**Jdg 1 / Hag 1**

**Main theme: Give careful thought to our ways, go up the mountain and pursue, overcome the enemy and build the house of the Lord**

 **-Gain the land / Build the house**

Golden verses: Jdg 1:2-3 Hag 1:14

The book of Judges included the most miserable and the darkest history of the Israelites. There was no king with them and they did not exalt God as King. Everyone did as he saw fit. They were repeatedly wayward and were repeatedly redeemed by God. This exhibited God's unchanging love and everlasting will for the chosen people. The main theme of the two chapters concerned gaining the land and building the house - on one side concerned the people of Judah and Simeonwere first instructed by God to gain the land. On the other side was the prophet encouraged the returned leaders and the people to get up and build the house. This teaches us we ought to give careful thought to our ways and remove our inner enemies completely. Then by God we may be courageous to gain all souls of the land, to build up the body of Christ and the house of our souls.

1. **Remove the enemies, gain the land and give careful thought to build the house**

Destroy the enemies (Jdg 1:1-15) – Give careful thought (Hag 1:1-6)

1.**【**Inquire of God's will】1-5 The Israelites inquired of God who would be the first to go up to fight against the enemies and gain possession of the land. They were instructed by God that the tribe of Judah was to go. God promised He had given the land into their hands. Judah and Simeon agreed to help each other and they went together to fight against the enemies. They struck down the Canaanites and the Perizzites for God gave them to their hands. We too ought to consider God's mind to go together to save men and gain the spiritual possession!

※【Pass God's will】1-2 Haggai the prophet considered God's mind and sought His will. Thus God's words came to him. He declared to the restored leaders of God's will that the time to build the temple had come. But the people only had regard for themselves. They did not bear God's mind or understand His will. They thought the time had not come yet to build His house. Similarly, the Israelites did not inquire of God's will after Joshua died. The time to take possession of the land has come. We ought to do according to God's will to build His house!

2.**【**Destroy the enemies fiercely and plea for inheritance together】6-15 The men of Judah went up to kill the Canaanites. They pursued the adversary Adoni-Bezek and cut off his thumbs and big toes for he had cut the thumbs and big toes of seventy kings. God avenged him according to his brutal deeds. They attacked Jerusalem and got Hebron. They defeated three strong enemies. Not only did Caleb followed the Lord wholeheartedly and plead for the land, he also led his whole family to bear a different spirit to value God's possession. The newly-wed couple did not inquire of the worldly riches; they asked for a field and a spring in one heart and were granted. Blessings upon blessings!

※【Ought to give careful thought and build the house together】3-6 God's house remained a ruin. How could we live complacently in our paneled houses? We ought to give careful thought why we have planted much, but have harvested little. Our gain was put in a purse with holes in it. On one side was listening to the Lord's words and gave careful thought to their ways to cut off our hands and feet that made us stumble (Mt 5:20) and hammer out our inner adversary. On the other side was to learn from the example of the whole family of Caleb to ask for possession together to gain the land and build the house.

**B. Go up the mountain and pursue, obey and build the house, ensure to destroy the enemies completely**

Violate the command (Jdg 1:16-36) – Obey the command (Hag 1:7-15)

1.**【**Ensure to destroy all the enemies completely】16-19 Judah and Simeon went together to destroy the enemies and gained the land for God was with them. They killed the Canaanites and took the territory of the Philistines. They drove out the people of the hill country. But they did not have the faith to grasp God's promise to drive the people from the plains because they were afraid of the enemies' power of the chariots. (Jos 17:17-18) Since God is with us, we ought not fear the anti-God power of Satan. It is God who will trample them down. With God we will gain the victory. (Ps 60:23

※【Go up into the mountains and bring down timber】7-8 The Lord God Almighty called to the people again to give careful thought to their ways. They ought to go up into the mountains and bring down timber together and pursue the spiritual advancement so their lives might grow and build the house in one heart to delight God and glorify Him. If Judah and Simeon could destroy the enemies completely by faith, they too would delight His mind and gain glory.

2.**【**How can we rely on man】20-26 It was only Caleb who was able to drive out the three sons of Anak by faith after gaining Hebron. They represented our inner enemies. (1 Jn 2:15-16) Since the family of Joseph had the presence of God to defeat the enemies, they ought to trust in God wholeheartedly. But they trusted in men's leading and left a great future trouble.

※【How can we care only for ourselves】9-11 God's house was in ruin, so how could we care only for ourselves? They expected much, but it turned out to be little. The heavens had withheld their dew and the earth its crops. They labored in vain and had nothing. The men of Judah were the first among the brothers to gain the land. But they did not destroy their enemies completely. Thus, self was a big enemy and the hardest to defeat. We ought to trust in the Holy Spirit to triumph, not for self and without compromising, and not by the help of men. Then God's house will not remain a ruin.

3.**【**Violated the order and left future trouble】27-36 God had explicitly ordered the Israelites to destroy the enemies lest they became a snare. (Deu 7:16) But the various tribes were not able to drive out the enemies in their territory and left behind some future trouble. The tribe of Dan had not been able to gain his land. The Amorites had occupied their land and forced them to stay on the mountains and not on the plain. They were overpowered by the house of Joseph. Our flesh is just as corrupt. If we do not trust in the Holy Spirit, we will not be able to overcome. (Ro 8:13)

※【Obey the command and build up the house together】Zerubbabel, Joshua and the remnant of the people bore a fearing heart for God and were stirred up to work on the house of God. While the various tribes went against God's order without driving out the enemies completely and became their lasting trouble. God's promise is forever faithful. All we need is to accept by faith and obey firmly. Then we will defeat the enemies completely and be able to build His house.

**Isa 11 / Rev 21:20 Main theme: Take root in the Lord and become precious stones, and save all the people in one heart**

 **-Seek for the root / Precious stones**

God's children who are suffering various afflictions and still keep the Word firmly will become precious stones like the daughter of Jephthah who can bring out the sacrificing brightness of red, holy like beryl and noble like amethyst.

(1)**【**Take root in the Lord】1-9 After we have accepted the Lord, we ought to do according to His words and take root to build up in Him. We will have the presence of the Lord, be filled with the Holy Spirit to discern with spiritual eyes and be transformed in our lives. We ought to be humble like an infant but we are powerful in prayer and spreading the gospel to attack the sins of the world. God's will on these people is never hindered and restoration is among the land.

(2)**【**Deliver the captivated and all people are favored】10-16 The Lord's Word is exalted, the captives are restored. They have partnership in the gospel and all people are favored.

