

9/22/19 - Judges 1:1-2:5 - "Compromise to Corruption"

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- [0 : 0 0] Please join me in prayer. Father, we are your people. Father, you have been guiding us through centuries, through this lineage starting from way back with Noah.
- God, from generation after generation after generation, you have been with your people. And Father, it is pointed forward to Jesus Christ.
- And today we come into your word at a certain point of this generation centuries ago. And Father, you were with your people then.
- And Father, it pointed to something greater though. And Father, let us see that something greater in your text here as we look into the Old Testament. Let us see Christ. Let us be convicted.
- Let us be moved by your word. And let us be, just double down on the series in Judges. And just trust your word that it has everything that we need.
- [1 : 0 1] It has everything that supplies all of our needs. It is the roadmap that you have given to us. So let us trust in your word. Let us come underneath your word.
- Regardless if we've heard all the Judges stories. Regardless if we've studied this. Let us come under your word. Let us submit to your word. And come with a fresh new eye.
- And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. We're going to talk about some winning streaks and losing streaks.
- If anyone knows me, I have a lot of testimonies of having some winning streaks and some losing streaks. One of my one most profound losing streak was trying to date my current wife, Bethany.
- My complete losing streak. I was on a losing streak of about three difference. You know, poked my head out. Hey, you want to get together? You know, nope.
- [2 : 0 5] And she didn't have any shame whatsoever. I had to pursue her. I was on a very much losing streak. You know, the, I don't know, have the Indians, I mean, going into sports, have the Indians had a winning streak lately?
- I know back in the, back in the 90s. Why am I looking at you? You don't even watch baseball. Who watches baseball in here? Indians? All right, moving off of the Indians.
- We can't talk about the Indians any longer. How about the Cavs? Anybody watch basketball? Terrible. We're not off to a good start. This is part of the losing streak that I'm talking to you about.
- I just cannot get these sport teams right. Well, we all know the Browns, you know. The Browns haven't seen a winning streak probably in, what, the 70s? But the Browns have definitely had losing streaks and everything like that.
- But going back into the book of Judges, we're going to see the tribe of Judah coming with a winning streak. And then something happens during this winning streak that all of a sudden, without explanation by the text and the immediate text and when it happens, they don't know why, but then everything turns against them.

[3 : 22] They go on a losing streak. I'm going to split this up into a couple different sections. We're going to see that progression and I'm going to call them scenes. We're not going to do points today.

I'm going to try something new. We're going to do scenes. So I'm going to break this up into various scenes and we're going to look at that progression and then specifically that shift that takes place.

And then look at the regression. And then finally, we're going to jump into chapter two. And I'm not going to read this. I'm not going to sit here and read. I timed it as I was reading. It was like over six minutes.

I feel like that would be more harmful than helpful. It's for the sake of attention. So we're just going to take this as we go verse by verse through the first chapter and into the second chapter of Judges.

So let's take a look at the book and examine how the Israelites did after the death of Joshua. In the first scene, we're going to look at is in chapter one, verse one through seven.

[4 : 22] Failure with success and barbarians at Bezik. Look with me. Turn with me. It's going to be up on the screen. But, you know, look in your Bible too if you have that or an app.

Look with it and highlight, circle things that are standing out. In verse one, chapter one, it says, after the death of Joshua, the people of Israel inquired of the Lord, who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites to fight against them?

The Lord said, Judah shall go up. Behold, I have given the land into their hand. And Judah said to Simeon, his brother, come up with me into the territory allotted to me that we may fight against the Canaanites.

And I likewise will go with you into the territory allotted to you. So Simeon went with him. Then Judah went up and the Lord gave the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand and they defeated 10,000 of them at Bezik.

So setting this scene up, scene one in verse one through seven here, we see a scene set up where you're seeing the torch being carried.

[5 : 31] The death of Joshua has occurred, the torch is now being carried to the tribe of Judah. So Judah is continuing the conquest against the Canaanites. And so Judah, in kind of like a collaborative effort, they talk to their other tribe, Simeon, their brother that this verse talks about.

