

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Judges And Ruth: Personal Blessing Amid Group Apostasy

Part II: History Of The Era Of The Judges

B. The Record Of Specific Judges, Judges 3:7-16:31

11. God's Remedy For Persistently Ineffective Human Effort (Judges 12:8-13:25)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

A lot of human efforts today seem stuck in the rut of ineffectiveness, and we can readily illustrate this:

(1) We face it in the economy: The Wall Street Journal editorial, "The Sanders-Trump Fuel" (January 30-31, 2016, p. A10) reported on the nation's tepid "0.7% growth in the fourth quarter of 2015," making this "the tenth straight year that the U. S. economy has grown by less than 3%," what "hasn't happened since the 1930s."

(2) We face it in politics: Thomas G. Donlan's editorial, "Take It to the House" (Barron's, February 1, 2016, p. 35) observed that if all the Republicans were to unite behind one presidential candidate, and if all of the Democrats were to do the same with their one candidate, either party "still wouldn't have a lock on the Electoral College" for a win. "(A) third candidate could add . . . the excitement of a possible runoff election in the House of Representatives," but "(a) long line of reformists have created a mess that is much worse than the system . . . that preceded it."

(3) We face it in religious realms: last week, a believer loaned me the January-February 2016 issue of Biblical Archaeology Review that she had been sent unsolicited by mail, and she asked me to review it. Parts of the issue looked fine: the back cover was a full-page ad by Christianbook.com with a statement honoring the Lord and page 63 had an ad on Mark Johanson's book, No Errors in My Bible, Sorry About Yours, that defended the Bible's inerrancy.

However, in the "Queries & Comments" section, the editor referred to the magazine's recent running of "Ziony Zevit's article, 'Was Eve Made from Adam's Rib -- or His Baculum?'" in which Mr. Zevit claimed God made Eve out of Adam's "'baculum,'" a bone in the male anatomy of some primates, and he concluded that this is why human males no longer have this bone. [I later read online that many scholars agree with Zevit's view ("The Adam and Eve Story: Eve Came From Where?" biblicalarchaeology.org, September 15, 2015), so we will answer Mr. Zevit's claim in our conclusion.] The magazine also ran an ad for the book, "The Second Princeton-Prague Symposium on Jesus Research" that is of the Liberal Theology persuasion that denies the divine inspiration of the written Bible.

So, for the "umpteenth" time, I could not recommend a work for the way it mixes truth with significant error!

Need: *Accordingly, we ask, "What is God's remedy for persistent ineffectiveness in various human efforts?!"*

- I. After Jephthah's judgeship (Judges 12:7), three "minor" judges led Israel in persistently ineffective ways since they tried to live up to Gideon's vain effort of living like a self-made king, Judges 12:8-15:**
 - A. We recall from Judges 8:22-31 that though Gideon once rightly refused Israel's request to set up a dynasty over the nation, he then proudly succumbed to acting like a king in having many wives and siring 70 sons.
 - B. Thus, judge Jair who followed him also failed to recall how God had raised Gideon up from weakness and obscurity (Jud. 6:11-8:21) to give him victory over Midian, so Jair tried to mimic Gideon's latter days, acting as if he was royalty by siring thirty sons to ride on thirty donkeys and rule over thirty cities, Judges 10:3-5.
 - C. Even after God graciously gave Jephthah victory in light of his background as an outcast (Judges 11:1-12:6), Ibzan arose as judge and tried to mimic Gideon's self-styled fame by siring 30 sons and 30 daughters and getting his daughters and sons to wed outside the clan to extend his political influence, Judges 12:8-10.
 - D. Judge Elon followed Ibzan, but he did nothing significant (Judges 12:11-12), so judge Abdon after him tried hard to counter Ibzan's lack of achievement when he sired 40 sons to ride on 40 donkeys and obtained 30 donkeys for his 30 nephews to ride in a vain effort to try to equal the fame of the "great" Gideon who had sired 70 sons before him; Judges 12:13-14; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Judges 12:14.
 - E. However, when Ibzan died, he was buried in Pirathon in Ephraim in the mount that belonged to the Amalekites, Canaanites whom Israel was supposed to have displaced, Judges 12:15; Numbers 13:25-30.
 - F. The efforts by these judges to make themselves great was spiritually futile, a fact seen in the apostasy in Israel that soon followed and led God to give Israel over to Philistine oppression for 40 years, Judges 10:6-7; 13:1.
- II. God thus remedied the situation by again graciously raising up a judge by divine instead of human effort similar to how He had graciously raised Gideon up out of human weakness and obscurity, Jud. 13:1-25:**
 - A. There are similarities between God's call of Gideon and of Samson, Jud. 6:11-34; 13:1-25: in both such events,
 - (1) Israel was suffering under oppressors (Jud. 6:6; 13:1 with 10:6-7),
 - (2) the Angel of the Lord appeared to

weak, obscure people (Jud. 6:11-12a; 13:2-3a), (3) He announced a miraculous deliverance for Israel (Jud. 6:12b-14; 13:3b-5), (4) He called for holiness in the human deliverer (Jud. 6:25-26; 13:5b), (5) He accepted a sacrifice from the party He came to announce deliverance (Jud. 6:17-21; 13:15-16), (6) He acted miraculously in the presenting of the offering (Jud. 6:21; 13:19-21) and (7) the recipients of the Angel's message first feared death for realizing they had seen God only later to be assured they would not die. (Jud. 6:22-23; 13:22-23)

