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Here is some additional information from a week or two ago about experts denying what the Bible says, from Robbie Dean:

Talking about the Hittites, Robbie Dean says, "And they (the Hittites) were relatively unknown from Biblical times up until 1927. I always laugh at this because this is your classic classic paradigm for dealing with the critics of Scripture. All of the liberals in the 19th century used to love to point to the Hittites as a people that never existed. They are just made up. We never heard of them. They are not mentioned in any other literature. No one ever heard of them before. This is just made up out of thin air and put into the Bible. And then in 1927, at the Hittite city of Boğazköy, they discovered a huge Hittite city, and libraries and palaces and everything. And all of a sudden now the liberals had egg on their face, because they don't believe the Bible can be historically accurate. They reject the truthfulness of the Bible from the presuppositional (1 word garbled). So anything the Bible says is suspect in their thinking. And we discover a lot of things about the Hittites. And in this particular period of the judges, a lot of Hittites had migrated down into the area of Canaan. And you have others later in history, like Bathsheba's husband, Uriah the Hittite was one of David's mighty men."

Tonight's lesson

Judges 8:28 So Midian was subdued before the sons of Israel, and they did not lift up their heads anymore. And the land was undisturbed for forty years in the days of Gideon.

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Subdued. According to Biblehub.com, this word is not used in the book of Joshua. It is used twice previously in the book of Judges, and other places. Here it is in the niphal, passive.

There are six main “judges” in the book of Judges: Othniel, Ehud, Barak, Gideon, Jephthah and Samson. Othniel is the best judge, the role model for the others. He is the only one against whom nothing bad is said. His narrative is very short in comparison to those judges who followed him in the text. All the others had some obvious defect. And on top of that, Samson doesn’t even deliver anyone. Then there were four who were imperfect yet delivered Israel. This verb, subdued, is used for the result of each of their deliverances.

Ehud:

Judges 3:30 30 So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land was at rest for eighty years.

Barak:

Judges 4:23 So God subdued Jabin the king of Canaan on that day before the sons of Israel.

Note here that the writer of the book of Judges emphasizes that it was God that subdued the enemy.

Gideon:

Judges 8:28 So Midian was subdued before the sons of Israel, and they did not lift up their heads anymore. And the land was undisturbed for forty years in the days of Gideon.

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Jephthah:

Judges 11:33 ...So the sons of Ammon were subdued before the sons of Israel.

Each of these narratives begins with something like “the sons of Israel did evil...” The conquest of the enemy ends with “were subdued” or as in the case of Barak, “God subdued.” The author of the book of Judges is using repeated words and phrases to tell us when the narrative starts and when the immediate problem of combat is resolved. Unfortunately, here, for Gideon, and later for Jephthah, the narrative will continue after the enemy is subdued showing that the sons of Israel neither thanked God nor continued in the way of faith.

Before the sons. Before is from the Hebrew word for face. So this action was accomplished in front of, in the face of, the sons of Israel such that they were witnesses to God’s deliverance. Yet, very quickly they will again abandon Him.

They did not lift up their heads anymore. There are two different verbs in this phrase. a) “anymore” is actually a verb and b) lift up

The first word, “again” or “anymore” depending upon the translation, we encountered previously in Judges. Two of those were in

Judges 3:12 Now the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD....

Judges 4:1 Then the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, after Ehud died.

At the time, I suggested a better translation to show the verbal action better than an adverb was “they continued.”

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So here in Judges 8:28, we have the verb plus a negative. Let us translate it as “did not continue.” Then the phrase becomes, they did not continue to lift up their heads.

Once again, there are body parts used to indicate ideas. “In front of” or “before” is literally, “in their faces.” Here the Midianites will no longer cause trouble by “lifting up their heads.”

The land. Ha erets. This is often used of the land of Israel.

Undisturbed. The previous usage usually indicates rest from war. This is not the word for peace.

