. You give them a bad leader like Adolf Hitler, look what they did. Incredible. England is the same way. You gave them Bloody Mary, she brought the English Empire under the Roman Catholic Church and killed more Christians than anybody in all of England's history. You give them a good one, Elizabeth. The King James Bible goes around the world. It is true in everything that you see. You give the church a man that will stand and preach and teach the Word of God uncompromisingly, he will build around him people that take the same stand. You get some little preacher that preaches little sermonettes and sells them out on cassettes, and that is what you will get in your church. It is just the way that it works.
5. Guard Against False DoctrineI will tell you something else: as a church and as a pastor, the number one thing you have to guard against in this church, any church today, is false doctrine and false teaching. When Paul wrote the books of 1 and 2 Timothy, he wrote to that young man Timothy, preparing him for the ministry. Remember now, Timothy is the model Christian in the New Testament for you. Antioch may be the model church, but Timothy is the model Christian and the model pastor. He is warned over and over and over again about wholesome words. "Beware of science falsely so called," that the Word of God is profitable for doctrine and all of those things. "Study to show thyself approved," he is told to be a soldier, to endure hardness, to stand. To stand against what? Stand for the Book and against false doctrine and false teaching, which was creeping in and sweeping through Christianity even in Paul's day.From the Book of Galatians chapter 5, you learn a great principle. That principle is simply this: "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."Galatians 5:9

A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.Leaven in the Bible is false doctrine. A little leaven leaveneth a whole lump. You are going to see from our story today in the Book of Judges, every one of these principles come true. This is what destroyed the nation of Israel, and this is what has destroyed Bible Christianity. By the way, it will destroy this church unless every man and woman in this church is on the watch. You are on the watch. You are on the watch for false doctrine and false teaching.Last Saturday night, I went to the astronomy meeting I always go to once a month. In fact, I was late because we had Manny's birthday, and I did not get there at the time, but when I got there, they had already started. I went in, and they held it at a church out in Lee's Summit. I was out there, and I did not want to go in. When I drove in, there were two guys, young guys, about 19 or 20. They pulled in the parking lot, and I went on in, and I was kind of looking through the doors there, and I did

not want to disturb everything. They came walking in, and one said, "Is that a church service in there, or are they having a meeting?" I said, "Oh, it is an astronomy club. They meet here once a month, and the church lets them use it." They said, "Oh, okay." He said, "Well, okay, that is fine," and he started to walk out. I thought maybe they needed directions, and I felt like I needed to ask, "Can I help you?" You know, me being the kind, gentle, sweet person that she said I was. So I walked out of the park. I said, "Hey, can I help you?" I thought maybe they needed directions. "Can I help you?" The guy said, "Well, we were just, we just had a couple of Bible questions, you know." I am thinking, "Okay." I said, "Oh, really?" I thought maybe you were... I said, "No, no. We were just driving down the road, talking about the Bible, and our pastor is out of town, and we just wanted to ask somebody about the Bible." Now, to the average person, that would stone you. The average person would say, "Oh, this is great." To the seasoned veteran, a red flag goes up. That just does not happen. There are not too many people, there are not many people walking the street with a sign that says, "Save me. I am lost." Every Sunday, I get up here and say to you people, "Hey, look, everybody wants to study the Bible. Nobody ever comes to talk to me." So do not tell me that you are going to drive down the road and you are going to be talking to this guy about the Bible, and you say, "Oh, here is a church. Let us go in here and just happen to see if anybody is there so we can ask some Bible questions." Now, maybe that happens back in Acts 7 or 8, 9, 10, but it does not happen in Kansas City very often, if at all. But here I am. I played my role, which my best role is stupid. I said, "Okay, maybe I can help you." He began to talk to me, and he had to run me through radical verses. I began to see very quickly that this guy was not, this was a setup deal. I talked to the pastor later, and he said, "Yeah, what they do is that they infiltrate people into your church, and they will come to your Bible study. They will come to this, they will come to that. They will sit around for a while and come to service, and they will see, maybe mark who the weak Christians are, and then they will go over and start talking to them and confuse them. They want to have Bible study with them, and first thing you know, your people are confused and lost before you turn around. They are out of your church and they are over in theirs." Now, I do not believe that they were just driving down there one time, but I do believe that I was at the right place at the right time because they thought they had a dummy. In the next 35 minutes when I was done with them, you would be surprised what I can do when I really play stupid. I do not know how they asked the right question to make you confused and then give you the answer to show you how stupid you are when you thought I was stupid for asking it. He started to go there, and the whole thing was predestination. They come from a covenant church, which is called reform theology today. He read, he said, "Well, I have got a verse I want to add." We talked about predestination a little bit, and I just kind of sparred with him. He said, "Well, I have got to, can you explain this verse?" He went over to the Book of Acts chapter 13. He read the verse, and the verse he read, just as sure as could be, said predestination. I said, "You do not have a King James Bible, do you?" He says, "No." He says, "What do you have?" He said, "An NIV." I said, "That explains it." He says, "What do you mean that explains it?" I said, "Well, that is the reason why you are hung up on predestination." He said, "Why? What do you mean?" He said, "Does not that what it says?" "Yeah, that is what it says. Mine does not say that." He said, "Well, they are the same." I said, "Really? They are the same? Okay." When I was done

