

QT Questions—for Judges

(Here's a short introduction to the book of Judges from one of my study Bible.)

- The book of Judges is a startling narrative about the pain of a life without God and about the wonders of God's intervention. The stories in Judges begin shortly after the death of Joshua, who led the Israelites into the Promised Land. The people no longer have a leader like Moses or Joshua, and they neglect their relationship with God. The result is a recurring cycle of—sin, punishment, repentance, and rescue by a “judge” (a leader sent by God).
- Judges reveals the depravity that results from people living by their own truth, “everyone did as they saw fit”—disorder, immorality, corruption and destruction—and the incredible need for God's reign. Even those raised up to help us can lead us astray, but God will not. He is the rightful king over our lives and over all the earth.

Judg 1 (1/10/23)

1. In 1:1-26, what did Judah and Simeon decide to do together and what was the result for their land (Josh 19:9); why cut off the thumbs and big toes; why couldn't Judah drive out the Canaanites living in the plains; how well were God's people obeying God's command and how is this applicable to you?
2. In 1:27-36, why were the Canaanites determined to live among God's people; what were God's people willing to accept of the Canaanites' determination; what should have ruled the hearts and decision of God's people and how would that play out; how is this applicable to your life?

* I see in this chapter the reality of living in this world. As much as God's people wanted to obey God's word fully, the reality was, it was really difficult. So, they seemed to obey God's word, but not go to the full extent, because they thought it was too hard. They chose to accept their reality over God's word. And I see that a lot in our lives, in my life. I am willing to obey, but, when it becomes too hard, I see myself not going all the way, even though I say I know, that obedience is the best possible thing I can possibly do for my life (Is 48:17-18). There's an idol in my heart, and at times, I choose to obey the idol over my God. How sad I am to realize this. “Oh Lord, I repent before You, for choosing my way over Yours, though I say, You know what's best, still, my action and decision clearly betrays You.” May I lovingly encourage all of us, me especially, let's pray that we would delight to obey our God fully, even when it may seem too hard, because we truly believe, He truly knows what's best for us, and our obedience before Him, is what's really the best thing we can do, both for ourselves and for God's glory.

Judg 2 (1/11/23)

1. In 2:1-9, according to God, how did Israel disobey Him and what was the result; what happened at Bokim and why did it not last long; how is this applicable to you?
2. In 2:10-23, how could the next generation not know the Lord when the previous generation served Him well and can you apply it to our day (v. 10); what does God call evil (v. 11) and what other strong language does God use to describe it, why is that evil; using God's definition of evil, can you see it near you or in people around you, will you describe?

* To me, 2:10 is a frightening Scripture. To think that parents will not see their children in God's kingdom in eternity. For parents and pastors and leaders, to think the people under our care will not be there to worship and enjoy the everlasting fellowship of love with our God. To know we could and should have served and helped our loved ones more and did not. The pain would be unbearable to think that our next generation would not know the Lord, when we have walked with Him. This is a sin too great to bear...

Judg 3 (1/12/23)

1. In 3:1-6, why were the enemies living amongst God's people; in God's sovereignty, why did God allow these enemies to remain; in verses 5 & 6, will you explain who was living where and why was it so wrong to do what they did; how is this applicable to you?
2. In 3:7-31, who were the first three judges; can you explain the cycle of each judges; what would be God's desire for His people and why then allow His people to go through this cycle so many times; how is this applicable to you?

* Starting with Othniel, we begin to see the cycle of apostasy, judgment, repentance and deliverance that will repeat throughout this book. See how many times this cycle is repeated. Reflect why God's people keep repeating their sinful ways. Why is it so hard to break away from this sinful cycle? Why is it so hard to break away from our sinful ways that we keep repeating? This book, the people, is a mirror that reflects and shows so much of who we are and what we do and why we need our Savior and Lord so much.

