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On Sunday, Phil talked about relationships. I would like to quote him here because what he said is important. And it also applies to the time of the Judges as well.

“Remember that everything is based on relationship. That’s what God established in all of creation. He made a creation that He can have a relationship with it. The institutes that He set in place for all of mankind from the very beginning have been about those relationships. The relationship of ourselves to God through free will, volition. The relationship of man and wife in establishing family. And the relationships there between parents and children. The relationships that we have in the local assembly are an extension of those establishments that God has given us.”

In Judges, there is the relationship between God and His people. He provides for His people. That includes discipline to bring them back in line. Remember the first two commandments.

Deuteronomy 5:6 ‘I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

Deuteronomy 5:7 ‘You shall have no other gods besides Me.

Although these commandments are specifically written to Israel, the intent of those commandments is included in the New Testament for Christians. But here, in the book of Judges, there is an established relationship between God and Israel. When Israel violated that relationship, God disciplined the people in order to bring them back into that relationship. And that applies to America today.

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When applied to Christians today, we worship God who redeemed us out of the slave market of sin as Herman is teaching on Sunday.

I debated whether to go back once again and review the issue of needing 10,000 troops to win the battle against the Canaanites. The answers to that question dovetail with the concept of relationship with God. In light of current events, you must cling to a relationship with God: a) faith dependency on the Holy Spirit for empowerment in the Christian Life b) fellowship with Jesus Christ, understanding doctrines especially our position in Jesus Christ and c) fellowship with God the Father being in His plan and participating in it to the end that we are blessed in time and rewarded in eternity.

Chris referred to 2 Peter a few weeks ago. A key passage he mentioned is

2 Peter 1:12 Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you *already* know *them* and have been established in the truth which is present with you.

2 Peter 1:13 I consider it right, as long as I am in this *earthly* dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder,

2 Peter 1:14 knowing that the laying aside of my *earthly* dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.

2 Peter 1:15 And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind.

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Why did God send 10,000 sons of Israel to fight the Canaanites?

1. Most Obvious: Learn war.

- a. God said He left Canaanites in the land so the sons of Israel would be taught war. The verses from chapter 3 says that they be taught war. First time around, I interpreted the verses to say to learn war. In the simple form of the Qal in the Hebrew, it usually means learn. But in the Piel, intensive form, as in chapter 3, it is often translated “teach.” So, if I go back to the word “taught,” who is going to teach them? Now, the only answer I can come up with is, God.

Here is an interesting summary on this word from the Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament (TDOT):

“The predominating idea is that God is the ultimate teacher. In the earliest period he is viewed as the teacher of any special skill. In time, however, this view shifted to one of God as the teacher of the Torah and of all the regulations applying to ethical and cultic life. He was the source of all instruction concerning these vital questions. This also meant, however, that he was the teacher of all wisdom, and was the only one capable of mediating this insight into the heavenly mysteries.”

Judges 3:1 Now these are the nations that the Lord left, to test Israel by them (that is, all the Israelites who had not experienced any of the wars of Canaan;

Judges 3:2 only in order that the generations of the sons of Israel might be taught war, those who had not experienced it formerly).

- b. When we came across these verses in Judges chapter 3, I just taught what was there. But, my thought was how are they supposed to learn

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war if they didn't have a standing army, once they are enslaved by various kingdoms?

c. If God is the teacher and they are to be taught, how did He do that? Look at the text. With each deliverance there is a different tactic used. God slowly gave them different tactics to use.

i. In the Othniel narrative, the defeat of the enemy is described in a vanilla way. God “gave into his hand” the enemy and he “prevailed.”

ii. In the Ehud narrative, Ehud first kills the king (cut off the head of the snake) and then deal with the enemy by blocking his escape and encircling him.

iii. In the Barak narrative, God turns the advantage of iron chariots into a disadvantage by using terrain and weather.

iv. In the Gideon narrative, which we have not yet dealt with, God instructs the sons of Israel to use deception.

So, with each narrative, God provides a new and different tactic which the sons of Israel are taught. Did they learn? Maybe not. But I suspect there was one person in Israel who did learn from these narratives: David. So much for the “most obvious” reason for sending 10,000 troops into battle. Maybe someone would remember the lessons taught.

2. Most Important: Witnessing the Work of God on behalf of the sons of Israel.

a. Previously mentioned in our study was the importance of tombs of the “judges.” The key issue is memory. What did God do for Israel? Witnesses pass on this memory in written form as in the book of Judges and in tradition by word of mouth from warrior to child and neighbor.

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- b. Also mentioned, is that God repeatedly reminds the sons of Israel about what He did during the Exodus. The Torah which is read during the feasts, the Passover in particular, each year. It is mentioned in Judges 2:1.
- c. And with each deliverance, there are witnesses that can pass on the information to following generations. Not only that, I suspect there were foreigners who travelled through Israel from time to time and picked up information. It is suspected by some that Greeks picked up the concept of a loose confederation of tribes in Israel as a model to be used in Greece. Witness to what God did.

There is application for us.

