

The Days of the Judges

Part 3

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Speaker | Frank Wallace |
| Duration | 00:44:02 |
| Online version | https://www.audioteaching.org/en/sermons/fw010/the-days-of-the-judges |

Note: This text is a computer generated transcript of the sermon. In some cases it may contain errors.

[00:00:00] Once again we are confronted with something that's unusual. Previous to this record, we found that the Lord raised up men to lead and guide and fight for Israel in their need. But here we find a woman, a prophetess, Deborah, sitting under her palm tree and judging the nation of Israel.

Very, very unusual condition of things. It indicated that men were somewhat wanting in leadership, in courage, and in direction from the Lord. An old brother in Port Seton often taught us that man always represents position in scripture, but woman often indicates condition.

And he often quoted Mary of Magdala at the sepulchre of the Lord on the morning of the [00:01:07] resurrection. The disciples were found wanting. They were his servants. He had chosen them. But they weren't at the sepulchre. They didn't anticipate the resurrection. Neither had they that intense love that Mary of Magdala had for the Lord. But she was found there because she was in a right condition. She loved the Lord. And she was found there and she received that wonderful message from the Lord to tell the brethren, go tell my brethren that I ascend unto my father and your father to my God and your God. You see, the Lord didn't say to Mary, now you go and get one of my disciples. They'll go and carry this message. She was available. She loved the Lord. And she received this commission. Her condition was right. Now, similarly here in the days of Deborah, you will notice we read a verse where it speaks about 40,000. Just let me get my [00:02:10] finger on the verse. It doesn't matter. There's a verse in the song that refers to, was there a spear among 40,000 of Israel? And the inference is that in 40,000 men of war, there wasn't one who was prepared to stand up and represent the Lord and his interests in that evil day. Until I, a mother in Israel arose, a woman with the interests of the Lord at heart. And she was prepared to take the stand. Now, perhaps in the previous two addresses, in connection with Othniel and Jehud and Shamgah, maybe a great deal of encouragement for the brothers. But I would think that in connection with Deborah, there's a great deal of encouragement for [00:03:03] the sisters that they too can stand up and be faithful for the Lord and do something for the Lord, for his interests. Now, when we read about Deborah, she is described to us as a prophetess.

It's quite an interesting study in the Old Testament and the New Testament, the study of prophetesses. We haven't time tonight, but we'll just mention them. You will remember them. In Exodus 15, when Moses sang his song of exultation and joy, we find it said that Miriam, the prophetess, she took her musical instrument and she praised the Lord too. She took her timbre and she praised the Lord. Miriam, the prophetess, she sang. Then there was a woman called Huldah and Hezekiah. He wanted to know the mind of the Lord and they went to Huldah, the prophetess, [00:04:04] and she very definitely gave the mind of the Lord. It wasn't a particularly encouraging prophecy

because it indicated that the Lord was angry with those who were refusing to obey his word. But there was some encouragement for Hezekiah that although judgment was coming, he personally would be spared. Huldah, the prophetess. Then we find in Isaiah chapter 8 that the prophetess, the wife of the prophet, she bared two sons whose names represented different phases in the history of Israel. Then we connect Deborah, the prophetess, and I think these are the four in the Old Testament who indicate the prophetess character. There is another one, Noah-Diah, in the book of Nehemiah.

She's linked with the enemies of the truth of God. She's linked with Tobiah and the other one, [00:05:02] I just forget his name at the moment, and she's linked with them in their opposition to the man of God and his work. Now when we come to the New Testament, we find that Anna is described as a prophetess in Luke chapter 2. She prayed, she fasted, she sang praises, and she spoke of the Lord.

Quite a remarkable woman, and she wasn't a young woman, not by any means, a very old woman, but we're impressed by the energy and the spiritual vitality and life that she had. She prayed, she fasted, she sang praises, and she spoke of the Lord to all those who waited for redemption in Israel. Quite a wonderful woman in her old age. Then we find in the Acts of the Apostles that Philip, the evangelist, had four daughters who prophesied. I would think that they prophesied at home because the scriptures tell us so plainly that women are to keep silent in the assemblies. [00:06:06] So if they exercise their prophetic character, then it must have been at home or in some private capacity by which they were able to convey the mind of the Lord to those who required it at any given moment. I think that these six women would cover their teaching concerning prophetesses in scripture. Very interesting study, and I commend it to you. We have to ask, what is prophecy?