Judg 4 (1/13/23)

1. In 4:1-10, in verse 1, what do you notice about the way God expresses; who is the judge and what's different; how is this applicable to you?
2. In 4:11-24, in verse 16, who is pursuing who and how is this possible (knowing what we know from 1:19); who is Jael and why are we told about her and what did she do; what do we learn about our God and how is His knowledge meant to impact us?

* We are told that God's people cried out to the Lord for help after twenty years of cruelty from the enemies (v. 3). Two years of suffering cruelty is painfully too long, yet, they waited twenty years to cry out to God. This we do and many Christians do, we linger and wait in our suffering, so much longer than we should. Why? Though there are many reasons, let me share simply one, and that is, because we refuse to get out of the sinfulness we have been lingering. The sad fact is, we often rather stay in our sins than repent of our ugliness and seek God's way to turn us around. Though all Christians would confess of our love for our God, but the decisions we often make is, we choose to remain in sin than repent and turn from our sins, and seek His way over ours. Our confession and our choices do not always walk together. Let's pray much for our hearts and decisions to both submit before our God and delight more than anything, to walk nearer and dearer with our God.

Judg 5 (1/14/23)

1. In 5:1-27, did you notice, some tribes marched for battle, while others did not, can you tell who did and didn't; what lesson do you learn; how is this applicable to you?
2. In 5:28-31, what was Sisera's mother hoping and thinking; what do we learn about the hearts of mothers (even when her son is doing evil); what kind of mother does our God desire for our mothers to be?

* Twice, God is praised because princes/leaders lead and the people follow willingly (vv. 2 & 9). To know our roles, to be faithful in our places, and to do them with our whole hearts for His glory, is praiseworthy for our God. May we not only know our roles, but exercise them faithfully and wholeheartedly, for the glory of our God. May we learn to be joyfully faithful as He is lovingly faithful to us.

Judg 6 (1/16/23)

1. In 6:1-24, when did God's people begin to cry out to the Lord and why wait until then; how did the angel of the Lord address Gideon and how strange was that and how did Gideon respond; in your life, have you seen the differences on the way God sees you and the way you see yourself or the way the world sees you?
2. In 6:25-40, what did God want Gideon to use in order to build an altar to the Lord and how would that impact the people; who did Gideon called on first to go to battle and why is this significant (v. 11 & 34); how did Gideon want God to re-assure him and what does that say about our God; how is this applicable to you?

* What God sees and how God speaks is so different than the way we are. The way Gideon was, the way he lived, the things he was doing, the things he was thinking and feeling, the way he spoke, and the way he saw God, was nothing the way God called him and saw him. If we were in Gideon's shoes, we would be no different. But, more important than seeing ourselves in Gideon, is the way God was with him, and the same way He is with us. The way our God sees us and addresses us in His word, is no different, isn't it? How awesomely amazing it would be, to see ourselves and those around us, as our God sees us and others and speak with His truth in His way. Let's remember, "Let God be true and every person a liar" (Rom 3:4). Whenever we have a different thought than His, may His truth humble us, and bless us to accept Him. Because we are liars, we need, we want, to repent and humbly accept His truth.

Judg 7 (1/17/23)

1. In 7:1-18, how many men initially come to join Gideon to go to the battle and how many are eventually left to do the fighting; why did God want to shrink the number when they were already much smaller than their enemies; what do we learn about our God and about ourselves?
2. In 7:19-25, what three things did Gideon's men carry and how were they used; can you imagine and describe why it produced what it did for the enemies; how is God involved here; how is it applicable to you?

* Our life experience has taught us, that the more we have, the stronger we are. The reason why we want to accumulate more, work to get bigger savings, work to be more

successful are all means for us to seek to be stronger. It is safe to say, most of us have bought in to the world's lesson well, for most of us strive hard to be successful, to be stronger. But, sadly, we keep forgetting the truth God teaches, that is, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in (our) weakness" (2Cor 12:9). God teaches us that His power shines when we are weak, and we taste more of God's grace when we are weak. For many of us, we want to be strong, and remain strong always, and never ever be weak. We keep ignoring God's way and strive to have God join my way. We have it all wrong. We have it reversed. We need to truly examine our hearts and see, if we think we know what's better for us than God does. May the battle in this chapter confuse our understanding, humble our hearts, and renew our minds to truly believe, "Let God be true and every human being a liar" (Rom 3:4).

