

Judges, Part 2 – How To Repel An Invasion

As we began our series on Judges last week, we learned that the people of Israel were PROMISED all of the land, but they didn't POSSESS all of it, and therefore they couldn't ENJOY all of it! That is like so many Christians today – they can QUOTE the Word, but don't LIVE the Word.

Scripture gives me freedom, but the Spirit gives me liberty.

John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

FREEDOM means, “the absence of restraint, liberation from slavery.” That's what truth does for me! But LIBERTY goes beyond FREEDOM. It means, “the power to choose, lack of inhibition.”

2 Corinthians 3:17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

Quite literally, God's truth frees me from sin, but God's Spirit allows me to ENJOY my freedom!

2 Corinthians 3:6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

THE DEVIL HATES LIBERTY! Read the news about countries where Christianity is basically non-existent. There is incredible bondage! He hates you for your ability to exist in a state of “liberty.” He begrudgingly accepts that some of you are now more or less permanently “free” from his clutches as far as individual sin, but he continues to viciously fight any church reaching for the “liberty” of the spirit. Why? Because that is a greater threat to his kingdom!

The devil hasn't changed his tactics in 6000 years – he waits until the moment of HARVEST, then he sweeps in with an invasion.

Judges 6:1-6 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord: and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years. [2] And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel: and because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds. [3] And so it was, **when Israel had sown**, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them; [4] And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. [5] For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude; for both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the land to destroy it. [6] And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord.

Every time there was an opportunity for HARVEST, the MIDIANITES invaded, destroying Israel's crops and livestock just for sport and to demoralize the people.

- MIDIAN was actually a son of Abraham; his descendants were LIKE Israel, but they were NOT Israel.
- The Midianites were friendly to the Israelites as long as they stayed on the OUTSKIRTS of the land and didn't ENTER IN.
- The Midianites would make an alliance with the Amalekites or anyone else just to maintain the STATUS QUO.
- The name MIDIAN means “brawling, contention, quarrel.”

Every time there is an opportunity for HARVEST, here come the Midianites, taking the crops meant for others just because they can! The spirit of Midian is a spirit of “ME FIRST.” How can you fight that?

Judges 6:11-14 And there came an angel of the Lord, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abi-ezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites. [12] And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. [13] And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? but now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. [14] And the Lord looked upon him, and said, **Go in this thy might**, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: **have not I sent thee?**

We are not trying to gain something we don't have, but trying to live up to what we already have in Christ!

Romans 8:15-17 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Did you know that every Christian is RICH in Christ? The Bible is my PASSPORT identifying me as a citizen of heaven, and also my BANKBOOK outlining all the promises of God that I can spend! Many Christians live miserable lives when God has made us joint-heirs with Christ! Guilt and fear are not proper motives for serving God! Rather, to compel us to live AS God's people, the Bible points out the staggering truth that because of God's mercy, we already ARE His people!

The word THEREFORE is the language of logic, and also the language of God's Kingdom. It's like saying to the heir of a multibillion-dollar fortune, “SINCE you have all this, THEREFORE live like it! Stop being stingy, stop being fretful, stop being sullen. You're RICH – act like it!”

Since God is worthy of my praise ...

1 Corinthians 6:20 For ye are bought with a price: **therefore** glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Since sin is beneath me as a child of God ...

2 Corinthians 7:1 Having **therefore** these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Since my sins are under the blood of Jesus Christ ...

Romans 8:1 There is **therefore** now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Since Jesus is returning soon ...

Romans 13:12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us **therefore** cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

Since Jesus has forgiven me so much ...

Luke 6:36 Be ye **therefore** merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

Since God hears and answers prayer ...

Hebrews 4:16 Let us **therefore** come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Since Jesus is taking care of all my needs ...

Matthew 6:34 Take **therefore** no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Since God can bring good out of bad situations ...

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly **therefore** will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. **Therefore** I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Since billions still need to know about Jesus ...

Matthew 28:19 Go ye **therefore**, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

God said to Gideon, "You already have what it takes to defeat the Midianites and stop this cycle of wasting the harvest – JUST STAND UP and I will be with you!"

The central promise of the Bible is not "I will forgive you," although of course that promise is there. It is not the promise of life after death, although we are offered that as well. The most frequent promise in the Bible is "I WILL BE WITH YOU." Before Adam and Eve ever sinned or needed forgiveness, they were promised God's presence. He would walk with them in the cool of the day.

The promise came to Enoch, who "walked with God." It was made to Noah, to Abraham and Sarah, to Jacob and Joseph and Moses and David and Amos and Mary and Paul and too many others to list. It is the reason for courage: "Do not be terrified ... for the Lord you God will be WITH YOU wherever you go." It kept them going in darkness: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art WITH ME."

God gave Israel the tabernacle and the ark of the covenant and manna and the temple and a pillar of cloud and another one of fire, like so many Post-It notes saying, "Don't forget. I am WITH YOU." When God Himself came to earth, His redemptive name was Immanuel – God WITH US. When Jesus left, His promise was to send the Spirit so that "I am WITH YOU always, even to the end of the age."

At the end of time, when sin is a distant and defeated memory and forgiveness is as obsolete as buggy whips, it will be sung, "God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell WITH THEM. They will be his people, and God himself will be WITH THEM and be their God."

JUST STAND UP ... AND I WILL BE WITH YOU!

One of David's mighty men also had the spirit of Gideon ...

2 Samuel 23:11-12 And after him was Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentiles: and the people fled from the Philistines. [12] But he stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines: and the Lord wrought a great victory.

Shammah's name means "devastation," but Jehovah-Shammah means "The Lord is there" – even in the midst of devastation! (Ezekiel 48:35)

Ephesians 6:10-11, 13-14 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. [11] Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to **stand** against the wiles of the devil ... [13] Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. [14] **Stand therefore** ...