I suppose most people would say, oh, it's the foretelling of future events, things that God has made plain in his word. And we would need to say, yes, that is one character of prophecy, but it's not the only character because a prophet is a man or a woman who gives God's word for the moment. They're able to bring the word of God forward in such a way as to help the people of [00:07:06] God in any particular condition. Now, that's a very wonderful service to render. It's not merely quoting a verse out of the Bible. That's always very precious. We would not seek in any way to underestimate the value of that. Nor is it giving a word on many things that we've heard over and over again, and there's certainly nothing wrong with that. Peter says, I'm stirring up your pure mind by way of remembrance. But there is such a character of ministry that deals with relevant problems, problems that are particularly connected with the people of God at any given moment.

And of course, the Bible is a very large book. And if a man is guided by the spirit of God, or a woman, guided by the spirit of God to give an appropriate word bearing upon the condition of the saints at any given time, then they're prophesying. They're given a word of prophecy [00:08:06] to meet particular need. One would think that when we come together on special occasions like meetings for ministry, open meetings as we call them, meetings when the Lord guides his servants to give a word of ministry, we should expect ministry of such a character that would help us in our particular needs of the day. I think it would be very wrong for a brother to prepare a certain message prior to coming to the meeting and feel, well, I'm going to give this prepared message. Is it not rather that we come together, waiting humbly on the Lord that he may guide us to the appropriate word that is necessary for us at that time, so that these meetings have a special character? It's not simply the unfolding of truth, although it is that in a sense. It's not only that. It's a specific word [00:09:05] to meet a specific need. That being so, how much we need to be cast upon the Lord and to have that waiting, not rushing, not making sure that I'm going to speak, but waiting humbly before the Lord to get the Lord's

mind to give him, we say it reverently, the opportunity to speak. He himself, and he speaks through his servants. Now, if we can only sit by quietly and humbly and having much prayer and exercise prior to those meetings, then I think we would find that the Lord would give us the ministry that is necessary for us. This, I believe, is New Testament prophecy according to its present usage. Strictly speaking, I believe the time of prophets is past. The time for prophetic ministry is not past. The assembly was built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.

[00:10:08] Now, you don't lay a foundation twice. If the foundation is laid, it's laid proper, it's laid deep, it's laid strong, and upon the foundation is reared the building. Now, the apostolic apostles and prophets, their ministry was the foundation of the church, the assembly. We must remember that in those early days, they had the New Testament in their hands as we have it. Many of the Christians were illiterate. They were slaves. They couldn't read, they couldn't write, but they certainly could listen. This is why Paul says to Timothy, give attention to reading. That is, Paul's letters were read by Timothy to those who couldn't read.

He made them aware of the mind of the Lord. Now, the New Testament apostles, the New Testament prophets, guided by the Spirit, speak the word of the Lord as it was necessary. [00:11:07] Now, we have the revealed mind of the Lord in our hands in the New Testament. It has all been revealed to us, inspired by the Spirit, and in that sense, any prophecy that is given today is not of an inspired character, but really comes within the scope of what has already been revealed. But then, of course, the Holy Spirit can take from that inspired portion and press it upon our hearts and consciences and bring a blessing to our hearts. Now, having said that, Deborah was a prophetess.

She was able to convey the mind of the Lord to the people as they required it. I ought to say, I ought to have said that in 1 Corinthians chapter 14, we read that prophecy is for three things.

[00:12:03] It's for edification. That means for building the saints up, building them up in their affections towards God, in their knowledge of the truth, in their responsibilities, in their privileges. Prophecy edifies. It builds up. And then, it encourages or, they authorize, says, exhorts.