with him, he found out they were not the same. He said, "Well," he said, "we take reform theology." I said, "Yeah, what reform did he get it from?" I said, "Calvin." I said, "Calvin." I said, "Yeah." I said, "You sprinkle babies?" He says, "No, not at all." I said, "Calvin did." I said, "Tell you something else. Have you ever read a book on John Calvin?" "No." "Well, let me just tell you this: if John Calvin believed what he wrote in the books that he wrote, he is in hell this morning. If he believed what he wrote in his books, I read his books." Then I said, "John Calvin, it did not come from John Calvin anyhow. You know where John Calvin got sprinkle babies? He got it from the Roman Catholic Church. You know where he got predestination? He got it from Augustine and the Roman Catholic Church. I see your Bible is a Roman Catholic Bible. That is why when they change the Roman Catholic Bible and put those things down, they put predestination in it." He got the wrong Bible. He did not have a clue. But you see, that is what wants to creep into this church. Maybe they will have a tougher time here, but that is the way they want to operate today. They want to sneak in, find the weak ones. That is why the church has to guard against false doctrine. That is why, and I will tell you, Galatians chapter 5, verse 9, talks about a little leaven leavening the whole lump. But Matthew chapter 13 tells you how that lump got leavened. The Bible never just says this without showing you how it happened. You want to find out why we got the mess we got with bad doctrine today? Go back to Matthew chapter 13. The story is right there. Matthew 13:33

Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. You spend those three measures of meal and see who they are. You have got it all figured out. So those are the New Testament concepts that are found in the Book of Judges. The last thing is, as I said, you have got to protect the people and your church from false doctrine. That is the number one thing.

III. The Judges and Israel's Decline

Now, the Book of Judges breaks down really easy. The Book of Judges is one of those great books that follows a natural progression. There are 12 men in this Book who are judging. The Judges are men that God raised up to deliver the nation of Israel every time they fell into apostasy. There are 12 of them. Now, a lot of guys say there are 14 because they count Eli and Samuel when you get into 1 Samuel. That is fine. But as far as the Book of Judges is concerned, there are 12. These are the men that God raised up to deliver the nation of Israel when they fell into apostasy. With these 12 men, we have got another whole study because these 12 men will show you the messed up concept of leadership that is found in the nation of Israel during this time. I am telling you, these guys, some are good, some are bad, some are terrible. These guys are the very best that Israel has, and they try to bring back the nation of Israel and lead the nation of Israel in tough times, and they only make the situations worse. I could not help but read that a number of years ago, and I thought of our own country because our own country is in the same mess. I looked at this and I thought, "You know what? America is just like the nation of Israel. This is like Christianity. America is so dependent on its leadership."