**Central point of the wheels: Seek for the root, become the precious stones, gain the land and build up the house to glorify God**

Dear Lord, may you make me consider your mind to save men quickly, unite with You, become the house of the Lord and bear fruit over the land!

**Jdg 2 / Hag 2**

**Main theme: Cut off all evil acts, be courageous to work and God works wonders**

 **-Cut off from evil / Build up the house**

Golden verses: Jdg 2:21-22 Hag 2:6-8

A discussion on cutting off from sin and building up the house – on one side it concerned the Israelites forsook God and served the various Baal and Ashtoreths after Joshua passed away. This provoked God to anger. Though there were messengers to warn them, they could never cut off from evil acts. On the other side it concerned Haggai the prophet encouraged the returned leaders and the people to be courageous to work and remove the defiled. Then God promised He would bless them. This teaches us we ought to tremble and cut off all sins and be courageous to do good without fear.

**A. Obey to be contrite, be courageous to build up the house and everything**

Be contrite (Jdg 2:1-10) – Be courageous (Hag 2:1-10)

1.**【**Obey and ought to be contrite truly】1-5 The angel of the Lord revealed to the Israelites and rebuked them. They were ungrateful and broke the covenant. They did not listen to God's words but made a treaty with the Canaanites. Thus God would not drive out their enemies. They would be thorns in their sides and their snare. The people wept aloud when they heard this. Then they offered sacrifices but they were not truly contrite. Thereafter they still did evil without bearing any fruit of repentance. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit and a contrite heart but not a sacrifice of flock and herd.

※【Obey and be courageous to build up the house】1-4 Haggai the prophet obeyed to encourage Zerubbabel, Joshua and the remnant of the people to be courageous to work. God was with them, so be courageous. After repentance the restored people were forgiven by God. They listened to the exhortation of the prophet and were able to be bold to obey and work. We ought to be contrite and obedient, and be strong to work. Then we will gain the help of God. God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. (2 Ti 1:7)

2.**【**Do not know God's deeds】6-10 After Joshua and the elders passed away, the Israelites no longer served God. The later generations did not know God and His deeds because they did not pass on the laws of God to the next generation. Thus their descendants did not know God and His deeds.

※【Understand God's deeds】5-10 Through the prophecy and the teaching of the prophet, God made the restored people know God and His deeds. He made a covenant with the people. So do not be afraid. God would shake everything on earth and in heaven. He would shake the desired of all nations and the glory of this present house would be greater than the glory of the former house. He also prophesied the Messiah would come and God would bestow peace. Regrettably, the people who did not know God and His deeds were stubborn and broke the covenant. They kept on in their willful ways and thus could not rest. (Isa 57:17-21)Therefore we ought to value and pay attention to the laws and all the prophecy and serve God forever.

**B. Cut off from evil acts and serve God in a holy manner will be blessed**

Cut off from sins (Jdg 2:11-23) – Be holy (Hag 2:11-23)

1.**【**Forsake God, worship evil and God is angered】11-15 The Israelites did evil in the eyes of God. They forsook Him and served the Baals. God was angered and He handed them over to raiders who plundered them. God attacked them with plague and they were in great distress.

※【God does not allow contacting the defiled】10-15 Again the prophet rebuked the priests. According to God's law, how could the consecrated meat be defiled? God is holy and jealous. Among those who approach Him He will show Himself holy! However, this people, this nation and their work were defiled. Thus God had to demolish the temple just like the Israelites when they abandoned God and worshiped evil. They provoked God to anger.

2.**【**Without stopping evil acts】16-19 God raised up judges to save them out of the hands of the enemies. But when the judges died, they resorted to follow other gods and turned away swiftly from God's Word. They refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways.

※【Disasters come continuously】16-19 We ought to give careful thought to the day before. God used blight and hail to attack them. They were desolate but yet did not turn to God like the people of the age of the judges. They refused to give up their evil practices. But God promised them from this day if they would obey and consecrate, and cut off from their evil, God would bless them.

3.**【**Learn to contend】20-23 The people broke the covenant. They did not listen to God's words. Thus God was angered and would not drive out their enemies so as to test them if they were willing to keep His Word. (Deu 7:22) Therefore God had allowed those nations to remain to let their future generations learn to contend.

※【Is granted the power】20-23 Zerubbabel was tested. He listened and kept the covenant. He destroyed all his inner enemies. God promised to shake heaven and earth and all the nations, so the temple might be built. God promised to overturn royal thrones and shatter the power of the foreign kingdoms, so they would be overthrown completely. God also promised Zerubbabel be His signet ring. He would be given the power to rule over all nations and this represented the power of Christ's kingdom. Therefore we ought to trust in the Holy Spirit to overcome the remaining enemies. To him who overcomes and does the will of the Lord will reign together with Christ. (Rev 2:26-27)

**Isa 12 / Rev 21:21 Main theme: Refined to be gates of pearl and street of gold and lead all people to exalt the King**

 **-Preach widely / Refine**

(1)**【**Suffer thoroughly and be refined】1-2 To persevere all kinds of trials and trust in the power of the Lord will be able to turn from evil and do good. He will experience the perfect salvation and be refined to be pure gold and pearl just like Joseph was released from the prison and gained the comfort of the Lord.

(2)**【**Lead all people to the Lord】3-6 We ourselves experienced the great victories. Then we may then lead men completely before the living fountain, to be grateful, to spread the Lord's salvation to all the earth and exalt Him as the greatest.

**Central point of the wheels: Refine by grace, be courageous to build the house and preach salvation widely**

Dear Lord, may you let me be refined by You to cut off all evil acts, be courageous to save people and lead them to the fountain of salvation!

**Jdg 3 / Zec 1**

**Main theme: Consider God's mind, pray zealously, destroy the enemies ferociously and gain revival**

 **-Destroy the enemies ferociously / Gain revival**

Golden verses: Jdg 3:10 Zec 1:3, 17

A discussion on destroying the enemies ferociously and gaining revival – on one side it concerned the people did evil in the eyes of God and served other gods which provoked God to anger. Thus they were given to the hands of their enemies. They cried out to God and He gave them two judges Othniel and Ehud to destroy the enemies ferociously and thus delivered them. On the other side was Zechariah the prophet saw in his vision, an angel of God interceded for the revival of Jerusalem and was granted. He also announced that God was jealous for Zion and He promised to rebuild His house and Jerusalem!