Judg 8 (1/18/23)

1. In 8:1-21, can you explain how the Ephraimites were cowardly terrible brothers' keepers; can you explain why the towns' people of Sukkoth and Peniel refused to offer help to their brothers; what would be the brothers' keepers roles in these situations; how is this applicable to you?
2. In 8:22-35, though Gideon clearly says the right thing in v. 23, how does his deeds betray his words (can you point out couple of these); we have no way of knowing the intention, but how was the ephod Gideon made used; what lessons do you learn from Gideon and how are they applicable to you?

* This chapter is full of sad events. Brothers who should be helping and assisting each other, refuse to do so. But, we see that a lot in our lives, don't we? When we should be helping others, we think about the what ifs, especially about the negative consequences it may bring, and therefore, we might not refuse people to their faces, but remain silent or aloof, which is no different than a refusal. Then, we also see, a mighty warrior, who had the faith to destroy his father's and the community idol, now, he, himself, sets up an idol for the community to follow, as he ends his life. No wonder, Pastor Eugene Peterson wrote a book titled, "A long obedience in the same direction," which is so necessary and missing with Gideon. His obedience was not long in the same direction to our God. May we humbly learn his lesson for ourselves, and learn, we are unable on our own to keep going in His direction. Let's pray much, repent often, and commit and re-commit, not out of our own strength and resolution, but leaning and seeking His blessing to keep us. It really is true, we can persevere, only because He preserves us. And He loves to preserve us, so we can persevere. What a good God we worship!

Judg 9 (1/19/23)

1. In 9:1-6, why would Gideon allow one of his son to be named Abilemek when he clearly said he would not be their king (8:23); why would the people give Abimelek 70 shekels of silver and why would they want to crown him their king seeing what he did; what do you learn about evil here and how is this applicable to you?
2. In 9:7-57, how is Mount Gerizim used here as compared to her former usage and what does that teach you (Deut 27:12); what is the meaning of Jotham's parable and how was it realized; what kind of city was Shechem supposed to be and what has

happened here (Josh 21:21); which two men are singled out as killed by a woman in this book; what lesson do you learn here?

* The propensity to evil is shocking and frightening, isn't it? To ascend to be the king, one half brother murdered seventy of his brothers of his father. In order to feel safer, the people willingly give money in order for someone else to do the evil dirty work. If success, accomplishments, championships, or the throne is the goal, then, the means to the end is justifiable, because the measuring stick will be, did it accomplish its goal, and it did. The measuring stick in our world is success or championships, and too many people, especially our young generation, and even in the church, many people have adopted this mentality that success is the goal, or the end justifies the mean. This is wrong; the world's way is wrong. God's way is, the means to the end is equally as important as the end; thus, the means we take for success cannot be in any way mixed with the ways that dishonors our God. When we live for God's glory, His glory must always be accomplished gloriously through every step we take to the final completion, only then, is God glorified. The end for God's people is always God's glory, and God's glory must be sought in every step to the final completion.

Judg 10 (1/20/23)

1. In 10:1-5, who are the two judges introduced and what are told about them; why do you think we are given little information about them; how is this applicable to you?
2. In 10:6-18, in v. 6, can you list all the idols Israel served; in vv. 11-14, how did God respond to the cry for help from His people and why do think that was; how is God's heart described when He decides to deliver His people and what do you learn about God and His heart for His people?