I remember back in the early 1600s, 1700s, when they were forming this country, they were sitting down and they were talking about what kind of government they were going to have. You are told today that we are a democratic government. That is not true. This country was never set up after a democratic government. This country was set up as a republic. There is a difference between a democracy and a republic. A democracy is where the people get to choose. A republic is where the government is set up based on principles found in the Word of God. That is the definition. They were sitting around back there, and John Locke, one of our founding fathers, began to stress the emphasis that when we put our government together, we needed to sit down and make sure we had good laws. He wrote a great paper, wrote many papers on it. He made many speeches before that little group. He said, "We as a founding nation must, at the beginning, set down good laws." William Penn in 1681 gave this address. I will tell you what, it is one of the most unbelievable pieces of wisdom that I have ever read in my life, certainly showing the character and the concept of the men who were in leadership when this country began. John Locke had said, "We need to have good laws." William Penn said, "No, you are wrong, John. No, we do not need good laws. What we need is good men." By "good," meaning saved men, that is what he is talking about. He said, "We do not need good laws. We need good men." He says, "Good laws do good, but good men do better." He said, "Good laws might help man be better, but good men will never lack good laws and will never allow a bad one." I am telling you what, that kind of wisdom was built into this country by our forefathers who simply said, "Good laws are not enough. You need born-again, blood-washed, saved men in office who not only put good laws, but are good men." In other words, their lives are dictated by the principles of the Word of God that produce the laws. Incredible, incredible. We see from that point, by the early 1800s, end of the 1700s, every state in the union had in its state constitution that you could not hold office in that state if you were not a born-again, blood-washed child of God, believing in God, the devil, and hell, eternal judgment. You see, back then, they believed you had to believe in heaven and hell and eternal judgment because they wanted you to believe that as their public representative, you were going to give an account someday before God for the laws you made. That was William Penn. That is what made this country great. The law of human collapse came in. Here we are today.

This book is simply built around these 12 men, and that is easy. In chapter 1, chapter 2, and chapter 3, you have a record of the apostasy that they get into, the fall of the nation of Israel and its long-term results. You remember when we studied Joshua last week, I showed you this in the last chapter, in chapter 24. Three times, Joshua warns them and admonishes them that you cannot serve God and you cannot keep those false gods. Three times he warns them and admonishes them that if they think they are going to be able to serve God and keep these idols, that they are nuts. Three times they will not give him a definite statement against the other gods and the other idols, but they simply say this, "We will serve the Lord." What you see at the end of the Book of Joshua destroys them in the Book of Judges.

We see that, as I told you last week, Judges is the weirdest book the world has ever seen. The whole book is to be viewed and understood in the last verse of the book, Judges 21:25: "No king in Israel and every man doing what is right in his own eyes." That is the Book of Judges, that is America, that is the church today. There is no king, there is no authority. Judges gives you insight

into why you can see some of the weirdest things in New Testament Bible Christianity that are so contrary to the Word of God. They confuse us. You see churches that seem to be successful. They talk about God, they have Bible studies, they sing hymns, they take up offerings, they help people, people get saved, they have missions they support. From the outside, it looks like, "Well, this is what it ought to be." But when you get on the inside, you see some of the most unbelievable, confusing stuff that you ever see in your life. God's people today are about as confused as they can get if they know anything about the Bible at all.

I used to do it. I used to sit back and scratch my head. When I was growing up back in the 60s and the 70s, and I was listening to the Bible being taught, everybody was saying the Laodicean church were those groups that were the liberal churches back then. Everybody thought, "Oh, that is what they were." But now that is very clear. That is not true. The Laodicean church is us. It is the very people who had the Word of God, who had God, who left Him and dumped Him now, and we have got something else. The Book of Judges begins to show you how God views the church and His perspective today. We are strange people. We are very gullible people.