**A. Cry out and are delivered, turn back from evil and overcome the spiritual war**

Cry for help (Jdg 3:1-16) – Turn from evil (Zec 1:1-11)

1.【Compromise with sin】1-6 God left a few tribes of Canaanites and the Philistines so their descendants of Israel might learn the warfare and to test them if they were willing to keep His commandments. However, they compromised with sin and intermarried with the Canaanite tribes and served their gods. They violated God's order and sinned against Him.

※【Turn back from evil】1-4 The prophet called to the people to turn from evil and return to God. Then God would return to them. They should not learn from their rebellious forefathers and disobey God or intermarry with foreign tribes, or to turn to worship their gods. Thus they became their snare. The elect ought to turn back from sin and do not compromise with evil.

2.**【**Cry out and be delivered】7-11The people failed God's grace. They did evil and forgot about God. They served the Baals and the Asherahs. (representing the god of the earth) Therefore God was angered and gave them to the hands of their enemies. They had to serve the king of Mesopotamia for eight years. In their distress they cried out to God. Then the merciful God raised up a judge Othniel. (the lion of God, the power of God) The Spirit of God came upon him and he overcame the enemy. He saved the people from the enemy's hand. After Othniel died, they turned back to do evil and God put them into the hands of the Eglon king of Moab to suffer.

※【Seek and see the vision】5-8 God's words and decrees are everlasting so His people may turn back to Him. The prophet sought humbly and had a vision. He saw a man riding a red horse. He was standing among the myrtle trees in a ravine. This represented that though the people were oppressed, God still had regard for them. This exhibited God's unchanging love just like when the people called to God in their distress; they were delivered by His merciful hands. God is waiting for their return like a fruitful myrtle tree glorifying God.

3.**【**Ready for war positively】12-16 The people were subject to the enemy for eighteen years. In their suffering they cried to God. God raised up Ehud (united, with power) to save them. Ehud loved God and his people. He prepared for war positively and paid the spiritual price. He made a double-edged sword. (Eph 6:17) Workers who are full of the power of prayer and the Lord's words will overcome the enemies.

※【Sent to go throughout】9-11 In the vision, the prophet saw a red, brown and white horses were sent by God throughout the earth to report. This shows workers had to be discerned in the spirit when they were sent out. Ehud was even more positive. He prepared himself positively. He was able to see and was powerful in the spirit. Then he accomplished God's work!

**B. Destroy the enemies ferociously and seek revival**

Overcome (Jdg 3:17-31) – Revive (Zec 1:12-21)

1.【Overcome the enemies courageously】17-25 Ehud was filled with a jealous heart of God. He hid his sword and went into the den of the tiger. He bravely pierced through the enemy's belly. He then closed the door behind him and escaped. He overcame the enemy wisely and bravely. When the enemy found out this, their king was already dead on the floor.

※【Plead for revival】12-17 In the vision, the prophet saw the angel begged God to have mercy and restore the holy city. God spoke kind and comforting words to the angel. God was very jealous for Zion. He proclaimed restoration and to rebuild the temple. Ehud saved the people from the enemy and also had a jealous and sacrificing heart. God's words are a sharp sword and can pierce through the belly of the enemy. God's words are also good medicine and can comfort the restored people so the temple may be rebuild due to the Lord's words. (Ac 20:32)

2.【Destroy the enemies ferociously】26-31 Ehud locked the door of the upper room behind and blew a trumpet quickly to gather the troops. He continued to advance and took possession of the fords and destroyed the enemies ferociously. He won a great victory and the nation had peace for eighty years.

※【God's power】18-21Then the prophet saw the vision of four horns and four craftsmen. The people sinned and did evil. Thus God disciplined them through the foreign nations to scatter them. Thereafter God raised up four craftsmen to crush the horns showing the power of the Most High God. He ruled the history of mankind and revealed the righteous everlasting love of God toward His people. The triumph of Ehud was also a manifestation of God's power. All the foreign kingdoms are for the benefit of God's people.

**Isa 13 / Rev 21:22 Main theme: Escape from sin, believe and obey the Lord's words and dwell in Him forever**

 **-Escape / In the Lord**

The prophet prophesied that the time for punishing Babylon is near. God's children ought to escape from it, and to obey the Word through the Spirit and by His blood. So they may dwell in Him with blessing and be free from disasters.

(1)【The Lord God and the Lamb are the temple】Rev 21:22 He who has the Lord's command and obeys will dwell in the Almighty God and the Lamb. He will be freed from disasters and is blessed.

(2)【There is misery in the world】1-22 God's children do not be led astray by the evil world (Babylon). In a short while total destruction will come from the Almighty One to all the earth. God will punish the earth with wrath and He will humble the pride of the ruthless. The saints ought to trust in the Lord's salvation of the cross and to escape from sin. They must die completely to the world (Gal 6:14-15) lest their result be like Lot.

**Central point of the wheels: Die to the world, dwell in the Lord, pray to destroy the enemies and pray for revival**

Dear Lord, may you save me from every evil, to be zealous to revive and be holy to serve and forever dwell in You!

**Jdg 4 / Zec 2**

**Main theme: The** **Lord's words measure and destroy evil; cope with the enemies together and be filled with God's glory**

 **-Overcome the enemies / Revive (Consecrate / Be measured)**

Golden verses: Jdg 4:21-22 Zec 2:5

A discussion on overcoming the enemies and revival – on one side it concerned the Israelites were afflicted by the enemies and they cried out to God in their misery. God raised Deborah, a prophetess to be a judge. She sent for Barak to lead an army of ten thousand and overcame Jabin, the Canaanite king and his commander-in-charge at one stroke. On the other side it concerned Zechariah, the prophet saw a vision. He prophesied the holy city would revive and God promised to dwell among them. We ought to learn from Jael, the godly woman to be at peace at home but discerned in the spirit. She mastered the victory by prayer and destroyed the enemies by wisdom.

1. **Gather up the mountain, consecrate and be quipped; the Lord's words measure**

Listen to the judgment (Jdg 4:1-10) – Measure the city (Zec 2:1-5)

1.【Cry out to God and listen to the judgment】1-5 After Ehud died, the Israelites once again did evil in the eyes of God. Thus God put them under the iron power of Jabin, a king of Canaan, so they were cruelly oppressed. Then they cried to God for help. God raised up Deborah, a prophetess to be the judge of Israel. Due to the oppression, the people were thirsty in the spirit. They went to her to have their disputes decided through God's words. They were shed by the light, cleansed internally and gained the restoration.