* In this chapter, God's people are all over the place in their idolatry, as they worship these false gods from the east of the Jordan all the way to the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Holiness means being set apart, and that, they were not doing from the people of their day. Because of their unwillingness to fully obey their God and completely conquer the land, now the people of the land seem to have a firmer grasp of the land than God's people. Isn't that very similar to our day, though we are called and sent to the world to be Heaven's Ambassadors, too many Christians do not represent our Home Country, but we have assimilated and are often driven by the ways of this world, aren't we? Even the way God's church and God's families are run, we often submit to the ways and motivation of the world. The book of Judges is painful to read sometimes, because its mirror so obviously shows our faces, our hearts, our ways. But, the amazing love of God is, even during such ugly days, our God will not forsake us. He wants us to know Him, as Immanuel.

Judg 11 (1/21/23)

1. In 11:1-33, why and who drove Jephthah out of town; who and why asked Jephthah to return and what do you think of their motivation; why is the king of Ammon waging war against Israel and what do you think of Jephthah's response?

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2. In 11:34-40, what and why does Jephthah make his vow and what was the consequence; how and why does his daughter respond the way she did; what do you learn about making a vow to God and how is this applicable to you?

* We saw it with the fathers of Abimelek and now with Jephthah, they did not practice one-man one-woman marriage life. Sadly, many of our OT men, like Abraham to Jacob to David and of course, Solomon, they were terrible examples. As godly as they were in some areas, in marriage fidelity, they were terrible sinners, showing us what not to do. Yet, despite their wrongful sinful ways, it is amazing to think that our holy God would still use these sinners to accomplish His sovereign will. Clearly, we can see, our God is almighty despite the ugly sinfulness we may practice. This, in no way, excuses our sinfulness, nor is it to teach us that God allows sinfulness in us. Our main focus here should be, that the power of our almighty God is not limited by our sinfulness. His will will be done, because He is the sovereign God. That is why, when we live our lives, our eyes should always be raised to see Him, even above our foolishly wrong ways.

Judg 12 (1/23/23)

1. In 12:1-7, where have we seen the Ephraimites behave similarly and how is it different here; what couldn't the Ephraimites pronounce the word and what was the result; in his decision, where does it seem Jephthah's focus was; how could he acted with overflowing grace?
2. In 12:8-15, who are the three judges and what are they known for; is there anything that catches your eyes on these verses; how is it applicable to you?

* I am sad and hate the behavior of both the Ephraimites and of Jephthah, the judge. I hate that the Ephraimites would act so immature, so entitled and pure evil. Rather than thanking and blessing their judge for protecting them, they accuse and threaten to destroy his family. This is repaying good with evil. But, I also hate and am sad, very sad of Jephthah's response to the evil attack he received. Reflecting on his heart, in light of what he had to pay and sacrifice for the war he just fought, who wouldn't be heartbroken. Perhaps, because of his deep pain, he has no room to forgive these foolish and childish offenders. So, he repays them evil with evil. Both actions ultimately are evil and very sad. Unless our eyes are turned upward and see our God, how can any one of us have the grace to thank and to forgive. God's overflowing grace is so absolutely necessary for the Ephraimites, to know gratitude and express it well, and for Jephthah, to humbly offer forgiveness because our God has forgiven us first, when we surely were not deserving, like the Ephraimites. In His grace, may our Lord bless us to repay the evil done to us by others, with blessing and forgiveness, not in our own strength, but because His grace overflows in us.

Judg 13 (1/24/23)

1. In 13, what kind of life was the new born boy to live, and what does that life entail, and why live that life; in order to live that life, who came to stir him (v. 25); when God commands and desires for His people to live His way, what does He do?

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- In 13, what is the name of the angel of the Lord and why such name; why does Manoah believe that he will die, and was he right to think this; how does God's name Immanuel change everything; how is this applicable to you?

* This chapter begins with the first word, Again. Again the Israelites did evil before the Lord. Again, they did what they should not have done. Again, they did what they earnestly prayed and promised to not do. As we see with God's people here, sin has a tendency to creep up into our lives, again and again. I wonder, how many again we have done. Too many, isn't it?