It stirs up. It engages the affections and desires and exercises of the people of God.

The word of God brought to bear upon them exhorts them or encourages them to further activity, further devotion, and increased activity in the things of the Lord. Then it says it consoles.

Consolation. Prophecy consoles. Well, that's a very comforting word, isn't it? And it has been said it builds up and it stirs up and it binds up. Sometimes the saints need encouragement.

[00:13:06] They need help. They need comfort. And the word of prophecy is able to bring that to the saints. Now, if ever the people of God required all this, it was at the time of Deborah. Here was this mighty king of the Canaanites, Jabin, and for 20 years he had held the nation of Israel in bondage. Now, the name, the meaning of the name Canaan is merchant. And all through the Bible we find people who make a trade of things, whether it is the people of God or the truth of God or any other kind of thing, are generally found in a very bad character. The worst of all, of course, was Judas, who was prepared to trade his master for 30 pieces of silver.

Surely the most outstanding incident and illustration of this kind of thing. [00:14:06] When we come to the book of Revelation, we find that great Babylon that is judged and the smoke of its torment goes

up into heaven. We find that all the traders of the world, they've done business with her. All the different trades and all the different materials and all the things of value have all been connected with this great evil system that is against God. You know that the book of Revelation presents two cities, Babylon, New Jerusalem. And the question for us is, which city are we seeking to promote? For what are we building? We either promote the one or the other. And of course, if we are not those who make a trade of the word of God, that is, we're using it for our own benefit. We are trading for Christ. We're working for him. We're sacrificing. We're working. We're doing the things that are pleasing in his sight. [00:15:05] We are not marked by the spirit of the Canaanite, personal gain, selfishness, aggrandizement, not that kind of spirit, but rather sacrificing and seeking to promote the things of the Lord. This, of course, is the spirit of the Lord himself. In the words of the parable, he sold all that he had in order to gain the treasure that was in the field and to obtain the peril for himself. The Lord Jesus Christ, who was so rich and yet became so poor in order to enrich others, that's contrary to the Canaanite. The Canaanite is prepared to get more and more and more. Suppose he makes others poor. That doesn't matter. As long as he makes a gain, that's all that matters. Now, this is the kind of spirit that was holding the nation of Israel [00:16:01] in bondage, and nobody seemed to care. 40,000 spears in Israel and not one lifted up in defense of God and his interests until this woman arose, Deborah the prophetess. Now it says that she's dwelling under her palm tree, the palm tree of Deborah. Now, we've learned that when the spirit of God writes things in the scriptures inspired by him, there's a particular reason for it. It could have been an oak tree, could have been any other kind of tree, but the spirit of God has indicated to us there's something special about this tree. It's not just a palm tree, it's the palm tree of Deborah. There's a particular reference to it. She sat there and she judged Israel. They came to her with their problems and she helped them. Now we have to examine in the scriptures, what does palm trees indicate in scripture? What does the palm tree represent? [00:17:07] I think the first reference to it, I'm not quite sure on this mind, you better check it, but I would think that the first reference is in Exodus chapter 15, where you remember they came to the wells of water and the 70 palm trees. Now as far as Israel was concerned, that was a tremendous blessing. There they were, thirsty, parched, hungry perhaps, traveling through the wilderness and they come to this place of refreshment and fruitfulness, a place of shade, a place of rest. When Solomon built the temple for God, the palm tree was very, very prominent in the decoration, the palm tree.