※【Measure oneself with The Lord's words】1-2 Zechariah the prophet saw a man with a measuring line in his hand and also a vision of rebuilding the holy city. The prophet obeyed to measure the city to see how wide and how long it was. (Isa 8:20) On one side was the people sought God's judgment in their affliction. On the other side was God's word was the measuring line. The holy city was measured and the people took their lesson to return to the right way fitting to God's measurement and requirement.

2.【Go up the mountain and consecrate】6-10 Deborah had deep counsel and in-sight in the spirit. She sent men to command Barak to encourage him to lead ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun to Mount Tabor (thou wilt purge). God promised to give the enemy into their hands. To go up the mount is for the warriors to speed up their preparation. First they need to purify themselves, prepare the spiritual weapon, and get ready to go.

※【The holy city is revived】3-5 The prophet also saw the scene of the restoration of the holy city. God promised there would be people living in Jerusalem. Men and livestock would increase. He would be a wall of fire around it and He would be its glory within. Deborah prophesied in the spirit that they would win in the battle. Restoration and triumph promised by God would be fulfilled. But we must pursue to be consecrated and sanctified and be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, then we will see God's glory.

**B. Escape from evil, God accepts the battle and we overcome the enemies by prayer**

Pray (Jdg 4:11-24) – Wait (Zec 2:6-13)

1.【Destroy the enemies' troops and God comes out for battle】12-16 Sisera gathered together all his iron chariots and troops to contend. Deborah ordered Barak to lead the troops into battle. God promised to contend for them personally. The troops of Barak were a holy team who dared to risk their lives. (Jdg 5:18) When the time came, Barak led the troops downhill and God made the army of the enemy routed and was defeated.

※【Escape from sin and God protects】6-9 God ordered the scattered people to escape from sin (1 Co 6:18; 1 Jn 5:21), and not to dwell with Babylon. God would reveal His honor and protect His people. Whoever touched them touched the apple of His eye. God would raise His hand against the enemy so they became the plunder. Similarly God would contend for the army of Barak so their enemy would be completely annihilated. We ought to escape from sin and be consecrated to be the Lord's warrior. Then we will be protected and saved.

2.【Prayer masters the victory】11,17-24 General Sisera escaped embarrassingly in his defeat. He fled to the tent of Jael and thought he would be free from danger to keep his life. Jael received him warmly and led him lay fast asleep. By wisdom, prayer and power she overcame him. She held a hammer (the Lord's words Jer 23:29)and a peg (hidden prayer) and quietly drove through the enemy's general. Though Jael was a Kenite, she left her tribe and lived with the people of Israel. She took the God of Israel as her God. She loved God and hated evil. She defeated the enemy's general ferociously and triumphed

completely.

※【Wait for revival】10-13 The people returned and God lived among them. Many nations would be joined to God and be His people together with the elect to sing and be blessed. God would inherit Judah as His portion in the holy land and would again choose Jerusalem; so all mankind would be still before God. He also made the enemy's army be under the rule of the Israelites. On one side was victory after prayer and nailed the strong enemy to death. On the other side was waiting by faith and saw the promised revival.

**Isa 14 / Rev 21:23 Main theme: Afflicted and return, obey the true light of the Lord and destroy all the enemies completely**

 **-The light of the devil / The true light**

Return after affliction and realize how great is the suffering for not fearing the Lord! Then we know only the Lord is the true light. We ought to obey and act according to the Lord and value His words as great.

(1)【Return after captivity and serve the Lord humbly】1-2, 32 After suffering, return to the Lord with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength, then you will be blessed and shown mercy by God. Your enemy will be your footstool. From then on, keep the covenant in trembling and run to the Lord and serve Him humbly.

(2)【God has decided to destroy all the enemies】3-31 God raised up Babylon to cut us down to edify His children. But they thought they were as wise as a god. They tempted the nations with their evil light. So though their might shook the earth, God was determined to destroy them. Thus they were totally destroyed in an instant. God will save His afflicted people from their heavy yoke and suffering.

**Central point of the wheels: Destroy the enemies and revive, God's glory shines**

Dear Lord, may You be my everlasting light so I may overcome by You and lead sinners to gain your light of life!

**Jdg 5 / Zec 3**

**Main theme: Be diligent to obey the Word, be holy by grace and it will outflow to all directions**

 **-Overcome / Be holy**

Golden verses: Jdg 5:31 Zec 3:6-7

A discussion on overcoming and be holy – on one side it concerned Deborah and Barak sang a song to praise God for He overcame the enemies for His people. They sang and praised God of His triumph. On the other side it concerned Zechariah saw a vision to be holy. This exhibited the high priest and the returned people would be holy by grace. It is not by our struggling to be holy or triumphant but all by salvation and the power of God to take off our old rags and replace by new and glorify God's name!

**A. Be holy and overcome by God, and be willing to sacrifice yourself**

Overcome (Jdg 5:1-15u) – Be holy (Zec 3:1-5)

1.【Unable to resist the enemies】1-11 In the song of Deborah and Barak we saw the Israelites chose new gods. The roads were abandoned and everyone turned to their own way. Thus war came to the city gate. Faced with a strong enemy, there was not a weapon among forty thousand people. They were powerless to resist the enemy because of their sin. God was not with them. In their great distress, they cried out to God and God raised up Deborah and Barak to win over the enemy and saved them.

※【Utterly filthy】1-5 In the vision, the prophet saw Joshua the high priest was dressed in filthy clothes standing before the angel of God. Satan was against him. Due to the bondage of sin, he was defiled just like the people were helpless to resist in the battle. But he still stood before God. This teaches us that only by purifying ourselves and removing new gods, then we may be able to resist the enemy and overcome the accusation of Satan.

2.【Overcome by God】1-15 After Deborah and Barak won, they made a song to praise God. Barak fought courageously and took captive of the enemy. He led ten thousands to rush after him into the valley. They were all willing to risk their very lives. God came down Himself and attacked the enemy. The earth shook and the heavens poured. Everything worked for the good of it. Wake up, Deborah! Arise, Barak! Overcome and triumph by God!