- d. Each one of us should at some point witness God's working in our lives, in our church, in our families, in our nation. We witnessed that. Now we can tell, witness, to others what God has done. For the Risley family, they give the gospel. Then a new believer, so delighted in what he found in believing in Jesus witnesses or tells a neighbor about what he found, what God did in his life, even if that was only for a few minutes. And in eternity, there are rewards for walking by faith. We share in God's glory because He worked through us.
3. Most Unexpected: Fellowship with God.
- a. You are possibly looking at me with furrowed brow and saying, "Come on Kit. Are you saying that in war you can have fellowship with God?" And yes that is exactly what I am saying. You may think fellowship is drinking a beer with a buddy on your back porch. But what does the Bible say about fellowship.
 - b. When I started studying the book of 1st John, I ran across the Greek word for fellowship. There was a master's thesis I read on that

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word. There are two main concepts associated with fellowship as it concerns God: a) participation and b) sharing.

- c. Rather than have a long drawn out study of these words, let me cut to the chase. In each of these wars to regain independence, the fighters fight as fulfilling God's will. God guaranteed success. But, he used men that were, even for a short period of time, willing to trust Him. As such they participated in God's outworking of history. They participated. They were in fellowship with God. When we walk by faith, we participate in God's outworking of history and have fellowship with Him.
- d. At the end of the battle, having participated in the victory, they shared in the glory. The issue of glory will come up in a verse or two.
- e. There is perhaps one more item to consider under fellowship that applies to us. I have to go to work. I have to go to the store. My physical body does the work. But, if I am walking by faith dependence on the Holy Spirit, I am in fellowship with God and participating in His plan and will share in eternity with Jesus Christ rewards and glory.

Judges 4:6 Now she sent *word* and summoned Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh-naphtali, and said to him, "The Lord, the God of Israel, has indeed commanded, 'Go and march to Mount Tabor, and take with you ten thousand men from the sons of Naphtali and from the sons of Zebulun.

Judges 4:7 I will draw out to you Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots

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and his many troops to the river Kishon, and I will hand him over to you.”

Judges 4:8 Then Barak said to her, “If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go.”

Judges 4:9 She said, “I will certainly go (walk x 2) with you; however, the fame shall not be yours on the journey that you are about to take (walk), for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.” Then Deborah got up and went (walk) with Barak to Kedesh.

I will certainly go with you. Remember, the word to “go” is also translated “walk.” And this walk has both a physical and spiritual component as does everything in our lives that involves thought. The mind is where the battle is. And note that words for walk/walking are used four times in this single verse.

However. The Hebrew word translated “however” is not the word we might expect. A simple “but” could have been used. That would be the word “and” which can be translated “but.” There are other words that are stronger that could have been used here. The one that is used seems to be a fairly strong adversative “but.” It is only used 44 times in the Old Testament based upon statistics on BibleHub.com. Let’s look at two other passages that demonstrate the strength of this “but.”

Moses sent out a recon team in Numbers 22. They were to traverse the land and bring back word on what kind of land it was. God had promised them a land flowing with milk and honey. So the majority report which did not include Caleb or Joshua, is given in verses 27-29.

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Numbers 13:27 So they reported to him (Moses) and said, “We came into the land where you sent us, and it certainly does flow with milk and honey (the promise of God), and this is its fruit.

Numbers 13:28 Nevertheless (this is our word), the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large. And indeed, we saw the descendants of Anak there!

Numbers 13:29 Amalek is living in the land of the Negev, the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan.”

Verse 28 starts with the word “Nevertheless” in English. This is our word. In this context, the “nevertheless” is a very strong “but.” It goes in the opposite direction to the observation in verse 27. What they saw in verse 27 matched God’s promise. The majority is walking by sight and not by faith. “Sight” says this is an impossible situation. “Faith” says to trust God and His Word because we understand His character and our relationship to Him. With God, nothing is impossible (Luke 1:37). The point of this word in context is the adversative strength. It is not what is expected.

In Numbers chapter 22, Balak, king of Moab, commissioned Balaam to curse Israel. God told him to go and only say what God instructed him to say (in verse 20). Then in verse 28

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Numbers 22:35 But the angel of the Lord said to Balaam, “Go with the men, but you shall speak only the word that I tell you...”

The second “but,” “but you shall speak only...” is our word. Again, the expectation is that Balaam is to curse Israel. But just the opposite happens. Again, the point of this word in context is the adversative strength. It is not what is expected.

The point of this discussion is that the word “nevertheless” in Judges 4:9 is a strong adversative expressing an outcome that is different than what might be expected. Barak will not get the glory of killing the commander of the enemy forces, a woman will. This is not what Barak expected. I suspect, he will learn much about “grace” from this incident. We will see later in chapter 5.

The fame. The Hebrew word is translated by a variety of English words in different translations: honor, glory, fame. It is not the normal word for “glory.” That would be kabod. Remember the character “Ichabod” in 1 Samuel 4:21. His name literally means “inglorious” (Gesenius) or “no glory” (NASB note). He was so named because Israel had lost the ark of the covenant to the Philistines. So what exactly does the word here in Judges mean? To get an idea, let us look at how it is used.