I noticed this not just last week, but the week before last, when President Reagan died. I have no qualm with President Reagan. I thought he was a great president. Besides, anybody who could be on Death Valley Days for 20 years is okay in my book. That was an old Western movie he hosted for a lot of years. I watched that thing, and I thought to myself, "You know what? This is so interesting, because this whole nation is getting a perspective, a week-long funeral." I am not against that. I mean, he was a President of the United States and all that. But I thought to myself, "You know what? Somewhere over in China, somewhere over in Africa, somewhere over in the Baltics, somewhere over in Europe, somewhere over in Russia, somewhere over there, a place where nobody knows, some old child of God, or some dear saint of God, that gave her life or everything all her life to serve God, never had one bit of notoriety. When she dies, she will probably be thrown in a hole someplace with dirt covered over, and nobody ever thinks twice about it." Here is a guy, somebody said, "Well, President Reagan was..." Well, you know what? I do not know if he was or he was not. But let me just say this about him. I said it about Calvin. I listened to the new bigwigs that got up there and gave his eulogies. Let me just say this: if those are his friends, and he really believed what those guys said the Bible said about going to heaven, he is in hell. Now, I am not saying he is in hell. I am just saying, I just go by, you know what? Let me tell you something. If I die, and one of you guys does my funeral, if you do not tear the paint off the walls and preach the truth, I am going to come back and bite you in the posterior extremities, man, in the lower regions. Man, get up there and got the whole world. What do you talk about? "Oh, he is fishing in the beautiful streams of the water. He is looking to the purple sunset that out of that, it out of that, it out of that." Oh, man, I am telling you, "Let us join together in the common universal concept of baptism." Oh, give me a break. Now, I am not saying he was or he was not. I do not know. I hope he was, but I am just saying this, man, come on. I know this: I watched his life. I grew up as president. I never heard him make one statement publicly about the second coming of Christ. I never heard him make one statement about the Bible being the absolute perfect Word of God. I never heard him make one public statement in any place in the world about the fact that God was going to judge the world someday and there was a place called heaven and a place called hell. So you take it from there. I am just saying a lot

of weird things we buy into. You see, when I look at something like that, sure, I am moved. I am moved. I think to myself, "Honor to whom honor is due." But I do not buy into the place where, you know, it is just as Rush Limbaugh said today, "God spoke to America, and America was listening." Then he went home that night. His wife said, "By the way, I am leaving here. God told me while he was talking to you that that is what I am going to do." And off we go. Come on, keep it in perspective. The Book of Judges helps you see things as God sees it. Not just the Reagan funeral, anything in life where the whole world just paints it up as, "Oh, God is here. God is there. He was the greatest servant God ever had." And there is some old guy over there in Africa that nobody even knows his name, gave his whole life serving God, dies in a burial pit someplace. God has a perspective you need to see. That is what the Book of Judges does. It shows you how God looks at things.

In chapter 1, 2, and 3, you have the beginning of the, we talked about this last week, the 93 missing years. There are 120 contradictions in the King James 1611 Authorized Version, 120 mistakes that God made, 120 places where God just lost it and put the thing down wrong. There are books on it. I have looked at all 120 of them. I must confess with you, 90 of them could be answered and worked out with just common sense. But that is the first problem we have got. The last 30 take about five minutes of Bible study and turning your pages and believing in what you read to solve those. Anyway, we talked about this last week, and the great concept here, there are no contradictions in the Bible. Those 93 missing years that you find from the Book of Acts are answered in the Book of Judges.

- In Judges chapter 3, verses 5 to 8, you have 8 years with the King of Mesopotamia.
- Judges chapter 3, verse 12, you have the 18 years in Moab.
- Judges chapter 4, verse 1, you have the 20 years under Sisera.
- Judges chapter 6, you have 7 years with Midian.
- In Judges chapter 13, you have 40 years with the Philistines.

It adds up to 93 years. There you are. No big deal. But what it does is it teaches another great concept back then. It is also a principle today. God was not counting the time that the nation of Israel served other gods. The point is this: God does not count the time today that we are not busy doing something for Him.

I talked to you about building a Laodicean, of being a Philadelphian in a church and a Laodicean church spirit. I talk about my job as building Philadelphian Christians in a Laodicean church. Somebody said, "Bob, how do you do that?" Well, the Bible tells you to do that.

Ephesians 5:16

Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

So I can, as a New Testament born-again child of God who believes the Bible, I can for myself and for this church and for you, we can redeem that time. Somebody says, "Well, it says redeem the time for the days are evil, but how do you do it?" You have got to go to Psalm 90. In Psalm 90, verses 9 through 12, or on down through there, it tells you exactly how to redeem that time. The Bible never tells you to do something without giving you a place that tells you how to do it.

He tells me leaven over here. He shows me where the leaven comes in. He tells me to redeem the time. He is going to show me how to redeem the time.

IV. Overview of the Judges

With all that in mind, let me give you a quick breakdown of the judges, and then we are out of here because I know it is Father's Day, and I am a father. I am a grandfather. Next week I am going to be an archbishop, but anyway. Now keep in mind as we break these things down in the Book of Judges, not only is it a picture historically, it is a picture inspirationally of the things in our own life and our own Laodicean church, but you are going to find darkly the pictures of the second coming. You are going to find great principles on the tribulation period, the millennium, and of course life, sin, and the Laodicean church period.