And you see the camaraderie occurring in this passage where they want some, you know, they want some travel companions. They want to do this together. They want to conquer together. You don't see much division in this.

And this is key because as we get closer to the end of the book, you will see the complete opposite of this. And so Simeon went with him and then Judah went up and the Lord gave the Canaanites, note, the Lord gave the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hands and they defeated 10,000 of them.

The torch has been passed to Judah from Joshua. Joshua was a great leader. There's an entire book about him. Imagine that.

And it's all about his journey with the Israelites, his leadership. He was a strong leader in the nation of Israel. People remembered his leadership.

[6 : 42] They listened to his leadership. His leadership had great success. And so with the traveling partner, they go and they take on the Canaanites and the Perizzites in this land as they defeated 10,000.

And we see the progress continuing as we continue in scene one. We're going to read about a little sign of infection in verse five that begins. Verse five continues, they found Adonai Bezek at Bezek.

Imagine that. And fought against him and defeated the Canaanites and the Perizzites. Adonai Bezek fled, but they pursued him and caught him and cut off his thumbs and his big toes.

And Adonai Bezek said, 70 kings with their thumbs and their big toes cut off used to pick up scraps under my table as I have done so God has repaid me.

And they brought him to Jerusalem and he died there. So we see in this conquest they meet a man named Adonai Bezek.

[7 : 50] His name literally means Lord of Bezek. He was a Canaanite ruler. And Judah deals with him in a very familiar way within this culture and within that context.

They cut off his thumbs and big toes. While it seems odd to us, this actually had meaning. This was a type of physical mutilation of enemies.

It was well known in ancient eastern context and specifically used in wartime against the highest ranking authorities. What this type of torture accomplished for the enemies was not only punishment.

Obviously you can imagine losing the dexterity in your hands by having your thumbs missing. You wouldn't be able to do any mulch outside. And you wouldn't imagine losing your big toes.

Losing your toes is huge for your balance, stability, support. It makes it very, very difficult to walk without toes. So it creates sort of like this punishment, the loss of dexterity, but also humiliation.

[8 : 59] And this is of which Adonai Bezek recalls in verse 7. We see 70 kings with their thumbs and their big toes used to pick up scraps under my table.

As I've done, so God has repaid me. He's sort of having this revelation in his own mind of reaping what you sow.

You know that saying. Reaping what you sow. He's experiencing that because what this punishment was, it was a symbol of taking away one's power and one's authority.

It meant something in that cultural time. And regardless of the familiarity of this punishment during this certain period in time, even though it was relevant during this time, there is something huge that just reading this on your own, maybe in a coffee shop and things like that, you might miss.

But this was a practice that was strictly used by not the Israelites but by the Canaanites. So you see a certain sign of an infection occurring which is going to be drawing and getting larger as this book goes on because in the sixth verse of this chapter, you see Israelites behaving like the Canaanites and acting and taking vengeance out on their enemies just as the Canaanites did.

[10 : 27] We'll get more into that in chapter 8. But friends, haven't we all been in that position where you kind of say, I will give them a taste of their own medicine.

The wrong that they have done to me, I'm going to do to them. We take this into our own hands and we act with our own vengeance. But is this allowing God's justice to reign supreme?

Or is this actually putting us in a position of playing God? We've all felt it. We've driven down the road and somebody, you know, doesn't put their blinker on. They completely cut us off.

Almost lead us into, like, merge into a semi-truck. You know, as aggravating as life can be, we feel tempted. Maybe it's just me. Maybe it's a moment of confession for me.

But you just want to hit that gas pedal and just, you know, get back at them. You know, just as they have done, I'm going to do to them. You know, you've felt it. People hurt you.

[11 : 27] You want to respond and just double down in the same way they hurt you. You want to, they want to hurt you back. Be careful of acting upon your own justices, church.

Remember, Galatians 5, what it says about your actions. Are you living by the Spirit? Are you prone to be living by the Spirit or living by the fruits of the flesh?