Per the Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament (TDOT), “In Proverbs, apart from 28:12, tip’eret is always used in a secular sense, as something that brings honor to a person.” Here are a couple of texts that may give you a feel for this word.

Proverbs 16:31 A gray head is a crown of glory; It is found in the way of righteousness.

Proverbs 17:6 Grandchildren are the crown of the old, And the glory of sons is their fathers.

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Proverbs 20:29 The glory of young men is their strength, And the honor of old men is their gray hair.

The TDOT says from a theological perspective that “We also note a concentration of texts in hymns of praise and assurances of salvation; we may therefore safely conclude that the root p’r is used especially to express Yahweh’s salvific acts on behalf of his people together with his glorification in the light of these acts—ultimately even when the glory of Israel or Zion is the subject of p’r.”

Although Barak will lead the battle against Sisera’s army, he will not kill Sisera. In chapter 3 Ehud kills the king and leads the army against the king’s forces. He achieves this “glory.” However, in chapter 4, a woman, Jael, will kill Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army. We will hear more about her later in this chapter and again in chapter 5.

The journey. Hebrew is literally the “road” or “way.”

You are about to take. The Hebrew is from the word to walk. So Barak is walking on a road. The emphasis here is on the way Barak is ordering his life. Although Barak is listed as a faith hero in Hebrews chapter 11, he is having to deal constantly with the fight between walking by sight versus walking by faith.

Kedesh. This is from the root word meaning holy. According to Unger, this name can mean “holy place” or “sanctuary.” It was a city of refuge (see Joshua chapter 20). This is Barak’s hometown. This is where he gathers the troops prior to moving out to battle.

Judges 4:10 Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh, and ten thousand men went up with him; Deborah also went up with him.

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Is Barak not demonstrating his faith? What does Jesus say to “doubting” Thomas? Let us read John 20:19-29.

John 20:29 Jesus *said to him, “Because you have seen Me, have you now believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.”

Barak summoned. The word summoned can be translated as cry, call. It is the same word used of the sons of Israel in Egypt when they cried to the Lord:

Exodus 2:23 Now it came about in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died. And the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of their bondage rose up to God.

In Exodus, the sons of Israel “cried” to the Lord. In Judges chapter 3 it is used in a similar context for the sons of Israel crying out to the Lord.

Judges 3:9 But the sons of Israel cried out to the Lord, and the Lord raised up a deliverer for the sons of Israel to set them free, Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother.

Judges 3:15 But when the sons of Israel cried out to the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer for them, Ehud the son of Gera, the Benjaminite, a left-handed man. And the sons

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of Israel sent tribute by [m]him to Eglon the king of Moab.

But here in chapter 4, it is used for calling/gathering the troops together. This is not an unusual usage as the TDOT says: “The Hebrew verbs take on a specialized meaning in the politico-military sphere, where they refer to the summoning of all able-bodied men (and chariots) to muster as an army before the onset of battle (z’q niphil, Jgs. 6:34f.; hiphil, Jgs. 4:10, 13; qal, Jgs. 12:2) and before its end (z’q niphil, Josh. 8:16; s’q, [reflexive], Jgs. 7:24; 10:17; 12:1; 18:22f.; 1 S. 14:20). Here we can observe an established practice in Israel’s Yahweh wars during the period of the judges.”

I suppose you could look at it this way: When calling or gathering the troops, you are attempting to get help from physical human troops. When you are calling or crying to the Lord, you are asking God to assemble His spiritual troops, including the Lord of Hosts, which is sometimes translated Lord/Commander of (God’s) armies.

The question came up last session of why God needed 10,000 troops to fight a battle that is His. I gave you three suggested answers: 1) Training in war for the sons of Israel, 2) witnessing the deliverance of the Lord in order to “witness” to those not at the battle of God’s faithfulness to His promises and to even a “small” amount of faith and 3) fellowshiping with the Lord by participating in His works and participating in the God’s glory because they were walking by faith and let God do the work. By “small” amount of faith, I am not saying you get more faith. No. I am saying that there are situations, perhaps small like the attack of the mosquitoes. Then there are situation in which you need to trust the Lord for the attack of the Elephant. Same faith, just a willingness to trust God in a more difficult or seemingly impossible situation.

Sometimes, I get a bit confused by a translation, especially when the translation leaves out completely words from the Hebrew.

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Judges 4:10 (NASB) Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh, and ten thousand men went up with him; Deborah also went up with him.

Judges 4:10 (NIV) There Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali, and ten thousand men went up under his command. Deborah also went up with him.

Judges 4:10 (Young's Literal Translation) And Barak calleth Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh, and he goeth up -- at his feet [are] ten thousand men -- and Deborah goeth up with him.

The Hebrew has “at his feet,” exactly what the Young’s Literal Translation says. The Biblehub’s interlinear suggests “under his command.” Even the Septuagint translates it “at his feet.”

Deborah went up with him. She promised she would accompany him into battle. As you will see, it was important that she did. Note that she walked but here she went up. They are going to Mount Tabor which is “up.”

Judges 4:11 Now Heber the Kenite had separated himself from the Kenites, from the sons of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, and had pitched his tent as far away as the oak in Zaanannim, which is near Kedesh.