- The first judge: Othniel (Judges 3:5-8).

He delivers them from the king of Mesopotamia. I am going to spend a little more time with, so I am just going to breeze through just so you get it, but we are going to end good here in just a minute.

- The second judge: Ehud (Judges 3:12-14).

Now he is a neat guy. Study that story. He kills a guy by the name of Eglon, king of Moab, and it is one of the neatest pictures you ever saw in your life because it is a picture of New Testament soul winning. This guy goes in and he talks to this guy who is a picture of an unsaved guy. He is a really worldly guy, and the Bible says that Ehud has got a sharp little two-edged dagger. Picture the Word of God. He walks into this guy and he talks to this guy, and he takes that thing and he sticks him with it. When he sticks him with it, the Bible says that the guy was kind of a heavy guy, that his body wrapped around the heft of that thing that he could not pull it out. Now that is a picture of when you stick somebody with the Bible, it stays. Remember last week I talked about Jeremiah, that my mandate was to, as a preacher, was not to pull back my sword from blood but to draw blood and not do the work of God deceitfully. Well, that was this guy right here. He went in and he stuck him. The Bible says that the man's fat grabbed the heft of that dagger, and he could not pull it out. Then the Bible says the dirt came out. Any time you stick somebody with the Word of God, the dirt that is on the inside is going to come out. Great picture, great picture.

- The third judge: Deborah (Judges 4-5).

That is a woman. Of course, we are living in a time when if God would have been in charge, there would not have been a woman, but that is the way that it is. God used her. God uses whatever is willing to be used. In this case, Deborah is a type of the church. She is a woman. She kills Sisera, that is your next type of the Antichrist. She kills him with a head wound like the Antichrist, with a nail. The Bible says in Jeremiah chapter 23, verse 29, that nails are a type of the Word of God. So here is a woman that kills the type of the Antichrist with a head wound with something that is a picture type of the Word of God, a picture of the second coming of Christ. Then she sings a song of victory about it. Of course, that is Judges chapter 5, she sings the song of victory. That is the new song found in Revelation chapter 14, verse 3. It will all pose together.

- The fourth judge: Gideon (Judges 6-8).

Oh, what a great principle that is. Gideon's 300, a great Bible principle. Gideon starts out with 32,000 men. God says that is too many. Now you have got to keep in mind that they are going up against a 135,000 enemy. They only have 32,000 to start with. God says that is too many. So He cuts them down and sends 22,000 home, leaving 10,000. If that were not bad enough, He says, "Okay, take that 10,000 down to the river and let them get a drink." You watch the way they drink, and the way that they drink, they drink two ways. The way the one guy drinks, you send him home. The way the other guy drinks, you keep him. That is great for a preacher. One of the things that I do is watch how you drink. The pattern is right there, and that has never been wrong in my life that I have seen it. You take the guy that drinks one way and the guy that drinks someplace else, they wind up being two types of guys, and you might as well send the one guy home. Take that for what it is worth. But that is what your Bible does for you. It shows you those kind of things. 300 people up against 135,000. Then He says, "Go get those boys." He comes up and he says, "Well, I have got a battle plan. We have got air cover coming. We are going to have a 15-minute barrage, rolling barrage. We are going to have them straight. We are going to put in mortar. We are even got some gas bombs over here, and we are going to do this thing. We are going to win this." God says, "Scrap those things. Here is what I want you to do. Go down here to Kmart and Walmart, and you might have to go a couple other places because you are going to need a lot of these, but get you some lamps, get you some pitchers, and then get you some trumpets." Within the lamps and the pitchers and the trumpets, you have not only a picture of the second coming of Christ, you have a picture of how you and I are to fight the battle every day in our lives. We do not have time to get into this one, but that makes a good 30-night Bible question. But the great principle is, you know what? God is always in the minority. That is the other thing. You look around this world today in Christianity, everybody out there, you know, from just the Bible consistency. A guy stayed with me one time. He said, "Bob," he said, "what you believe," he said, "nobody in the world believes this. How in the world can you say you are right when everybody else in Christianity, who is anybody, and you are a nobody, how can you say you believe this and you are right when everybody else who has got thousands of degrees, millions of hours in Bible colleges doing great things, and you are over here saying one thing, and everybody, what makes you think that you are right when all the world thinks you are wrong?" I said, "Easy. In Noah's day, the whole world, four billion people, thought he was wrong. He only had eight. He was right. God is always with the faithful few. If it is big and it is great and it is grand, God is probably not there. Not always, but 98% of the time." So what a great story that is.