For forty years in the days of Gideon. Forty is sometimes used as an indicator for testing. Israel is on probation. Would the sons of Israel obey the Lord. The answer is of course no, they will not. This also suggests that Gideon lived for an additional 40 years after the combat.

Judges 8:29 Then Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and lived in his own house.

Remember from last week, that Gideon was offered the spot as “ruler” of Israel. He said he declined, but then he appears to live like a king: He asks for and receives “tribute” from the warriors; he moves out of his father’s house and has his own; in the next verse we learn he had many wives.

Gideon has two names, “Gideon,” and “Jerubbaal.” Robbie Dean has a keen observation on this, which I quote:

“Now we see the legacy of Gideon beginning in Judges 8:29, notice the shift in name, "Then Jerubbaal," we are told back in Judges 6 that after Gideon was called by God he went out in the dead of night with some of his servants, household servants, and he destroyed...it was like a small temple that was set up there for the worship of Baal, and apparently his

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father was a priest in Baal worship, and his father had set this up and so the surrounding region all came to Gideon's home to worship Baal. And when Gideon came in with a couple of oxen and tore down this shrine to Baal his father came out and gave him this name, Jerubbaal. Now when I taught that, I made the point that Jerubbaal was probably Gideon's primary name and Gideon was his secondary name. Gideon means a hewer; Gideon emphasizes...he's only called Gideon in the passages where he's obedient to God and he's doing what God wants him to do and he is pictured as God's instrument to destroy the pagan forces, but whenever he is pictured in terms of his spiritual depravity we go back to this word, Jerubbaal, and that is because it's misconstrued, I think in the English, we get the idea that when his dad calls him Jerubbaal, it's transliterated "let Baal contend," and people take that to mean well, if Baal is really god he'll come back and he'll take care of himself. And it's really more of a prophecy that Baal will eventually contend and rule out. The author uses that to foreshadow the fact that Gideon will eventually succumb to the pagan worship of Baal worship.”

So when we come to Judges 8:29 there is a shift back and forth between the names. In verse 29 he's Jerubbaal, in verse 30 he's Gideon. In verse 32 he's Gideon, in verse 33 he's Gideon, and then in verse 35 he's Jerubbaal again. Jerubbaal is at the beginning and the end, that's framing the passage, and what the author wants us to pay attention to is the fact that he's going back to this name to indicate the negative characteristics of Jerubbaal, of Gideon, that he is in spiritual failure at this point.

Lived. Again, another excellent point made by Robbie Dean. “Then Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and lived in his own house.” Now the word there for "lived" is going to be the Hebrew word *yashab*, it's pronounced almost like a "v" and it's primary meaning is not to dwell or to live, its primary meaning is to sit; it is used of a king sitting upon his throne. And so when we are told that "Jerubbaal, the son of Joash went

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and lived in his own house," that's badly translated, he went and sat upon a throne in his own house, he is establishing himself as a dynastic head by how he is acting; he's acting like a king.”

We have a term in English which characterizes someone as having vivid hero fantasies, “Walter Mitty.” Perhaps Gideon was imagining himself as king, attempting to fashion his life as a king while all the while refusing to call himself king.

Judges 8:30 Now Gideon had seventy sons who were his direct descendants, for he had many wives.

From Constable:

“Gideon enjoyed the fruits of his heroism for the rest of his life. He was wealthy enough to afford "many wives"—who bore him "70 sons"! In this respect, Gideon lived like many ancient Near Eastern kings, who *normally* married many wives and fathered many offspring. But he was following pagan cultural customs, and was violating God's will revealed in the Mosaic Law; because he not only accumulated much gold as a king (v. 26), but he also collected many wives as a king (cf. Deut. 17:17; Gen. 2:24).”