B. However, striking *differences* highlight **increased divine empowering and holiness with less human effort**:

1. God came to more lowly, faithful people -- humble Danites who had stayed in their divinely allotted tribal land versus the apostate Danites who had left that allotment to eradicate a people elsewhere outside God's will -- than in His appearing to Gideon of Manasseh; Jud. 18:1-31; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 403-404.
2. God came to a more helpless person -- a barren woman versus the farmer Gideon, Judges 6:11, 15; 13:2.
3. God gave a greater emphasis on holiness with Samson's lifelong Nazirite vow versus Gideon's mere destruction of his father's Baal idols, Judges 6:25-26; 13:5.
4. God gave a greater miraculous display with the announcement of Samson's judgeship, ascending in the flame of Manoah's sacrifice, not just miraculously igniting it as in Gideon's call, Judges 6:20-21; 13:19-20.
5. God's Spirit **began** (*halel*, B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 320; Hiphil = "the Spirit of Jahweh **began**") to **impel** (*pa'am*, Ibid., p. 821; infinitive absolute = "to **thrust, impel**") Samson, implying multiple future expressions of power in contrast to the Spirit's coming on Gideon just once, Judges 6:34; 13:25.
6. The Angel said His name was surpassing, implying deity unlike in Gideon's call, Jud. 6:17-21; 13:17-18.
7. God equipped one man to be an army in Samson versus having Gideon lead an army, Jud. 6:16, 34; 13:5b.

Lesson: *God's remedy for the persistent ineffectiveness of Israel's judges who tried to copy the vain self-help efforts of Gideon's latter worldly days was for God HIMSELF to empower Samson for service with GOD'S might as He had originally empowered Gideon, but with a GREATER EMPHASIS on GOD'S POWER, PERSISTENT HOLINESS in God's servant and LESS HUMAN EFFORT for GREATER success than Gideon had known.*

Application: *If we are in a rut of ineffectiveness, (1) may we believe in Christ to be saved, John 3:16. (2) Then, may we (a) abandon vain self-help human efforts (as in Gideon's latter days) and (b) humbly (c) rely (d) on God's gifting and power (as in Gideon's former days) (e) with a constant attention to separation from sin, or holiness, and see (3) God richly bless us with HIS divine provisions of success.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

We now apply the sermon's lesson to answer Mr. Zevit's claim that God made Eve from Adam's baculum:

(1) In past lessons, we learned Christ exemplified in Mark 12:18-27 our need to interpret the Bible literally, grammatically and historically, so we **RELY on Jesus' example to view Genesis 2:21-22** to see God made Eve from 1 of Adam's *sela'* (*'ahat missal'otayv*, Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 3) where *sela'* is written as a **plural** noun. God thus took **1 of at least 2 sela'** from Adam, but animals with a baculum have **only one!** Eve did **not** come from a **baculum!**

(2) We must also **RELY on how the Bible interprets itself**, and, in doing so, we note that the Hebrew word *sela'* in Genesis 2:21-22 appears also in 1 Kings 6:5-6; 7:3 and Ezekiel 41:5 plus ten more times in that chapter, and each such case uses it to refer to "side-chambers or cells" in the temple. (Ibid., B. D. B., p. 854) If one views the temple floor plan from above, these rooms enclosed the "temple like ribs" along both of its **sides**, Ibid. Also, *sela'* elsewhere in the Hebrew Old Testament describes items on a **side** of an object -- a ridge of a hill, planks of wood on a floor or wall, leaves of a door or the side of an ark, the tabernacle or an altar, Ibid. A *sela'* is **not a baculum!**

(3) We also **RELY on Scripture's clarification of itself** to note that were God to have made Eve from Adam's baculum, part of male anatomy in some primates, Scripture would teach the central purpose of Eve would be to function in physical intimacy with Adam. Yet, Proverbs 31:10-31 presents the virtuous woman as a multi-faceted "helper" to her spouse, nowhere mentioning her physical intimacy with him. God's forming Eve from Adam's rib only to return her to his side to become his beloved, comprehensive companion far better pictures Biblical marriage.

(4) We also **RELY on God's creative order** for truth: the surgical removal of an organ from a patient today as occurred when God put Adam to sleep to take something from his side and close up the flesh in its place (Genesis 2:21-22) does not affect that patient's ability to produce offspring that have the organ. Mr. Zevit's claim that God's taking of a baculum from Adam to form Eve to explain why human males no longer have that bone thus errs.

We conclude that God did not make Eve from a baculum, but from a rib, and mankind never had a baculum!

May we trust in Christ to be saved. May we then abandon human effort that acts proudly and independently of God and humbly rely on His gifting, power and Biblical directives to see Him greatly bless us.