- The fifth judge: Abimelech (Judges 9).

He is your next type of the Antichrist. Oh, and I must confess to you, this is one I hope you do not ask on Thursday night. Strange story here. Abimelech talked about the trees going forth and anointing a king over him. When you lay the whole thing out, Abimelech is the bramble, and the bramble tree gets crowned and picked as the king. Hence, Abimelech becomes the king. But there is more here than that. Oh, yes. In that thing in Judges chapter 9, you have an olive tree, you have a fig tree, you have a vine tree, and you have a bramble tree. In Genesis, in the garden with the first Adam, you have the same four trees. In Matthew,

Mark, Luke, and John, with the second Adam, you have the same four trees. You know who gets crowned king over there? The bramble does. So when Christ is on the throne, they give Him a crown of thorns from the bramble. That will take you a while. The thing will tell you what the tree of life is. It will tell you what the tree of... it will tell you what three ate off of. It will tell you everything you want to know.

- The sixth judge: Tola (Judges 10:1-2).
- The seventh judge: Jair (Judges 10:3).
- The eighth judge: Jephthah (Judges 11-12).

My old buddy, Jephthah. If there is ever a man that pictures the 21st century and 20th century Christian, it is Jephthah. Here is a man that does his own thing. Here is a man that is a saved man. Here is a man that in every case that you find him, he is totally oblivious to the Word of God, doing his own thing. He is out there, and he is a hot hit anyhow. He is out there, and they try to get him to be the judge. He says, "Okay, I will be the judge." He is walking down the road, feeling pretty good about everything, and he makes one of those great big spiritual vows, saying, "Oh God, if you win this great battle for me, the first thing I do when I come home, the first thing I see, I will offer to You and I will sacrifice to You." Well, he gets a great battle, comes back, and the first thing he sees is his daughter coming out the gate. So, true to his vow, he kills his own daughter. How many times have I had people ask me, "How is God in that? How did God, why did God allow that?" The answer is simple. We are in the Book of Judges. God is not a million miles around any place here. This is the place where there is no king in Israel, and every man is doing right in his own eye. This is a picture of modern man today, losing their kid to the world and killing their kids, as sure as you put a bullet to their brain, because there is no absolute final authority in your life, and you are doing your own thing and giving God the credit for it. Well, I preached that for a while, but we have got to move on.

- The ninth judge: Samson (Judges 13-16).

Oh, and if there is any man that totally shows the attitude of the time of the judges, it is Samson. A total disregard of authority for the Word of God and everything in his life. Now, traditionally, when you hear the stories about Samson, they focus on all the things in his life, and there are some great sermons on it, and it is all true. It is all true. Of course, he is portrayed as the great he-man with a she-weakness. He is always getting into the wrong situation. He is a Nazarite. He is under a vow. Numbers chapter 6. When he sins, he is supposed to do something to get that vow taken away. Of course, he touches the dead lion and he gets the honey out. Then he never does what he is supposed to do. That is another great message. He was supposed to get a lamb. He was supposed to get a female lamb. He was supposed to get a ram. Well, he did not. It is great preaching. All of them are great. They are all true. They are all ways to apply it to your life. But you know what? We are going to go for it as far as the overall concept of how it fits to the Book of Judges and where we are at. Because he is more than that. He is more than that.

I have heard it preached that he was a spiritual suicide when he got up there, which he was, and he pulled those pillars down. He brought those pillars down on him, and he killed himself. I have heard guys preach that, you know what? You can live your life of sin and do your own thing, and finally God takes your life home. I believe that. I do not find any violation with that preaching. I

think that is true. But I think it is even more than that. I do not think it is just the fact that God is going to kill you. I do not think it is a fact that there are some people out there that just will not repent and keep on sinning. People go on and on and on, and God, He just comes, God comes down and says, "I cannot put up with this anymore. You are messing up too much. Come on. I am taking you home." I believe that happens. I believe yes, Samson is a picture of that, but I do not believe that is the only picture he has. Because there are a lot of live Christians walking around today at the judgment seat of Christ, they are going to be as dead as a fish in the sun for a week. They are dead, and they are alive, and they are saved, but yet they are dead.