Here is Robbie Dean’s comment: “"Now Gideon had seventy sons who were his direct descendants, for he had many wives." Now see the author is indicating he's not just acting like a king, he's acting like a Canaanite king, "Gideon had seventy sons." According to archeological discoveries in a town called Ugarit, which is in the northeast of the area we call Israel, which was a Canaanite city at approximately this same time, according to the Ugarit records we know that in their pantheon of gods El was the chief god and Asherah was his wife or consort, and El and Asherah had seventy sons. So the author is assuming that the reader, any

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Jew at that time, would have understood this, that the reader understood Canaanite mythology. So when he tells us that Gideon had seventy sons he's saying that Gideon is acting like a Canaanite god, he literally had seventy sons but he brings out this point just to indicate just another characteristic of Gideon that he has succumbed to the paganism of the culture around him. He's acting like a king; he has seventy sons. Now if you stopped there most of the women here would be cursing him and glad they're not his wife, but we're then told that he had many wives. This again is a characteristic of pagan kings, is that they would have a harem.”

direct descendants. According to the Young’s Literal translation, “came from his loins.”

He had many wives. Literally, “to him became many women,” if I understand the Hebrew accurately. Robbie Dean’s take is that this indicates he is becoming like a Canaanite king.

Judges 8:31 And his concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son, and he named him Abimelech.

Constable: “He also kept a "concubine" in "Shechem," which the Canaanites controlled at this time (cf. 9:2, 28). His concubine appears, from references in chapter 9, to have been a Canaanite. Josephus said that her name was Drumah. The Israelites were to eradicate the Canaanites, but now their leader decided to marry one (cf. Exod. 34:15-16; Deut. 7:3-4)!”

What exactly is a concubine? From Merriam-Webster online: "a woman with whom a man cohabits without being married: such as a) one having a recognized social status in a household below that of a wife b) mistress

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(sense 4a) "a woman other than his wife with whom a married man has a continuing sexual relationship"

Shechem. This is where the sons of Israel affirmed the covenant with Yahweh/God. In 8:33, the sons of Israel will worship Baal-Berith, literally, Baal of the covenant. This covenant is not with Yahweh but with Baal. "This is bad...This is very bad."

Judges 8:32 And Gideon the son of Joash died at a good old age and was buried in the tomb of his father Joash, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

Did Gideon think of himself as ruler or king? Here are some items to consider:

1. He was asked to be ruler in Judges 8:22. The request was in the imperative. In Judges 8:23 Gideon gave the correct answer that "Yahweh shall rule over you." Yet, the sons of Israel had planted an idea in his mind.
2. This is after the Midianite kings had suggest that Gideon looked like a son of a king. If you repeatedly suggest something to someone, over time, they may begin to pick up what you are trying to convey. Isn't that the point of TV commercials that you see over and over?
3. He requested that each of the warriors give Gideon gold earrings plundered from the Ishmaelites. Some see this as giving tribute to a king.
4. He sat on a throne like a king in his house (per Dean).
5. He had many wives like a king might have.
6. He named one of his sons Abimelech which means my father is king.

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7. A name can influence how a child thinks of himself. Call a son, My Father is King could put into the child's mind the thought that he should become king if his father is king.

Old age. Literally, gray haired. Again, the picturesque Hebrew. Dying of old age was considered a sign of blessing.

Buried in the tomb. Again, one of the deliverers was buried in a spot described by the text. A memorial site. However the exact site is not known with confidence. There is a site that people go to to pray.

From the website:

<https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/64395>

“Meiri then spoke to Rabbi Natan Chai of Itamar, who explained the "circumstantial evidence" indicating that this was Gideon's Tomb: "The Arabs in the area call the place Gadua (pronounced Jadua), and in addition, it is located on the border of the inheritance of the Tribe of Menashe - Gideon's tribe. In any event, the Ari Zal [the saintly 16th-century Kabbalistic Rabbi Yitzchak Luria of Tzfat] investigated many of the holy gravesites, and wrote that even if they are not the precise sites of burial, many of them serve the same purpose in being 'the site of the soul.' I'm not saying that this is the case here, but it could be. Some four families now live on the hilltop neighborhood known as Mt. Gideon, which is a part of Itamar. Approximately five years ago, some of those who live there built the beautiful structure atop the grave. People often come here to pray and the like. This helps us reconnect with our Holy Land.””