And pay attention, too, in this passage, in this first scene is the Lord's commissioning because just as Judah was commissioned to carry out a certain task against the enemies of God, we, too, are called to carry out, we are commissioned to carry out a certain task against the enemies of God as well.

Now, it's not one of cutting off thumbs and big toes at all. It was given to us by Jesus Christ Himself in Matthew 28 where He gave us the marching orders.

He gave us a mission to accomplish against the enemies of God. Go, therefore, making disciples of all nations, baptizing them, teaching them. This is the commission in which we have to fulfill His way.

[12 : 38] There's not always an easy answer. Sometimes we blend in more than we stand out as Christians and, you know, myself included. We're all victim of this. But we are being sent to baptize, to be teaching, to obey commandments.

And it's a balanced commission. It's not just coming to church, it's also going from church. It's taking the message to the enemies of God that you might know in your workplace, in schools, in your own neighborhoods.

How many of you have non-Christian neighbors? And as the text continues here, I'm going to fast forward a little bit.

Verse 8 and 10, the author highlights three more successful battles of Judah against Jerusalem. Jerusalem was struck by sword and was hit with fire.

They traveled to Negev and defeated Anak's sons at Hebron. And that one in verse 10, that defeat in Hebron was no light conquest at all.

[13 : 42] These were big conquests because Anak was actually a very big man. He was tall. He was actually compared back when Joshua, before they entered the promised land, they talked about Nephilim, those giants where they were going in but they were a little bit scared of these giant people.

Anak was one of those guys. Just a big guy. So these people, the Israelites, are defeating in verse 8 through 10 and they're taking ground.

We see the progression. And then we get into scene 2 in verse 11. Look with me at the bet at Deber. Verse 11 says, From there, from there, from there, they went against the inhabitants of Deber.

The name of Deber was formerly Kiriath-sefer. And Caleb said, he who attacks Kiriath-sefer and captures it, I will give him Oksa, my daughter, for a wife.

And Othniel, the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, captured it. And he gave him Oksa, his daughter, for a wife. When she came to him, she urged him to ask her father for a field.

[14 : 52] And she dismounted from her donkey and Caleb said to her, What do you want? She said to him, Give me a blessing. Since you have set me in the land of the Negev, give me also springs of water.

And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs. And the descendants of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up with the people of Judah from the city of Palms into the wilderness of Judah, which lies in the Negev near Aaron.

And they went and settled with the people. So what we're seeing in this scene is a bet at Deber. We see Caleb on his conquest, Israelites in the middle of their conquests, and he's like, You know what?

Whoever takes on this next challenge, this next conquest, this next victory, we meet Othniel. Who Othniel, we're going to learn a lot about him. He's one of the judges that we're going to be learning about very soon in the next couple weeks.

But we'll get into more specifics later, but who we meet even in this story that is very interesting is Oxa, Caleb's daughter. She is one sharp cookie, I'll tell you what.

[15 : 57] I don't know if you could tell from the passage, but what she did was huge in this passage. She's blunt. She's hard-headed.

She jumps off her donkey, and it's almost as if her demeanor, you see, she didn't have to say a word. Her demeanor, Caleb says, what do you want? I'm going to get used to that, having twin girls now.

I can imagine the teenage years, you know, they're just going to come. I'm going to know what they're looking at. What do you want? So after this victory, she's a practical individual.

After this victory, which Othniel led, Oxa got the privilege of marrying her mighty cousin. Now, you know, it sounds odd, you know, and everything like that, but like I said, there's going to be some like illustrations and everything.

We're going to actually, towards the end of this series, we're going to be looking back at this, of how much different Israel looks because what just happened was marriage within the Israelites, but what happened, especially in the judgment of Samson, is marriage with the Canaanites.

[17 : 04] So there's going to be some contrast that will be popping up. So I'm trying to like just clue you in on what to make a mental note of. So she marries him, but she doesn't even stop there.

She asked her father for a field as her dowry. That's great. That was in cultural times. And once she realized where the dowry was, that it was in the south of Canaan, she saw the need to irrigate it.