Samson winds up a total captive to the Philistines. We know what the Philistines are. That is a picture of the world system. Not only does he become a total captive, in other words, when you study his life, you will find that the events in his life and the people in his life led him right down the golden path to be exactly where he is at. That thing is just an absolute destruction of his life. Yet, lo and behold, he is found in Hebrews chapter 11 in God's hall of fame. You know why? It was a picture of me and you. There he is, captive by the Philistines, naked, blind, broken, wretched, shamed, disgraced, enslaved by the sin of this world. At the judgment seat of Christ, he is a picture of the child of God that is going to stand there who has been in bondage to the world system and could not break it and did not want to break it. Yet they are saved. They are on their way to heaven. They are going to be in heaven. He is a picture of the child of God that at the judgment seat of Christ loses all that he has, and he winds up naked, shamed, and broken. The great lesson that Israel never learned, neither do we.

The greatest message I ever heard on this, I never heard it in person. I heard it on tape by an old boy by the name of Sam Jones. How many ever saw the Grand Ole Opry? The Grand Ole Opry is in Ryman Auditorium. Everybody thinks that is the home of the Grand Ole Opry. Ryman Auditorium was the home of Sam Jones. The world just took it over like everything else. Sam Jones was a Methodist, fire-breathing, hell-damnation preacher who was preaching down there, and some old gambling guy got saved. When he got saved, he recognized who got him saved by the preacher of the Word of God. He built Ryman Auditorium down there. Every week Sam Jones preached there for, I do not know how many years, and he preached the Word of God and got thousands of people saved. After Sam Jones died, man, movement, machine, Grand Ole Opry. How come there was not somebody else who took his place? Why did not Jerry Falwell down there preaching, tearing it up? No picture fight against him, but I am just asking why did not somebody else do it? Sam Jones used to preach on Samson. You know what he preached? He would preach the lesson that he would say, "Sin blinds you, sin binds you, and sin grinds you." He was blinded by his sin, he was bound by his sin, and then that Philistine finally made a slave of him, and he ground for them. He was blinded, bound, and he ground that millstone. Oh, picture of a child of God, spiritual suicide. You are alive, but you are dead. When you get to the judgment seat of Christ, you are sold into slavery to this world, man. When you get to the judgment seat of Christ, you are there naked, shameful, broken, busted, standing there before God because you have danced with this world instead of taking care of the business with the Word of God.

V. The Depths of Israel's Total Collapse

Judges chapter 17 through chapter 21, and we are done. Those chapters show you the depths of Israel's total collapse. They go into Baal worship, the idols, the groves, the gods, the images, the false doctrine. In fact, remember me telling you before when you go over to Revelation chapter 14, when it talks about the 144,000, there are two tribes that are not part of the 144,000. One is Dan, one is Ephraim. You go to Hosea, you will find why Ephraim is not. You come to the Book of Judges chapter 17 through 21, you will find out why Dan is not. Samson was from the tribe of Dan. In the Book of Judges, Dan goes into deep apostasy. They accept Baal worship. They dump every semblance of God and the Word of God. Yet they have got a form of godliness and a form of religion. You have got Micah who takes a man from Dan who is his priest, who brings him images and groves, and he has all this stuff taking place.

Then in chapter 18 and 19, you have one of the strangest stories in the Bible, almost a remake of Sodom and Gomorrah. Yet there is no destruction, there is no fire from God coming down here. I will tell you why. You have got an end picture, and the end of this book shows you exactly what leaving the Word of God and depravity of man do. You have got a picture of what is in America today, because America, you want to judge this chapter 18 and 19, that strange story? That is the same exact thing we have got in America today. Totally depraved, reprobate mind, no concept of God from one end to the other.