When we turn over to the New Testament, we begin to get some insight as to what this means. You remember when Jesus was entering into the city of Jerusalem, they cut down palm leaves [00:18:05] and they strewed them in the way. I suppose that's where we get the reference to Palm Sunday. The children, they strewed the palm leaves in his way as he entered the victorious Messiah into his city, the city of Jerusalem. But there's another reference which I think finalizes this thought in our mind, the idea of victory. And in Revelation 7, John the prophet is given a vision into the future of a vast company of people who are saved out of the tribulation. They are martyred in the tribulation, but they belong to the Lord and they're standing before the throne and they're singing the praises of the Lord and they all have palm leaves or palm branches in their hands. Victory has been secured. The battle has been won. They're through all the difficulty and trial. They've remained faithful and there they are in their hands is the emblem of victory. [00:19:07] We believe this is what the palm tree represents above all else, victory. Now, if we think of that in our minds, here is a woman who has the spirit of victory in her heart. She's sitting under her own palm tree and she's judging Israel. It's most remarkable that in the Bible we find many servants of the Lord, they exult in triumph before ever a shot has been fired. I know that's a mixed metaphor according to the age, but nevertheless, this is the kind of spirit that marked them. We think of Jehoshaphat when he saw the tremendous army that was against Israel and he prayed to the Lord and the Lord guaranteed him that there would be a victory.

And before ever they began to fight, Jehoshaphat got all the army into position and he set the [00:20:02] singers in front and they began to praise the Lord for the victory and they haven't even started. Now that's faith. The apostle Paul, although he passed through tremendous exercises and problems, could rejoice. Think of him in the prison. Think of him in the middle of the prison in Rome and writing to the Philippians and he's telling them to rejoice. Why, Paul? You're a prisoner. The enemy has overcome you. You're no longer the servant of the Lord. Why do you exalt the people in this way? Why, he says, I'm still serving the Lord. I'm writing to the Philippians. I don't know if that dear man could look down the ages and anticipate the millions of Christians who would derive comfort from his letter written from a prison. But there he was rejoicing in spirit. No thought of defeat. Not a bit of it. Why, he goes on to say in that epistle, the time's coming [00:21:02] when the Lord will change our bodies, the bodies of humiliation, and he'll fashion them like unto his own body of glory according to the power that he has to subdue all things unto himself. The Nero's of the future, the tyrants of the future, they'll all bow before the power of this glorious man who is at the right hand of God. Paul was not imbued in any way with the spirit of defeat, rather the opposite, more than conquerors through him who loves us. And so Deborah, here she is under her palm tree, spirit of victory in her heart, and she calls for Barak. And she says a very significant thing to Barak. I want you to look at it in verse six. And she sent and called Barak, the son of Abinoam, out of Kedesh Naphtali and said unto him, [00:22:02] hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded saying, go and draw toward Mount Tabor and take with thee 10,000 men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun. And I will draw unto thee to the river Kishon, the captain of Jabin's army with his chariots and his multitude, and I will deliver him into thine hand. Now there's not a single evidence of doubt, uncertainty, hesitancy in this message from Deborah. It's as clear and as distinct as it's possible to be. She says the Lord has commanded you, Barak, to go to those two tribes, Zebulun and Naphtali. He's even indicated the precise number who have to be called out of those tribes, and you have to go and fight, and the battle's won. The Lord will deliver him into thine hand. Now that's a very wonderful [00:23:03] message for anyone to receive. She was a prophetess. She had received it from the Lord, and now she was directing a man, and he had the right to be there. This is where a man should have been in the leadership, directing affairs, and it really was an indictment against the manhood of Israel that a woman was giving this message. Well, what kind of man was he? Well, he says, if you go with me, I'll go, but if you're not going, I'm not going. Well, what a pathetic kind of man. How he failed to appreciate the message that had been delivered to him. The message was one of certainty, of power. It had nothing to do with Deborah. It's all about the Lord, what the Lord would do, and if only Barak had received the message in the way it was delivered, why, what an opportunity he had to shine in his leadership. Instead of that, God's government [00:24:01] comes in, and the prophetess gives another word. All right, she says, Barak, I'll go, but you've missed your opportunity. Now, God will deliver into the hands of a woman the captain of Jabin's army, and that's the story as we take it down to the end of the chapter. All that Deborah said came to pass. She gave the message of the Lord. It came to pass as she said it would. The army was defeated. The captain of the army was killed by a woman, and the Lord subdued Israel at that time. It's quite interesting that when we turn to the 11th chapter of Hebrews, it's Barak who is commended for his faith. Well, we cannot question the inspired word of God.