- Let's understand couple of things here. First of all, sin is powerful and oppressive. Just because we have decided and resolved to never sin that way again, does not mean, we have the power to break ourselves away from our sins. The clutches of sin will not let us go, until the wages of sin is paid in full. Which points us to the greater truth, and that is, as often as we have sinned and as many agains we have done, the price that our once enemy and now our Savior has paid, completely finished the power of sin over us, and cleanses us whiter than snow. Because His payment over our sins was so complete, there can never again be a condemnation over us for our sins. That's what our once enemy and now our Savior has done. That's who Christ Jesus is, our Savior and surely our Lord as well.

Judg 14 (1/25/23)

- In 14, can you list in all the ways Samson broke his Nazirite vow, and why would he do that; can you list the ways you broke your vow before God and can you examine why you did that and spend some time humbly repenting before God?
- In 14:6, 19, does the power of the Spirit give physical strength; is this a rule or is there more (Ex 31:1-5; 1Chron 12:18); can you explain from John 16:13-14, what is the purpose and roles of the Spirit of God; how is this applicable to you?

* Let me offer a few words of explanation on v. 4, "His parents did not know that this was from the Lord..." Did God cause Samson to break His own command? No. God was not leading Samson to marry this Philistine (Canaanite) woman. It was Samson's passion (which was wrong), which was causing him to desire a wife that was clearly contrary to God's will (Deut 7:1-6). However, while Samson's desire was sinful, God still used it for His own purposes to bring judgment on the Philistines. Remember, God knew how to use the sinfulness of Pharaoh and even of Judas, to accomplish His good will through their evil actions. That's what makes our God's will sovereign and His ways wiser than we are able to understand.

Judg 15 (1/26/23)

- In 15:1-8, who did Samson go to visit and what happened; what was Samson's mindset in his visit and his responses; what do you learn from all these?
- In 15:9-20, who handed Samson over to the Philistine and why; what does the Spirit of God enable Samson to do and why would God want to use him; despite Samson's immature, selfish and unholy ways, how is God's conclusion for him (v. 20); how is this applicable to you?

* I am shocked and disappointed and saddened over couple of things here. First, the mindset of Samson is shockingly sad. After the way he left his wedding days, he is so completely oblivious to what he did, to what others thought and did, that he would come back to visit his supposedly wife, whom her father already gave away to one of his groomsmen. Samson is so blind to his selfishly foolish immature behavior, and yet, God can still use such ill prepared, undeserving, and unwise person to lead His people, and that, for twenty years, we are told. This is shocking and amazing to me, that our God can use such foolish vessels. Maybe, that's way, I can be in the ministry. But, it is so sad to think I can identify with him. The second shocker that saddens me greatly is the mindset of the people of Judah (vv. 11-12). God's people are now calling the Philistines, "rulers over us." This book began with the people of Judah conquering over the Canaanites, but because they wouldn't completely obey God, now, the people of Judah were calling them, rulers over us. This truly mirrors our Christian culture today. May our God bless us with His humility to be able to examine sincerely how far we have fallen, and how earnestly we need to humbly repent of our sinful ways, and turn back to our God and His ways, beginning with our own lives, in our families and in our church.

Judg 16 (1/27/23)

1. In 16:1-22, who are the two women Samson goes to visit and why; why did Delilah wanted to know the secret of his great strength; what three lies did he tell; what does he believe is the secret of his strength; where did his strength truly come from?
2. In 16:23-31, who did the Philistine believe delivered their great enemy Samson and why; why would God answer Samson's last plea and what happened; how is this applicable to you?

* In v. 24, God's word says, "When the people saw him, they praised their god..." This is one of the saddest commentary of one's life. Imagine, if people saw us and praised their idol. In other words, imagine, we becoming a reason to give thanks to their sinful ways. Imagine, Christians and God's churches becoming a reason to give thanks for sinfulness. We heard many such instances, haven't we? Churches and pastors supporting homosexuality, and the homosexual community praising the inclusiveness and love of such churches and people. Of course, this is simply one of many sad examples.