※【Be holy by grace】1-5 Though Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes and helpless to resist the entanglement of sin, he stood before God. When God rebuked, Satan was driven away; just like a burning stick snatched from the fire. When God ordered, the filth was taken away. He was clothed with holy garments. Deborah and Barak overcame and triumphed by God. Joshua was sanctified by grace. Both were by grace and there was nothing to boast of. (1 Co 1:30; 2 Co 2:14)

**B. To risk one's life and be diligent to go forward to keep the Word and be dutiful**

To risk one's life (Jdg 5:15l-31) – Be faithful (Zec 3:6-10)

1.【To risk one's life】15-23 In the tribe of Reuben, there was much searching of heart. They were complacent by the stream. The people of Gilead and Dan were waiting negatively. The people of Meroz were idly standing by without giving a hand. They ought to be cursed. Only the people of Zebulun and Naphtali risked their very lives and marched on. God made the stars helped in the fight. The river swept the enemy away. Heaven and earth and everything worked for the good of it!

※【Keep the Word and be faithful to the assignment】6-7 The angel of God gave the charge to Joshua. If he would keep and walk the Lord's way, then he would govern His house and have charge of His courts. To keep the Lord's Word and be faithful to His assignment to march on, then we may become a daring death squad of the age. The tribe of Reuben knew but did not act. They were complacent and lazy. They might have the spirit but were not willing to risk their lives for the Lord.

2.【Control over the strong enemy】24-31Jael was a prayer warrior. She was quiet in her tent but she was abundant in her life. She prayed in the spirit and was very powerful. She induced the enemy to lay fast asleep and controlled over the his crucial point. He thus sank and fell. May those who love God be like the sun when it rises in its strength! (Mt 13:43)

※【Remove the sin and revive】8-10 God wanted Joshua and his associates to pay attention to the prophecy and listen to His words. God set a stone engraved with seven eyes showing the Lord was killed to remove the sin. The stone the builders rejected had become the capstone prophesying Christ the descendant of David would reign. He will give peace, abundance and restoration. On one side was the prayer warrior grasped the promise of God and struck the enemy at the crucial point. On the other side was redemption grace of Christ full of power. The sin of the land would be removed in a single day bringing revival. God's deed is great and wonderful!

**Isa 15 / Rev 21:24 Main theme: Consecrate and be refined will bring splendor; be hypocritical will lose honor**

 **-Lose honor / Bring splendor**

(1)【The holy city is refined and shines】Rev 21:24 The Lord overcomes all sorts of trials and shines, giving light to those in the dark. The holy city is refined and shines so the nations are blessed; just like Joseph was released from the prison and shone full of glory.

(2)【Listen to the Lord's words but do not act】1-9 Moab was the eldest daughter of Lot. The descendants she bore with the father were not right in the foundation. They listened to the Lord's words but would not act upon them. They built houses on the sand. They ran a broad way and wished everyone to see them. They were superficial in the spirit and held the dregs of sin in the deep. Thus in a moment, they turned to desolate and fell into a wailing and tragic result. If they do not repent, God will add more disasters.

**Central point of the wheels: Destroy the enemies by grace and be holy to shine**

Dear Lord, may you let me be complacent no more, but be willing to sacrifice, diligent to go forward to keep and guard the Word so I may praise and triumph!

**Jdg 6 / Zec 4**

**Main theme: Remove evil thoroughly, obey the** **Lord's words completely and work by the Spirit**

 **-Be sent / By the Spirit**

Golden verses: Jdg 6:23 Zec 4:6

A discussion on being sent and by the Spirit – on one side it concerned Gideon was called and sent to deliver the people from the Midianites' oppression. God's Spirit was on him so he was able to cope with them courageously. On the other side Zechariah saw the vision of a gold lampstand and two olive trees. This showed the building of the temple was not by might nor by power but by God's Spirit to accomplish it. The church that pays the price to pray in one accord will see the Spirit comes and workers are raised, so the church will revive.

**A. Was called and sent, offer completely and be refined to shine**

Entrusted (Jdg 6:1-20) – By the Spirit (Zec 4:1-7)

1.【Cry out in trouble】1-10 Again the Israelites did evil and abandoned God. God put them into the hands of the Midianites. They were deeply oppressed and suffered. Thus they cried out to God in trouble. God sent a prophet to rebuke them so they might take lesson in their distress and return to God. How can we be rebellious and ungrateful to worship other gods?

※【Be refined and shine】1-3 The prophet was awakened by the angel and saw a vision of a solid gold lampstand. Beside it were two olive trees, one on each side. There were seven lights on the lampstand all connected to seven channels. This referred to the restored people were refined and radiated to become the witness and glory of God. The affliction of the Midianites was to refine the people to take lesson and remove evil to be the solid gold lampstand to shine and glorify God.

2.【By the presence of God】11-16 Gideon was a mighty warrior who loved his nation and his people. When he was in the winepress, he was watchful to guard against the enemy and diligently threshing the wheat. An angel of God appeared to him and sent him to save the people from the bondage of the Midianites. Though he saw himself the weakest and the least in the family, God was with him and surely he would be able to destroy the enemy to save the people.

※【Accomplish by the Holy Spirit】4-6 The prophet sought humbly to understand the vision of the gold lampstand. God instructed Zerubbabel the returned leader that the rebuilding of the temple was not by might nor by power, but by God's Spirit. Gideon's dispatch was also not by his power, but God was with him. He would attack the Midianites like attacking one man.

3.【Offer completely】17-20 Gideon was humble and favored. He asked the angel to give him a sign so as to strengthen his faith. He also pleaded to accept his offering. He compared himself to a young goat and was willing to sacrifice. He poured out all his love like broth being poured out. He was accepted by God and it was witnessed by a fire which consumed the meat. He built an altar to the Lord and named it The Lord is Peace. He experienced God's peace.

※【There is nothing too hard for God】7 Zerubbabel trusted in the Holy Spirit and was full of faith. The mountain would become level ground. Gideon offered completely and was accepted by God. Though the Midianites were like mighty mountain, they would become level ground! Zerubbabel brought out the capstone representing Christ would be the capstone. (Ps 118:22) The building of the temple was completed and the people shouted 'God bless it'. God had the perfect glory! Only if the leaders of the age will offer themselves thoroughly and completely win by God, there is nothing too hard for Him!

**B. Remove evil completely, contend by the Spirit and be accepted by God**

Tear down (Jdg 6:21-40) – Build up (Zec 4:8-14)

1.【Remove Baal】21-32 As God had revealed to Gideon and shown him peace, Gideon built an altar to God and named it The Lord is Peace. Not only did Gideon offer thoroughly, he completely obeyed to tear down his father's altar to Baal. He neglected the opposition from his father and the whole town. He eliminated all difficulties and overcame all the evil power. He built an altar to God and offered his sacrifice. Though he was hated by the whole town and was even pursued by the people, God made his father returned to plead his cause.