She's like, well, what are we going to do here? This place is a desert. It's like living in the middle of Nevada. There's nothing. So, being a practical, bold woman, sometimes I, you know, how we were created, you know, men and women, you know, women being a helper of a man, man, she really helped, helped Othniel in this transaction here.

Because she was like looking way ahead. My wife often looks way ahead and she helps me in various decisions and things like that. So she boldly approaches Caleb, her father, for the springs.

And surprisingly, where most men might feel offended, like, really? I just gave you this land, you're asking me for more? Where most men and fathers might be like, no.

[18 : 16] He doubles it. He doesn't just give her the lower springs, he gives her the upper springs. Gives her even more than what she asked for. Friends, we can learn a thing or two from OXA.

Within this passage, within this scene, there's such boldness and such confidence that OXA has as an individual. That she could inquire Caleb for such a dowry. You're not just being like, I don't know, he might say no.

We should be happy with what we've been given. No. She boldly jumped off her donkey and said, I'd request this, father. How similar is this when we ask the father according to his will?

When we boldly approach him and he lavishes upon us the same confidence that we can have with him. We ask with anticipation, we ask God the father with expectation that he will come through.

A reminder for us to draw boldly to the throne knowing that he cares for us. He's, and guess what church, he's lavished upon us the greatest dowry of all.

[19 : 23] And while we see the springs of water here, he has given us a spring of living water through Jesus Christ. In fact, this is a water that will never run dry.

You can keep tapping into that water source. And fast forwarding out of this scene to, what a way to end this section. I mean, side notes.

I mean, we've just seen battles and battles and battles and now you see wedding, a marriage. You see endowments coming. having land, having fertility, the rich blessing of God to his people.

And it continues through verse 17 and 18 in Judah's continued conquest against Zephath, Gaza, Eshgalon, and Ekron. And so with so much momentum, church, with victory after victory, progression after progression, slight signs of infection, slight signs of, you know, this, you know, questionable acts against the enemies.

God was allowing Israel to progress against the enemies of the Canaanites, continuing that of what Joshua left for them. But we see something suddenly change in verse 19.

[20 : 43] Read with me as we see scene three of problems in the plains. verse 19 says, And the Lord was with Judah and he took possession of the hill country, but he could not drive out the inhabitants of the plain because they had chariots of iron.

Remember last week when we spoke about this, you know, we are looking back in Deuteronomy chapter 7 where it actually says, Then you must devote them to destruction, speaking of Israel, to the enemies.

You shall show no mercy to them. You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters and their sons to their daughters and your sons, for they would turn your sons from following me and serve other gods.

Also in Joshua, remember, one man puts a thousand to flight. So why, church, are the chariots of iron such a big deal?

God is with them. The God who throws mountains into the sea. God is with them. He's been with them since this very verse, from verse 1 to verse 18. But now, in verse 19, something suddenly happens.

[21 : 57] If God was with Judah, why were the iron chariots of the Canaanites such a problem? In this passage of Judges, things were off to a great start.

Joshua's leadership lived on. There were multiple tribes coming together. Remember, Judah and Simeon coming together and rallying together to fight against the Canaanites. There was a battle cry happening.

And at God's command, they moved and they conquered. But not now. Something changes. And to make it even more clear to us and even the audience who received this book, the first readers of the book of Judges, the author arranges two contrasts in the following two verses.

two contrasts of progress and regression, which is common, you know, contrast within Hebrew literature to really show you what's going on in this passage.

Read with me in verse 20. It says, And Hebron was given to Caleb and Moses had said, as Moses had said, and he drove out from it the three sons of Anak.

[23 : 05] Verse 21. But the people of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem. So the Jebusites who lived with the people of Benjamin in Jerusalem, so the people, sorry, so the Jebusites have lived with the people of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.

You see a verse of progression, which we already spoke about back in Hebron with Anak. A victory that was already spoken about, but now a regression.