Perhaps if we had written it, we would have said Deborah was entitled to this commendation for faith, but I suppose Barak too is credited with it because in chapter five, when the song is sung, [00:25:05] Deborah and Barak are both together. Perhaps we say mistakenly that this is Deborah's song because it says, then sang Deborah and Barak, the son of Abinom on that day. They're joined together now. They were joined together in the action that overcame the Lord's enemies. Deborah directed, Barak followed, the battle was won, the enemies were destroyed, and that was a time for

celebration. You remember that exalted song in Exodus 15? One would say much more exalted than this song. Wonderful song of praise and worship to God because victory had been accomplished.

It's interesting to know that this is the only song, as far as I am aware, in the book of Judges [00:26:03] to tell the truth. After the death of Samson, there isn't much to sing about. There's much to be sad about. Many grievous things are done in the nation of Israel, but it's always true that in the Bible, when victory is achieved, then singing begins.

It's been true down through the history of the testimony. There are many hymn books in use today amongst Christians. Most of the hymns that are sung are the product of revivals of one kind and another. Whenever there's a real revival amongst the people of God, the power of the Spirit in activity amongst them, blessing for the unconverted, blessing for the saints of God, we find that there's a rich addition of hymns to the Lord and to God our Father because of what has been achieved. If you search this out, [00:27:06] you would find that this is very true. Take, for instance, the marvelous enrichment to hymnology in the Methodist revival through the hymns of Charles and John Wesley, hymns that are still being sung today with fervor and feeling and value. The Brethren revival, too, has contributed many rich hymns of worth and depth and value. Many other revivals have contributed in the same way, hymns of worth, the product of conflict and victory. We would trust that there will yet be a revival of interest amongst the people of God. There will yet be a time of blessing in answer to the end of revelation for the unconverted. Let him that is a thirst come. We would desire to see this before the coming of the Lord. If it were so, then I think we could anticipate many compositions, spiritual compositions of worth and depth and feeling. [00:28:04] So Deborah and Barak, they sang, praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel when the people willingly offered themselves. Now, I don't know anything at all about textual criticism and the ancient languages of Hebrew and Greek, and I find it very difficult to understand how the authorize says, praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel, and Mr. Darby's translation says, praise ye the Lord for the time when leaders led. Anyway, I for the moment would like to use what Mr. Darby rendered, that leaders led, and when the leaders led, the people willingly offered themselves. Now, this is always true. It's true in secular history, isn't it? That when a man of courage arises, whether it be in Scotland or England or any other place, when men of courage arise, [00:29:02] you always find that there are people who are willing to be led. Prior to the leadership, there seems to be an acquiescence in the conditions that prevail. But whenever a man of courage rises up and say, now look, this is what we ought to do. We're not going to accept these conditions of tyranny and bondage. I'm prepared to do something for it. Who's going to follow me? And we do find in secular history that this was often the beginning of freedom from bondage. Now, this is so. This is exactly the principle in Deborah's song. Deborah arose, Barak arose under her direction, and the people, especially Naphtali and Zebulun, they willingly offered themselves and something was achieved for the Lord. Now, leadership, I believe, is seen for us in the New Testament, most definitely in apostolic authority and in the ministry that they provided [00:30:02] for us. Paul, James, Peter, John, their ministry, and of course the others who weren't disciples, but were inspired of the Lord to give us the New Testament books. Now there we have, first of all, the authoritative leadership inspired by the Holy Spirit. In a lesser sense, we have those who are called leaders, rulers, elders, pastors, overseers, people who are concerned about leading, directing, caring for the people of God. Now, when this is done in a proper and spiritual manner, that is leading people to Christ, this is the great thing. I don't mean in conversion, that's the office of the evangelist. What I'm referring to, leaders, elders, rulers, pastors, overseers, these people are leading the saints of God to Christ. They are directing them to [00:31:03] his glories, his power, his offices, that they might get the gain of all that is in Christ for their testimony and for their privileges. What a responsible position to be in. This is the place for mature, experienced Christians, and this is their responsibility in relation to the