Judges 8:33 Then it came about, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the sons of Israel again committed infidelity with the Baals, and made Baal-berith their god.

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Constable “After Gideon's death, the Israelites again wandered from the Lord (cf. 3:7, 12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1). They even made a covenant with Baal ("made Baal-Berith their god")—in disobedience to God's Law. "Baal-Berith" (v. 33) means "Baal of the Covenant." Ironically Shechem, the town where the Israelites had twice renewed their covenant with Yahweh after they entered the land (Josh. 8; 24), would soon become a site and center of this Baal worship (9:46).”

Again committed infidelity. They “continued” is my preferred translation of the word that the NASB translates “again.” It is a verb, not an adverb. The word for “committed infidelity” means that. But that says it so nicely. It means to fornicate.

From the TDOT, “The terminology of the marriage contract or covenant can be applied easily to the covenant between Yahweh and Israel. As Yahweh’s own people, Israel must not have intercourse with other nations, since their religion is irreconcilable with proper worship of Yahweh.”

This seems to be part of the cycle the sons of Israel were in: Do evil, cry out to the Lord, He provides a deliverer who delivers Israel, when the deliverer dies, they again do evil.

A point I have made previously, is that the sons of Israel cannot handle the freedom God gave them. Not having a human government leads them to forget God and do whatever they want to do. But, when they do have a king over them, if it is an evil king like Ahab or Manasseh, they do evil. When they have a good king like David or Jehoshaphat or Hezekiah or Josiah, there is someone to restrain them from doing evil.

Judges 8:34 So the sons of Israel did not remember the Lord their God, who had saved

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them from the hands of all their enemies on every side;

Once again, they did “not remember.” Then to emphasize the “lost memory,” God reminds them in the book of Judges, that God had repeatedly “saved” or delivered them from many crises. There is another word for forget used in Judges 3:7. Robbie Dean had an interesting monologue on that (3:7):

Per Robbie Dean (Judges 2021/Lesson 19).

“To forget, to ignore to not take into account something, or to intentionally disregard, disdain or reject God. And this is a very strong statement because to do this, a person has to go into a certain amount of self-deception to forget God, to forget what God has done in the past. To think psychologically that at the base of Mt. Sinai when the Israelites are following Aaron and he builds a golden calf and says this is the God that brought you out of the land of Egypt. They have just two or three weeks before this, they have been slaves in Egypt and they were observing all God’s miraculous judgments against Israel (sic) and the parting of the Red Sea and now they are saying that it is this golden calf who did it. So you have to be somewhat delusional and psychologically messed up in order to trick yourself into such a way of thinking of denying what you know to be true in order to follow some sort of fantasy. That is what it is. That is an illustration of what Paul describes in Romans 1 “as suppressing the truth in unrighteousness.” And to fully understand it you have to understand it in the light of a similar previous statement in Judges 2:7 and 2:12. 2:7 is positive, the people of Joshua’s generation served the Lord. And I pointed out that there are quite a few people who have said to be servants of the Lord. Abraham was a servant of the Lord. Moses was a servant on the Lord. Joshua was a servant of the Lord. Job is a servant of the Lord. Isaiah is a servant of the Lord. The Messiah is

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the ultimate servant of the Lord. Is 51-66. And this is a very high accolade indeed that one is the servant of the Lord. And it indicates you have given yourself to God. It doesn't mean you don't sin. David is called the servant of the Lord and he sinned pretty egregiously. But God said he had a heart after Him."

Judges 8:35 nor did they show kindness to the household of Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) in accordance with all the good that he had done for Israel.

Kindness. This is the Hebrew word "chesed." It is sometimes characterized as "covenant love." In this case, God delivered Israel through Gideon. So, not only did the sons of Israel forget God, they also forgot what Gideon had done.