Sudden halt, contrast of progress, contrast of regress, and the storyline continues. However, it's going to be a lot different. The victories that once were reality become a distant memory.

The God who was very near to the Israelites became very distant until chapter 2, as we'll read. The author turns the focus in verse 22 from Judah onto the other regions of Israel, and one thing that's happening in scene 4 is the nationwide corruption of Israel.

Let's read about what is going, what happens after this point. In verse 22. The house of Joseph also went up against Bethel, and the Lord was with them, and the house of Joseph scouted out Bethel.

[24 : 24] Now the name of the city was formerly Luz, and the spies saw a man coming out of the city, and they said to him, please show us the way into the city, and we will deal kindly with you. And he showed them the way into the city, and they struck the city with the edge of the sword.

But they let the man and all his family go. And the man went to the land of the Hittites and built a city and called its name Luz. That is its name to this day.

So you got the house of Joseph. We were just speaking about the tribe of Judah. Now you see the house of Joseph, another tribe. And they were scouting out Bethel.

They were going to take on Bethel. Going into Bethel, they're like, wow, this city looks a little bit complicated. You know, a lot of buildings. I don't know. I don't even know who's who here. Well, that's important to note.

Because what are they supposed to do against the enemy? As Deuteronomy 7 said. Completely bring to destruction. It doesn't matter who's who. Go into the city and do what God has commanded to do.

[25 : 30] But instead, they meet a man and they're like, oh, we need a concierge. Is there a, you know, where's the nearest drinking fountain? You know, restrooms? You know, we'll deal kindly with you. We're going to kill everyone else just by the way, but we'll deal kindly with you.

They let him and his family go. It's interesting because the house of Joseph partially follows the commands of the Lord and makes alliances with the Canaanites.

You see this infection begin. Rather than focusing on the provision of the Lord to lead them in the city, to take the city as the Lord is giving them the victories, and possibly some confusion going into this big city and possibly desperation like, I don't know what to do with my hands.

I don't know who's who. They make a pact with the Canaanites thinking that, oh, this isn't that bad. We're going to use them to do evil to the other people, but we're going to spare them.

That sounds like a good plan. Yeah. Church, disobedience is disobedience. Success must be defined on God's terms, or in other words, the ends should never justify the means, church.

[26 : 45] The nationwide corruption continues. Within the remaining nine verses, get this, church, within the remaining nine verses are recorded eighteen regressions where it is stated in one way or another, quote, they, the specific nation of Israel, lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land, for they did not drive them out.

Nine verses, eighteen regressions occur from this point forward. Manasseh's regression from verse twenty-seven to twenty-eight, Ephraim's regression in verse twenty-nine, Zebulun's regression in verse thirty, the Asherite's regression in verse thirty-one and thirty-two, and Naphtali in verse thirty-three.

So let's continue to look at the severity which is illustrated in verse thirty-four. Let's pick this story up at verse thirty-four because it's almost insult to injury at this point as we get to the end of chapter one.

We see the insult to injury in verse thirty-four. Read with me. The Amorites pressed the people of Dan back into the hill country for they did not allow them to come down to the plain.

The Amorites persisted in dwelling in Mount Harris, in Aijilin, and in Shea Albim. But the hand of the house of Joseph rested heavily on them and they became subject to forced labor and the border of the Amorites ran from the accents of the Ekrabim and the Selah and from Selah and upward.

[28 : 25] So in this regression to the end of this book, into the end of this chapter, we see the progression, something happens, and now complete regression. Severe losing streak.

Not only did the people of Dan live among the Canaanites, but they were enslaved by them. They were actually driven back by the Amorites. You see how this story is kind of flip-flopped as well.

It used to start out with the Israelites going on and defeating, but right now the story, it talks about the Amorites pressing the people of Dan back into the hill country. The house of Joseph settled in with three regions.

It is just absolutely breathtaking just of what is all of a sudden happening. The people of God losing ground now. But what is the author trying to communicate to its readers?

Us, people, the first readers of this book, it still raises questions. If God was with them, as we spoke about in verse 22, why were the chariots of iron a problem?