※【Lay the foundation of the temple】8-10 God is the first and the last. Zerubbabel laid the foundation of the temple and his hand would also complete it because God is the Lord of Peace and no one can prevent the work. God's eyes range throughout the earth. God was delighted when He saw the plumb line in his hand (the Lord's words are the standard). Gideon trusted and obeyed. He listened completely and removed Baal. He laid the foundation on the rock of God and delighted Him. Though he was attacked by the people of the whole town, he was not wavered. God made his father work for the good of it!

2.【Contend by the Holy Spirit】33-40 The Midianites allied with other enemies and camped in the Valley of Jezreel. God's Spirit came upon Gideon and he was full of power. He blew a trumpet and gathered the people. All the tribes followed him and went up to meet him. Finally Gideon asked for two positive and negative signs and God granted him.

※【Shine by the Holy Spirit】11-14 The prophet asked the angel twice. He was instructed by God of the meaning of the two olive trees by the side of the lampstand. They were the two who were anointed to serve the Lord of all the earth (Rev 11:3-4), that were the returned leader Zerubbabel and Joshua. They paid the price in one heart and prayed by crushing to pour out the golden oil so the restored people be like a gold lampstand shining. Gideon contended by God's Spirit and the returned temple shone by God's Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the origin of revival! Without the Holy Spirit, there is no revival and no victory. Therefore we ought to open our mouth wide to ask for the Holy Spirit and for revival! (Ac 1:8)

**Isa 16 / Rev 21:25 Main theme: The gate of salvation is opened, seek humbly and be favored; wail due to arrogance**

 **-Seek humbly / Arrogant**

The holy city is refined. Therefore pray unceasingly and preach the Word and lead men to enter the gate of salvation.

(1)【Seek humbly and be favored】1-5 Acknowledge we ourselves are afflicted sinners. If we will trust in the salvation of the Lamb and hide under the Lord's shadow, we will dwell immediately in Him. We will be able to proclaim His words of judgment. If we will continue to seek Him and act on God's will quickly, then many people will be favored.

(2)【Wail due to arrogance】6-14 If we are proud and angry when we are suffering, our ending will be painful and wailing. Prayer of pride will not be answered.

(3)【Ought to grab the chance now】13-14 Since the Lord is still tolerant without cutting me down, may the Lord redeem me and purify me to become His slave of love. We do not ask for any price but more people may turn to be justified. The more we are forgiven, the more we should love the Lord.

**Central point of the wheels: Seek humbly and be favored, trust in the Holy Spirit, overcome the enemies and build up the temple**

Dear Lord, may you let me be humble and obey You forever, trust in the Holy Spirit to hold the plumb line on hand and accomplish your work!

**Jdg 7 / Zec 5**

**Main theme: Through tests and obey the Word firmly, become a flying scroll to destroy the power of sin**

 **-Fighting warrior / A flying scroll (been tested/be sent)**

Golden verses: Jdg 7:20 Zec 5:4

A discussion on fighting warriors and a flying scroll – on one side it concerned only three hundred fighting men were left from thirty-two thousand after being tested by God. They were like round loaves of barley bread and empty jars full of spiritual life, power and a zealous heart. Thus they triumphed over the enemies gloriously. On the other side it concerned the prophet saw a flying scroll full of power, thus the house of the wicked fell completely. May the Lord let us be tested to be abundant in life, fit for His use, filled with spiritual power to be transformed by the Word, love and Spirit, so we may become fighting warriors of the age and a flying living scroll!

**A. Through tests and become fighting warriors, fit the measurement to be a flying scroll**

Through tests (Jdg 7:1-8) – Fit the measurement (Zec 5:1-4)

1.【Through tests to select fighting warriors】1-4 God saw that the troops of Gideon were too many, so He ordered those who trembled with fear might turn back lest the brothers were disheartened. (Deu 20:8) God wanted to test the leftover ten thousand men personally. So He commanded them to go down to the water. Many are called but the chosen ones would be the warrior.

※【Fit the measurement to become a flying scroll】1-2 Zechariah the prophet looked up again and he saw a flying scroll showing God's judgment was near. The Lord's words were the measurement and the truth. (Zec 2:1-2; Jn 17:17) This scroll had to be according to God's measurement representing God's righteousness, holiness and the measurement of the cross. Therefore we ought to eat up the Lord's words, so no matter when and where we are, we will take the standard of the truth and the cross as our requirement to control ourselves and deal with our old self. We then may be transformed by the Word and the Spirit to become a living scroll. Similarly, the troops of Gideon were tested fit for God's measurement and requirement. Then they were selected as the warriors to attack the Midianites.

2.【Die to the flesh and be a fighting warrior】5-8“Many be called, but few chosen.”(Mt 20:16) The result of the test was those who lap the water with their tongues were chosen by God. These three hundred men were faithful and alert. They were on call. They nailed their flesh to death and did not long for the secular. They kept the Word in trembling and did not indulge in grace. The rest all knelt down to drink lavishly. They considered more of their flesh and cared only for the enjoyment before their eyes. They were unaware of the situation of the enemy and were thus eliminated. Only the three hundred men were picked by God as warriors. They brought the provisions and trumpets. They were enriched in the spirit and full of power ready to go.

※【Become a flying scroll with power】3-4 The flying scroll was going out over the whole land full of power. It would enter the house of the thief and the house of him who swore falsely, so the unrighteous and the ungodly would be judged and destroyed. The three hundred warriors of Gideon were like the flying scroll and the workers of the four living creatures. They were full of the Lord's Word and blew the trumpet of gospel! We ought to eat up the scroll, put our flesh to death completely, go through tests and be a warrior.

**B. Workers of loaves of barley bread, be transformed in the spirit and love to face the enemies in one heart**

A loaf of barley bread (Jdg 7:9-25) – A cover of lead (Zec 5:5-11)

1.【A round loaf of barley bread】9-18 That night Gideon obeyed to bring his servant to the camp of Midian. He heard a man said he dreamt of a round loaf of barley bread tumbling into the Midianite camp. It struck the tent and the tent collapsed. The barley bread was the sword of Gideon. When Gideon heard this he worshiped God. He knew that God had put the enemy into his hands. Thus he gathered the troops and divided them into three companies each bringing their empty jars and torches ready to fight at any time.