flock of God. Not their flock, the flock of God. And so, when this is done in a spiritual, humble manner, subject to the leading of the Spirit and the direction of the Lord, the people will willingly offer themselves. Or will they? They didn't all willingly offer themselves here, as we shall see in a few moments. But thank God there will always be those who will respond to true ministry that finds its center in Christ. If it doesn't find its center in Christ, eventually it will be doomed to failure. It might be a very good idea. It might be a very [00:32:08] reasonable idea. But if it isn't centered in Christ, it will be bound to fail. And so we find that all those persons mentioned in the New Testament who have responsibility in relation to helping the saints of God, this is their object, to lead people to Christ. In the 13th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the saints were exhorted to obey your leaders and follow their conversation, says Paul. Imitate them. And what was the source or the substance of their conversation? Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever. Follow their example, says Paul. These are the men who are seeking to lead you, not leading you astray like false shepherds, but leading you to the Lord and into the fullness of his thoughts. Now [00:33:04] she goes on to say in verse 8, they chose new gods. Then was war in the gates. This is the verse I was looking for. Was there a shield or spear seen among 40,000 in Israel? This is in contrast to verse 7. I, Deborah, arose. That I arose a mother in Israel. What a contrast.

Poor, weak woman. The weaker vessel that Paul speaks about. What an indictment against the 40,000. She arose. They didn't. Now, in the end of verse 11, then shall the people of the Lord go down to the gates. Now, here are two references to gates. And we have to ask, what does this mean? Now, if you read the book of Ruth, you will remember there came the time when Boaz wanted to have Ruth for his wife. But there was another man who had a prior claim, according to kinship, [00:34:07] and this matter had to be gone into. So they went down to the gate. Now, the gate in the Old Testament represented the place of administration. I think that in the Middle East, in many of the Arab countries, this kind of thing still exists. This is where the elders of the village meet to discuss problems. I suppose very like the local council in our own towns and cities, where they come together to discuss matters of policy and matters that require attention. So it was in Old Testament times. The gates, those were the places where they met together to discuss matters and to regulate them according to the mind of the Lord. Now, what does this mean for us today? It means that we don't let things slide along in a haphazard fashion in connection with any company of Christians, and hope that everything will [00:35:02] work out all right in the end. Ah, yes, the Lord will look after everything. He's capable of doing this. Of course, he is quite capable. But he expects us to do what we can in relation to his interests in any place where we are set. And when the saints come together to discuss his affairs, they ought to be conducted with due reverence to the kind of business that we are conducting. It's not an opportunity to express our opinion in a democratic or communistic fashion. We are there to discuss the things that relate to the Lord. It's his business, I say so reverently.

They are his affairs, and they have to be studied, they have to be considered, they have to be arranged and settled in a manner that's consistent with his holy name. We gather to his name, and so the gates, I believe, would be the considered attention that we give to the interests of the Lord. [00:36:02] Now, we come down to a few people who are mentioned here. Verse 15.

For the divisions of Reuben, there were great thoughts of heart. Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flock? For the divisions of Reuben, there were great searchings of heart. Gilead abode beyond Jordan. You remember in the history of Israel, that when they came to the river Jordan, there were nine and a half tribes that definitely settled for going over the Jordan to take possession of their inheritance. But there was Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh who said, why the grass is beautiful in this side of the Jordan? This is ideal for our