[29 : 33] Why were concessions necessary? Why is all this regress happening? I want to use a visual aid to help you understand the reality and the actual history that's taking place within this first chapter of the book because it is a large chunk of scripture so let's take a moment to pause and look at some maps.

In verse 1, 1-7, we see Judah and Simeon versus Bezek. You see that right there. See the green dots? That is a progression in their conquest.

We see in verse 8-10, we see Judah versus Jerusalem, Negev, and Hebron. Progression. And then we see in verse 11-16, Judah versus Deber.

And then the progression continues in verse 17-18. Four different locations. Judah versus Zephath, Gaza, Eshgalon, and Ekron. And then we get to that but, but the iron chariots in the plains, we get in verse 19, Judah versus the plains.

And then the retelling of, in verse 20-21, Judah versus Zanic, and also the contrasts of regression, the Benjaminites versus the Jebusites.

[30 : 52] And then the total just collapse of everything. Everything goes wrong at this point. Verse 22-26, the house of Joseph versus Bethel, 27-28, five other locations, Manasseh versus Bethshean, Tanec, Dor, Iblium, and Megiddo.

We see in verse 29, Ephraim versus Gezer. Verse 30, we see Zebulun versus Nalao. Verse 31 through 32, we see seven locations.

And then verse 33, we see Naphtali versus Bethshemesh and Bethaneth. And then verse 34 and 36, four other locations.

This is the chosen people of God. These are people who in Deuteronomy they shall devote the Canaanites to complete destruction.

The Lord was with them. In Joshua, Joshua even told his nation, the people who were under his leadership, one man of you puts a thousand to flight and then this.

[32 : 10] we still do not know, church, as we go off of this map, we still do not know. Nine locations and 24 locations, nine locations of progression, nine locations of regression.

We don't know up to this point. We don't necessarily know why up to this point. If you know biblical theology, you might have a pretty good indication.

But as the author continues this investigation after presenting all this evidence, let's continue as we see the angel of the Lord enter in on this investigation in chapter two.

Because as we see in scene five, the last scene of this morning, we see judgment has come. Let's just read the next five verses.

Now the angel of the Lord went up from Gilgal to Bochum and he said, I brought you up from Egypt and brought you into the land that I swore to give your fathers.

[33 : 15] I said, I will never break my covenant with you and you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land. You shall break down their altars, but you have not obeyed my voice.

What is this you have done? So now I say, I will not drive them out before you. But they shall become thorns in your sides and their God shall be a snare to you.

Verse 4 says, As soon as the angel of the Lord spoke these words to all the people of Israel, the people lifted up their voices and wept and they called the name of that place Bochum and they sacrificed there to the Lord.

this is no light period in time for the Israelites. Judah went up, look at the language in these verses, Judah went up to Besec in verse 4.

The house of Joseph went up to Bethel and now in a special moment in the book of Judges an angel of the Lord went up as well, followed them, reviewed everything that they have done, reviewed the land that they've accomplished, reviewed all the covenants that they have made and kept and not made and broken.

[34 : 38] A time of review and assessment of all that has gone on in the nations of Israel has been done based upon their covenants. And a covenant is a promise confirmed in a ceremony of some kind, a wedding for example, of which people solemnly swear the promise of faithfulness to each other.

We see this often with even covenant partnership if you're a member of this church. You know, we've created a vow, a sort of two-way streak of accountability in our lives. We see this when we install pastors, when we install deacons.

It's a sort of covenant that we make that we're not going to break of dedication to one another regardless of anything else that might happen. We work together. God had previously made such a covenant with Israel as a nation when he promised to give the land of Canaan to Abraham's descendants.

And he acted upon that promise when they brought them out of slavery in Egypt and led them through the wilderness into the promised lands. We saw this in verse 1. However, Israelites' commandment and responsibility as beneficiaries of this covenant, they were supposed to be faithful to the Lord in keeping His commandments.

one commandment being that they should not make a covenant with the people of Canaan but rather break down their altars. We saw that in Deuteronomy 7. You cannot serve two masters nor can Israel have two covenants at once.