※【A cover of lead】5-8 Then the prophet saw a vision of a measuring basket. There on the basket sat a woman representing the power of wickedness. He also saw the cover of lead was raised and pushed over the basket – pray in one accord to block the power of evil. The barley bread and the cover of lead seemed useless, but they were able to destroy the enemy and to stop the power of wickedness manifesting the power of God's words and prayer in one accord!

2.【Destroy the enemies in one heart】19-25 The warriors of Gideon were set in three companies. They blew the trumpets late in the night and smashed the jars. They lifted up the torches and declared in one voice 'For the Lord and for Gideon'. Gideon and the three hundred warriors broke themselves and were burnt with love. God was with them and they fought against the enemy courageously. As a result, the enemy's camp cried as they fled. They turned on each other with their swords and the two Midian leaders were killed.

※【Deal with the enemies in one heart】9-11 The prophet looked up again and saw two women flying with wings. They quickly carried the basket – the power of evil, to the land of Shinar (land of roaring of lions), a base area which is anti-God far from the people of God. All warriors of the age ought to break and deny themselves like the two flying women utilizing the power of prayer to contend and destroy the enemy in one heart.

**Isa 17 / Rev 21:26 Main theme: Sow different seeds will lose glory; value the Lord's words and obey the Word will gain glory**

 **-Lose glory / Gain glory**

The holy city is full of honor and glory (Rev 21:26). There is great glory if we exalt God as holy, do good day and night and lead people from all directions to come to the Lord for God gives glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good. (Ro 2:10)

(1)【To sow different seeds will grieve】1-11As Israel did not value God's words and look up to the Almighty God but allied with Aram against Assyria, they planted what they thought was the finest plants and imported vines. They trusted in the poles and the incense altars. Thus the result was disease and incurable pain. All their glory was lost. If we sow by human flesh and sinful nature, we will reap destruction.

(2)【Trust in God and see His majestic power】12-14 Only by obeying the Lord's words and sow to please the Spirit, we will see God’s power. When God rebuked, the Assyrian troops of one hundred and eighty five thousand became dead bodies in a night. The enemy was avenged and ashamed. (2 Ki 19:35)

**Central point of the wheels: Through tests there is power to destroy the power of sin and exalt God's glory**

Dear Lord, may You let me be tested and selected, to be transformed in the Word, Spirit and love to be your fighting warrior and glorify your name!

**Jdg 8 / Zec 6**

**Main theme: Be humble to your kin and defeat the enemies ferociously, listen to the Lord completely and the people will stream to Him**

 **-Pursue closely / Run throughout**

Golden verses: Jdg 8:23 Zec 6:12-13

A discussion on pursuing closely and running throughout the land – on one side it concerned though the fighting warriors were tired out, they continued to pursue the enemies till they gained a complete victory. On the other side it concerned the prophet saw a vision of four chariots. The four chariots obeyed to run throughout the whole land and accomplished God's mission to judge the foreign nations. We ought to pursue closely, destroy all inner and outer enemies to be a returned people to offer gold and silver and be remembered forever. We also ought to take the final failure of Gideon as our warning.

**A. Humble and do not contend, pursue closely to destroy the enemy and obey to run throughout the land**

Humble and gentle (Jdg 8:1-17) – Humble to seek (Zec 6:1-7)

1.【Humble, gentle and do not contend】1-3 The Ephraimites were vexatious and criticized Gideon sharply. They complained that he did not call them to go. (Jdg 7:24) But Gideon was humble, gentle and did not contend. He was generous and did not fuss about it. He tactfully replied and turned away the wrath of the Ephraimites. (Pro 15:1)

※【Seek humbly】1-3 Zechariah the prophet continued humbly to seek the will of God. Thus he saw the vision of four chariots. God's servants shall not only learn from Gideon's humility, gentleness, not contending and caring about the overall situation. We also ought to imitate Zechariah's humility and advancing. He sought to understand the plan of God. He saw four chariots coming out from between two mountains of bronze. They were sent by the Spirit of God to judge the nations. The four chariots each had horses with different colors. They each had different mission going onward according to the sequence to execute judgment. We too have to accept God's judgment in every move, not swerving and not contending. Then we may accept the dispatch of the Holy Spirit to accomplish the Lord's work.

2.【Pursue closely to destroy the enemy】4-17 Though Gideon and the warriors who followed him were tired, they continued to pursue the enemy. They advanced after each victory and killed the Midianites. They caught the two kings alive and routed their entire army. Faced with the arrogant attitude of the officials of Succoth and the people of Peniel who rejected to support to give provisions, Gideon was very angry. Thereafter, when he came back triumphantly, he fiercely disciplined the Succoth officials. But he should not avenge on the people of Peniel by the standards of the world and violated God's command. He killed his siblings and was an excessive behavior.

※【Obey to run throughout】4-7 The angel answered the prophet of the vision of the four chariots. The four chariots were the four spirits of heaven, going out from standing in the presence of the Lord of the whole world. They were strong horses who obeyed to go throughout the earth representing the Holy Spirit's work on the whole land; just like the army of Gideon who continued in their battle to pursue to kill the enemy in order to obey God's will. But Gideon had a fly in the ointment. He revenged by the standard of the world. He killed his brothers and violated God's command. He disheartened the Lord's heart.

**B. Pay attention to obey, offer gold and silver lest we fall into the trap**

For self (Jdg 8:18-35) – Offer (Zec 6:8-15)

1.【Revenge on the enemy】18-21After Gideon had defeated the enemy and came back, he judged the two Midian kings. They acknowledged they had ruthlessly killed Gideon's brothers, the sons of his own mother, each one with the bearing of a prince on Mount Tabor. Thus Gideon swore he would revenge. He killed them personally and took revenge for his brothers.

※【Repay God's kindness】8-11 The chariot which went to the north (to punish Babylon in the north) accomplished God's will and comforted the Lord's heart. The warriors of Gideon destroyed the enemy fiercely. They killed the two kings and took revenge for the brothers who were killed also comforted the Lord's heart. The prophet obeyed to take the silver and gold and made a crown from three people of the exiles. He set it on the head of the high priest referring that the Branch had to get up to build the temple. The three people represented the exiles. God had avenged for them. They returned and built the temple to repay God's kindness and offered their gratitude. Babylon and all the enemies who had mutilated God's people would receive the retribution like the two Midian kings.

2.【Ask for gold ornaments and fall into the trap】22-28 After the victory, Gideon faced a greater challenge. He verbally rejected to rule over the people and let God to rule over them. But he asked the people for the golden ornaments and made an ephod. He then placed it in his town resulting in the people prostituted themselves by worshiping it. This became a snare to his whole family. If our flesh does not die completely without taking the name of God in every move, we will hurt ourselves and hurt the whole family.