Then in chapter 20 and 21, with all this great ungodliness going on with the tribe of Dan in apostasy and the Baal worship and the Sodom and Gomorrah and the sin and all this stuff has taken place. In chapter 20 and 21, you have the great leaders talking about great spiritual things with God, giving oaths to God, swearing to God, saying how great God is, and God is not a million miles around. In those days, there was no king in Israel, and every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

VI. The Enduring Lesson: Trust and Obey

In closing, I am going to give you the greatest thing about this story. I gave you a lot of great concepts, but I am going to give you the number one thing you want to take home today. Let me tell you something. This story, the Book of Judges, takes place 400 years before David comes to the throne and Solomon comes to the throne. This event takes place 400 years before the highest spiritual peak that Israel ever had ever came to be. I am telling you, they are in depravity now, and their greatest day is not coming yet. For 400 years from now, they get to the highest religious, political system of the kingdom of heaven anywhere in the history of the world. Then they fall apart and go into apostasy, and they go into a captivity, and they do not ever come back to the tribulation. You know why? You know why? You think it was something after David? You think it was something after Solomon? No, my friend. You know why? Because even though this is 400 years away yet, and they are still going to reach their greatest point when they had their downfall, you could not point to anything there that you do not find here. In other words, I am saying this: a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. The seed was sown in the Book of Judges that destroyed them in the Book of 2 Chronicles. Once you get leaven and false doctrine in your church, into your people, into your life, it is tough to get out. 400 years from now, David was going to come to the throne, and then Solomon, and after they leave, and they are dead, the

whole nation goes back to apostasy, back into the mess, back into Baal worship, the exact same thing that is in the Book of Judges. By 2 Chronicles chapter 36 and 606 BC, God says, "I have had enough," dispersing them into the world. It all started back in the Book of Judges. That is why the things you put in your kids' lives when they are little, those things are going to pay off when they get older. That is why the things that we teach you right now, and I told you last week, the importance of that first year, the things we build right now are going to pay off down there. The thing we have got to take care of and do business with 24/7 is understanding that we have got no leaven coming in here, no false doctrine, no false teaching, and brother, it stays with the Book, because I am telling you, you sow the seeds right now for what is going to happen in your life 20 years from now.

I am done. But I want to leave you with this. There is a reason why we sing songs out of here. Now I am not against good music. I am not such a stickler that I just have to, but I know, I believe this. We have fun and we laugh when we watch things that are not on TV, that are not biblical, and I think you can sing songs that way. But when it comes down to your praise and your worship, and you are going to use music, do not ever have less doctrine in your singing than you have got in your Bible. You guys would not put up with me getting up here and preaching some mealy-mouthed, mush-mouthed message that says nothing, would you? Then why would I put up with somebody singing about it? I know that is my problem, but that is where I am at. But there is a reason why I like this. Those old boys, they believed the Bible. I know those old boys were reading through here and reading these stories, and they said, "You know what, I have got a song I can put to that."

One of the greatest hymn writers that you ever find was a guy named Daniel B. Towner, lived from 1850 to 1919, right at the end of the Philadelphia Church Age. One day he was reading through the Book of Judges, and he must have said to himself—I have never heard him say this and never even met him, never heard him say anything, only read a short excerpt about his life—and I know what he believed, and I know he loved the Book, and I know he wrote his songs based on the doctrine, principles, and the Word of God. He must have come through that thing reading the Book of Judges, and he must have said to himself—I do not know if he did this, this is how I do it—I would say to myself, "If I am going to write a song about this book, what would be the title that would sum it all up? What would be the title that I could say in just the title of the song and then put the song to it, that would say exactly that every Christian who listened to my music and read the Bible would read the Book of Judges and say, 'That is what that song is about,' or hear that song and say, 'That is what the Book of Judges is about.'" About 1880, somewhere in there, he wrote this song, and it says it all:

When we walk with the Lord in the light of his word,
What a glory he sheds on our way,
While we do his good will, he abides with us still,
And with all who will trust and obey.

The Book of Judges: trust and obey, for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus than to trust and obey. Joshua said, "You cannot serve God and have those idols." He said, "You have to have courage, courage to believe the Word of God, courage to obey the Word of God, courage to rest in the Word of God." In the Book of Judges, they did not. When that old boy read that thing, he wrote that song, no greater line could ever state what needs to be done in the Book of Judges and

what needs to be done in our lives. Trust and obey, for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus than to trust and obey.

Every head bowed, every eye closed. Father, we thank You today, this morning, for the time we have been able to spend in Your Word.