[36 : 08] So God's judgment of Israel is based on not Him being a mean old God and just doing us wrong and it doesn't understand. They completely deserve the treatment that they received.

looking back at the Bethel regression. Remember what they said when they entered in that city having trouble navigating with that stranger in the city.

They said, we'll deal kindly with you. Well, this is actually we can actually read over that very easily and be like, oh yeah, deal kindly. Well, the words that are used in this, the underlying Hebrew expression is we will do chaste with you.

That word there is used, a word that's used in making a covenant. So when you see deal kindly, what they just did was they totally just made a pact and broke the covenant with the Lord.

The house of Joseph pledged loyalty to their enemy. One family, but they still did it. The motivation for driving out the Canaanites was never pragmatic. It wasn't about God just flexing his muscles and everything and just taking away the enemies and restoring the good guys and bad guys.

[37 : 25] This was not pragmatic by any means. This was spiritual. So this was not a minor detail of dealing kindly with them. This was a major infraction on Israel's part.

The Lord warned Moses of this back in Exodus 23. He said, Do not let people live in your country. If you do, they will make you sin against me.

If you worship their gods, it will be a trap for you. And the Lord also made it clear up in verse 3. Looking back, they, the Canaanites, shall become thorns in your sides and their gods shall be a snare to you.

This is the substance of the angel's rebuke here in Bethel. What have you done? What have you done? The angel says to Israel. Doesn't that even have just such a weight to it?

What have you done? Where have we heard that before? This question of rebuke, what have you done, is something that was spoken to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

[38 : 32] What have you done? They were unfaithful to the one that they owed everything to. They sinned and they knew it. Bring up that last slide of the last thing of all the devastation, the progression and the regression.

What have you done? All these nations of Israel, all of which despise the covenant of the Lord, through minor compromises to major offenses, what we see unfolding, church, as we're beginning this study, is the canonization of Israel, a very dark period for the nation of Israel.

They are without a leader and are finding themselves lost and the legacy of Joshua has come to an end and the people have now come under judgment. Isn't it interesting how you see the house of Bethel now becomes the place of weeping, Bokum.

That's literally what Bokum means, the place of weeping. It was too late for obedience despite their sacrifices. So as we come to a close today, there's four things I want to take away.

Number one, that there is no legitimate substitution for obedience. The ends can never justify the means. Obedience is obedience.

[40 : 00] Disobedience is disobedience. Number two, God's people must acknowledge that the Lord disciplines. You see the reality of this discipline that He deals with us based on how we keep His promises of how we do in this life.

Number three, God's agendas are not derailed by the disobedience of His people or His enemies. Regardless of what it might seem, it might seem like God might be actually using the wrong people in Israel to achieve His plans and purposes on this earth.

But no, His agendas aren't derailed. And we'll talk about that in a moment. And number four, success is always, is not always an indicator of obedience.

So we'll pick up the story next week, but the story ends here today. But I want to ask you a question, church. And I want to preface it because we see in this passage today the issue of small compromises, little things here and there that might seem subtle.

One small insignificant toleration became habitual sin in somebody's life, a pattern which exposed the corrupted hearts. The situation we see, Israel, in chapter two did not come suddenly.

[41 : 24] The angel of the Lord just didn't randomly come down at, you know, it was just passing by that day and it just decided to stop by and say, what have you done? Okay, on my way. No, this was an intentional time that was planned out.

This did not come suddenly. It was a slow process that began with one act of compromise that started actually in verse six as the author set up this book.

They deviated from obedience. What compromises do you have in your life? Like, looking at this story seeing and seeing the repercussions of our decisions and our compromises, what compromises are you making, men?

Women? Married single? Men, lust is a big thing. It's one of the biggest issues in a man's life.

And I don't want to negate the severity of it in a woman's life either. I'm not saying that. But men, lust, having a second glance, getting used to being desensitized to sin, being desensitized to living by the fruits of the Spirit and just accepting, yeah, just one little slip up and I'll be fine.