flocks. Let us settle here. Now, says Moses, if you settle here, it means that you're not going to go over Jordan to possess the land that God in his [00:37:05] sovereignty has given to you. You're not going to answer to the mind of God for you. Now, if you do this, you'll need to answer to your obligations. I'll need to accede to your request, but there are responsibilities that belong to you. First of all, you'll go over and help your brethren to fight to obtain the land. And when you've done that, then you can come here and dwell in Gilead. Now, he says, if you don't do that, be sure that your sin will find you out. And here is Reuben and Gad and a half tribe of Manasseh being found out. They abode in Gilead. Great, great resolves of heart on the part of Reuben. I suppose you could imagine the elders of the tribe of Reuben saying, oh, we must do something about this. Oh, we must go over and help our brethren. [00:38:04] Oh, remember we made a promise to Moses that we would do this kind of thing. Yes, we'll need to gather our army together, get the spears ready, get the swords ready. And they never moved an inch. Great resolves of heart to do something. And that's as far as it went. They never did a thing to help Barak and Deborah in this fight against the enemy. Well, this kind of thing can happen as Christians. How often has the Lord laid an exercise upon our hearts, perhaps to visit someone, perhaps to help someone, perhaps to give some tracks away, perhaps to do some form of service for him. And we've had great resolves of heart. It seems so great to do the service for the Lord, but somehow or other it's never done. And the Bible says the sluggard desires and has nothing [00:39:03] but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat. You see, when Deborah gave directions to Barak, she says, up, it's time to do something, time to do this for the Lord. And here was Reuben, great resolves, great ideas, great ideals, and nothing accomplished. What a sad thing, if that is to be true of us in our Christian experience. Then it says, why did Dan remain in ships? Why did Dan remain in ships? I suppose because he was too busy, too busy looking after his fishing or perhaps his trading. Well, I'm too busy to be occupied with this battle. Let them get on with it. Zebulun and Naphtali are quite able to look after this affair. I've got to carry on my business. I've got to look after my affairs. This is righteousness, does say that we're to be diligent in our business. So you to go to scripture when it suits us. Here was a man who had the [00:40:04] opportunity to serve the Lord, a tribe rather, and they lost the opportunity. They abode in their ships. They looked after their own personal interests. And then Asher continued on the seashore and abode in his beaches. One gets the impression, well, I'm sticking here. I couldn't care less. I'm not really interested. I'm abiding here. This is my place, my circle, my affair, and I'm not interested in what's going on in this in this battle against Jabin and against Sisa. You see, when the time of commendation came, those who were really active were the persons who were really worthy of commendation. And so we find Zebulun and Naphtali were a people that jeopardized their lives unto the death in the high places of the field. It's very interesting.

[00:41:02] Naphtali means wrestling. I forget what Zebulun means, but we can certainly concentrate on that. And wrestling simply means concern. That trite word exercise, I don't know a better. Exercise means energy expended. And here was Naphtali, a tribe who was true to its name. They were concerned.

They were exercised. For us today, it means we pray and we do what we can. We're concerned as to how we can promote the Lord's interests, how we can make the local company better by our own personal exercise. We're always greatly concerned that somebody else might make it better. Brother so-and-so, sister so-and-so, they don't show much interest. We're always greatly concerned about them, perhaps rightly so, and how right it is to be deeply concerned oneself and to make sure that we contribute in spiritual power and exercise in relation to the Lord's interests. So Zebulun [00:42:03] and Naphtali were worthy of commendation. In the 16th of Romans, what a wonderful commendation Paul gives there to men and women who really were concerned about the work of the Lord. They

labored much in the Lord. They labored in the Lord, men and women who did much for the Lord's interests. Now lastly, my time is gone, but there's a very important word. They fought from heaven, or from heaven was the fight. Now if we had been left to our own resources here as Christians, the testimony of Christianity would have failed long ago. Thank God there are resources that come to us from heaven where Christ is. My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. I can do all things through Christ who gives me power. There is strength and resource coming from heaven to help every Christian, whoever [00:43:05] they might be, to do something for the Lord, for the maintenance of his interests, to fight against the enemy, the enemy that would seek to overcome. From heaven is the fight. And now lastly, so let all thine enemies perish. We would all say amen to that. Thank God when all the antichrists are gone, their power is overcome. Thank God when Christ rules in the world, supreme in the place that is rightly his, when all enemies shall be under his feet. O Lord, but let them that love him be as the sun when he goes forth in his might. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of his father. How wonderful to look forward to that day, dear brethren. There is a time of victory, there is a time of reward, of commendation, and it will be when our glorious head, when our Lord Jesus Christ, our savior, is supreme, the man who will occupy the throne, [00:44:06] the one who once occupied the cross. Amen.