- How I wish verse 24 would read different for Samson and for us, "When the people saw him (saw us), they praise the true God we worship." May our lives be a reason to help the people turn from their sin, and not their reason for praise for their sinfulness. I pray that this verse causes us to humbly examine our lives and see what kind of praise we are producing in other people's lives.

Judg 17 (1/28/23)

1. In 17:6, why would "everyone do what they saw fit" (or what they thought was right); how can doing what's right in your eyes a wrong thing; can you examine your life to see, if something you think is right would not be in God's eyes?
2. In 17:1-13, can you list all the sinful ways you notice here; what are your thoughts on some of them; how is this applicable in your life?

* As we know, our behaviors are the fruits of our thoughts and beliefs. The freedom to do whatever these people wanted, from stealing to making idols to setting up priests, to the expectation of God's blessings is shockingly sad. They really thought and believed whatever they wanted. They had no compass, no foundation, no truth, no authority over them. To have no king over us, is a curse we do not have the power to untangle from. From the worldly perspective, surely Israel had no king. But, if they learned to look up, then they would have known, they truly have a King, under whose authority they can abide and flourish. As Christians, it's easy to state we have a King. But, the better way to see if our King truly reigns over our lives is to see, how much authority does He have in our lives. In the ways we submit to Him, we will see, if He is truly the King over us, or if we treat Him more like a servant, a magician, a part time doctor and provider and protector or whatever else we need Him to be, when we want Him to be, only for however long we need Him to be. And, if that's how we treat Him, then He is nothing like a true King. We really should check how much we submit to Him or how we treat Him.

Judg 18 (1/30/23)

1. In 18:1-20, how does the first sentence of this chapter explain the behavior of the people; why were the Danites exploring the land when they have already received their inheritance (Josh 19:40-48); can you explain the mindset of the priest and the Danites in these verses?
2. in 18:21-31, why is Micah pursuing the Danites and what did he mean with his confession (v. 24); what do the Danites do and why do you think they held on to the idols they stole; how is this applicable to you?

* This chapter has so many things go wrong, and they are all sandwiched between the first and the last sentences, from no king to idol worshiper. But, what makes it a frightening mirror to us, is the fact that all of their evil and sinful actions were sprinkled with God and His blessings, as if God was truly blessing their ugly thoughts and behaviors. Because God and His ways are mentioned often, it is easy to think that God was involved and blessing their deeds. May I say, I see and hear that a lot in our days, as many Christians invoke God's name in many of our endeavors or prayers, but His holy ways are surely not visible in our deeds. Indeed, these people are a frightening mirror to many of us. Before we go any further, sometimes, some days, we just need to sit a while and repent of our ugly ways. Maybe today is that some day.

Judg 19 (1/31/23)

1. In 19:1-15, will you write out the first sentence of this chapter and explain what it means for God's people then and now; what are the unlawful ways you see in the Levites' life; what are the unlawful ways you see in your own life; so, what kind of judgment and condemnation and punishment did you receive because of your unlawfulness?
2. In 19:16-30, what's the beauty of the old man's hospitality; what's wrong with this culture's understanding and practice of hospitality; what's does a God honoring hospitality look like today and how well are you able to practice it in your life?

* Many people do not like to read the OT. Chapters like this are so repulsive, people have a real difficult time reconciling them with God's holiness and love. If God is holy and love, then His people should also be likewise. But, as these people show us, and if we may be humbly frank, our lives also display not a very holy and lovely lives. Why, where did we go wrong? I learned that the most important and impactful thought that shapes our lives is how we think of God. Here, the people did not believe God was their King, so they felt free to act like the king of their lives and do whatever they thought fit/best. The people who believe in the Big Bang theory don't believe they have any accountability before their Maker, because they don't believe they have a Maker, so they live their lives as they see fit. The people who believe in Evolution believe they are descendants from animals, so they act with animal instincts, whether be survival of the fittest, or actions without restraint, it's what an animal nature would do. That's why, we Christians need to think hard and understand, when we accept the world's thoughts on our origins, we will act and be like them. Only when we understand and believe that we have a Maker, we have a King over our lives, who rules with His laws, and as His people, when we submit, then His holy and lovely ways will reign over His people. So, the question is, do you believe you have a King over your life, or are you your own king?