[42 : 39] Will you be? Are you going to do this on your own? A second glance, a quick peek, or a complete failure possibly with pornography. Women often struggle even likewise with the very same things that men struggle with.

But women also struggle with even just the cultural identity. You look at billboards and everything, you see just materialized pictures of women and now men and now even just all sorts, I don't know if it's man or, you know, just get confused anymore.

But having the perfect husband or boyfriend if you're single and you just would love to have a husband or if you're single and you're just looking for a boyfriend and you're compromising in that relationship and you're just like, well, maybe this will be my mission project.

I'll marry, I'll maybe start dating this guy even though he doesn't love Jesus. I'll show him Jesus and this will be my mission field. Be careful. One compromise could lead to a major failure.

Are we striving for acceptance of others no matter what the cost? The Lord is calling for faithful women, for faithful men with faithful minds, with faithful identities rested in Christ that go deeper than skin level, than outward appearances.

[44 : 00] He's looking after souls. He's looking for faithful hearts. Women, what greater affirmation is there than that? Your identity in Christ. You're a daughter of the King and also men.

What lust, what high could compare to getting in His Word and experiencing God through His Word? Married couples, you've experienced the loss of admiration possibly in marriage.

You know, the beauty in marriage, you've kind of like become cohabitants. I just saw a post on Facebook. It was, I don't know who shared it. I think somebody here shared it, of just how we can become so distracted in our marriages and compromise our time.

Time that is only, is actually ticking away. We don't know when it's going to continue. We don't know when it's going to end. Men become short-tempered. We have a cycle of grudge-mongering that happens.

We spend more time looking at our phones than looking at our wives or our husbands. I mean, it's sad. You compromise your time in marriage.

[45 : 17] In church, in the gospel, I mean, we see this often, often in our day and age right now. church is compromising the gospel. Trying to kind of like sand the edges and the rigidity that the gospel has and try to make it sound a little bit more appealing to people just for the sake of getting more people in their seats.

Totally lose it. The churches compromise that as well. Now, you don't want to be so legalistic, but you don't want to be so fluffy. The gospel is a very, very sharp message.

It brings to life a sinner. It brings them from death to life. Truth does not always care about your feelings. I think Ben Shapiro says that.

And sometimes the truth cuts deep, but God is the wound healer. Any cut that he makes, he will heal. He will, he will come through, he will heal your wounds that he cuts, that the gospel makes, but he will rebuild you in a new way, a new identity with new purposes.

Sometimes it's not popular, but God is the one who every knee will bow to. End of story. So for all of us, don't make small compromises. Remain firm in the faith, in your marriages, in your identity as a man, as identity, and as a woman, single, married, widowed, whatever the situation might be.

[46 : 47] Remain firm in the truth, and the truth found in the word of God, there is no justified compromises. And it's interesting because within these two compromises, are you more prone to compromise or obedience?

Because the, there's two responses. When you're obedient, there's a response to your obedience. When you compromise, there's a response to your compromise.

When you're obedient, it requires prayer on the back end to continue in your obedience. But when you compromise, it requires repentance on the back end. Church, we are one compromise away from being completely lost as a church, as a man, as a woman, married, single.

We are one compromise of being completely lost. However, the story doesn't end there. We are also one confession away from being completely found.

friend. Let us be found through confession and repentance daily in this life. Let us pray. Father, we are grateful for your word today.

[48 : 02] And as we come out of this text, as we, we, we allow a time of just a moment of reflection confession, of possibly the little and subtle compromise that we might be making, let us come at this moment as a time of confession.

As Pastor Rick comes up and to lead us in a, in just a time of just laying it out before you, let this time be a time where we can come to you where we don't have to wait for the angel of the Lord to come and say, what have we done?

Father, show us what we're doing right now because time cannot waste. We are not guaranteed tomorrow. The gospel call is urgent and we must take arms against the enemy in love and sharing that good news to those who are lost.

I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.