Judg 20 (2/1/23)

1. In 20:1-17, how many Israelites assembled and why did they come as one; why were the Benjamites not willing to purge the sin they clearly knew were committed; in this civil war, how were each group dealing with their own sins and with the sins of others; how is this applicable to you?
2. In 20:18-48, what is the similarity and difference between 20:18 and 1:1-2; even though the Israelites had received God's guidance, why do you think they lost 40,000 men in the first two battles; what was wrong with this civil war or how should have this been handled; how is this applicable to you?

* Once again, we witness a sad story of what went wrong with God's people. They assembled as God's people together as one, and yet, instead of fighting against the enemies as God commanded, they were fighting amongst themselves. When a father sees his sons, the brothers fight, we know how much heartache that brings to the father; how much more to our heavenly Father. I don't recall this many armed men coming together to fight the enemy in this book, but to fight their own brother, and that, to fight one small tribe, they were flexing their muscles. But what a display of vanity. The confidence they displayed, but to do what? The outrage they felt, but for whose sin should they have really repented? The overly self righteous justice they wanted to meet out. They really needed to look at themselves in a mirror. But, what if we also looked into the mirror? The burning for justice, the outrage we sometimes feel, the confidence to do what seems like the right thing, all sounds good. But, let's ask ourselves, are we doing so for God's glory? Are we seeking Christ's likeness, in them and in us? God's humility teaches us, whenever we are placing ourselves and our people first, we should always examine our motivation and purpose, is it for God's glory and is Christ's image our pursuit?

Judg 21 (2/2/23)

1. In 21:1-15, what's the oath they took and what was the result; how did they try to address the wrong; when one wrong produces another wrong, how have you addressed it in your life; what would God want you to do?
2. In 21:16-25, why would the Israelites condone kidnapping; how does God conclude and summarize all of these bizarre and terrible behaviors of His people; how is this applicable to you?

* As I said several times, this book, the behavior of these people mirror our hearts more than we would like to admit. While they don't take God's command to conquer the enemies seriously, they take their own vows so seriously, they would even kill their brothers, especially those who broke their vow. The question is, what makes their vow more right than God's commands? It doesn't; it couldn't, but they did. Sadly, we see that a lot in our lives. We take some Scriptures so seriously, while ignoring others, and get extremely overly righteous and angry, seeking justice, even violently, in order to keep the part I keep, all the while, ignoring and neglecting other parts of God's word, which should be taken just as seriously. I will not give specific examples here because I think there will be too many to give, and they will be painfully too personal for many of us. Hopefully, you will take the time to examine your hearts and obedience before God, and see, which parts of His word you take seriously, while ignoring other parts that should also be taken just as seriously. One way of saying this is, selective obedience, and that, is not true obedience that delights our God. He wants our full hearts, and not just partially. Suffice to say, as we discover or realize how partially we obey our God, may there be a humble genuine repentance in us, and may we humbly ask for God's blessing to be a more obedient child that will fully and wholeheartedly delight to obey all of our Father's words and will. And to that end, may we be diligent and earnest in our study of God's word, so that the more we learn of our Father's heart, the more we will experience His truth and grace, and delight to joyfully obey all of His good will for us.

- "Oh, Father, You know, we are prone to fall in our sinfulness. You know, how frail and fragile we are. But, Father, we pray that our greatest desire is to fall in love with You so greatly, that we will love You more than anyone or anything. And in that love, may we find our obedience to You, our greatest joy and privilege. Oh, Holy Spirit, whenever You convict our hearts and open our eyes to see our sinfulness, please drive us quickly to our knees, so that we can repent of our ugliness, and once again, taste the sweetness and power of our forgiveness in Christ Jesus. Thank You, for adopting us and being our God, for You alone, truly deserve all of our praise. In Your Son's name, we pray. Amen."