※【Offer gold and silver and God remembers】12-14 The prophet prophesied Christ is the Branch. He is completely victorious and will build the temple of God and be clothed with majesty. He will rule on His throne and be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony. The returned people would offer gold and silver for the crown to be placed as a memorial in the temple. But Gideon could not stand the test. He requested for the golden ornaments by his selfish desire and he failed completely. Not only was he not remembered, he set himself and all the people in sin and trouble.

3.【Follow other gods and swerve from the Lord's way】29-35 When Gideon went back home, he was complacent and indulged in himself. He had many wives and concubine. After he died, the people followed other gods again. They did not remember God's grace of salvation or show kindness to the family of Gideon. Thereafter Abimelech the son born by his concubine made schemes to be the king. He greatly endangered the people and put God's name to shame. He was finally in disasters.

※【Forsake idols and are blessed together】15 God's people paid attention to obey. They abandoned the idol and evil thoroughly. Foreigners from afar would also come to be favored and build the temple together. They were blessed by God. In his old age Gideon did not listen to God. His old self was the king and his sinful nature was the king.

**Isa 18 / Rev 21:27 Main theme: See and listen to the Lord's words, overcome the enemy by Him for apart from Him is wailing**

 **-See and listen / Enter the city**

Nothing impure or anyone who does shameful or deceitful will enter the holy city. God's children should take this warning deeply.

(1)【Ought to see and listen to the Lord's holy words】1-3 Men struggle diligently to be great by power. But they do not look at or listen to the words of the Most High God. Therefore the Holy Spirit sighed. The wings of Immanuel cover the breadth of the land. The Lord's heart wishes everyone to be saved and come under His shelter. He does not want anyone to perish. If we will trust in the salvation of the Lamb to break away from evil, then we may dwell with God.

(2)【God puts up disasters to force us to return to Him】4-7 God raises the enemy so misfortune forces men to turn back to God. By the blood and through the Word we will be cleansed to remove the detestable falsehood to enter the holy city to gain eternal life and blessings.

**Central point of the wheels: Pay attention to listen, destroy evil and offer and take warning forever**

Dear Lord, may you make me be forever humble and gentle, to defeat all my inner enemies, pay attention to your words, offer all I have and be remembered by You!

**Jdg 9 / Zec 7**

**Main theme: Do evil and be hypocritical will be avenged; obey the Word and love man will be blessed**

 **-Fierce / Hypocritical**

Golden verses: Jdg 9:9-10, 13 Zec 7:13

A discussion on fierceness and hypocrisy – on one side it concerned Abimelech was arrogant and brutal. He killed seventy brothers. He conspired to be the king and was finally avenged for his wickedness. On the other side it concerned the prophet rebuked the people for fasting hypocritically. They were stubborn and rebellious and thus would be punished and scattered among the nations. This teaches us not to be self-deceiving. We ought to repent, turn from evil and then be accepted.

**A. Do not do evil, do not be hypocritical**, **God be the King and we will be fruitful**

Conspire evil (Jdg 9:1-28) – Be hypocritical (Zec 7:1-7)

1.【Conspire to be the king】1-28 Abimelech was born by the concubine of Gideon. He was ambitious and used crafty schemes to ally with Shechem. He killed his brothers and held himself the king. Jotham, the youngest son of Gideon escaped from among his brothers who were killed and hid himself. When he heard Abimelech was crowned as king, he declared to the people that Abimelech was like the thornbush. He was arrogant and declared himself king. He swayed over the trees. He warned the people if they did not treat his father's house with honor and in good faith, or be ungrateful to repay kindness with evil, they would destroy one another and be cursed. Jotham united with God and stood at the spiritual height to warn people. His words were fulfilled.

※【Seek grace by hypocrisy】1-7 The people of Bethel sent men to entreat the priests and the prophets if they should mourn and fast in the fifth month as they had done for so many years. They did not turn from the idols and evil. They were not honest and righteous. Such kind of fasting was hypocrisy and self-deception. Their old self was the king. Abimelech killed all his brothers and plotted to be the king. He was even wanton and self-deceptive. Jotham was like the vine, an olive tree and the fig tree that united with God. He hid himself and exalted God as the king. He was not at all hypocritical. He bravely admonished evil and was able to be freed from disasters.

2.【God sent an evil spirit】1-28 Abimelech did not act honorably and in good faith as king. After three years, God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the citizens of Shechem. The people of Shechem were treacherous and set an ambush against Abimelech. God did this in order that the crime against the seventy sons might be avenged on them. He also made Gaal son of Ebed to stir up by chance to gain the heart of the people. The people of Shechem all turned to him. They were like thornbush and their old self was the king. Not only were they unable to bear fruit, they hurt themselves and others.

※【God is not pleased】1-7 The Almighty God declared to the people that they had fasted and mourned for seventy years. Was it really for Him that they had fasted! They did not listen to God through the words proclaimed by the prophets. God would not delight in such kind of fasting. Abimelech and the people of Shechem killed and did evil. They were even rebellious and stubborn. God turned from them and the evil spirit came on them. What God delights is humility and union with God, who exalts God as the king. He will be fruitful and be enjoyed by God and men. He glorifies God and benefits men.

**B. Listen to the Lord's words, have mercy on men; to kill one another will be avenged together**

Be compassionate (Jdg 9:29-57) – To kill brutally (Zec 7:8-14)

1.【To kill one another brutally】29-49 Abimelech came to know Gaal united with the Shechem to rebel. So he divided his men into four companies and they set an ambush at night to contend with them. He drove Gaal out of the city of Shechem. Then he turned to kill the people of Shechem and burned about one thousand people in the tower of Shechem.

※【To love one another】8-10 God's words came to the prophet exhibiting what God wanted was not the external fasting but to love each other deeply from the heart, to administer true justice and to show mercy on the brothers and the afflicted. Abimelech and the people of Shechem acted in collusion with each other and took each other's advantage. Thereafter they killed each other. They devoured each other and destroyed each other. (Gal 5:13; 1Pe 1:22)

2.【God's retribution】50-57 Finally Abimelech came to Thebez and tried to attack this city. All the people escaped to the strong tower. He tried to set it on fire. As a result he was killed by a woman who dropped a millstone on his head and cracked his skull. Thus God had avenged him for the evil of killing his seventy brothers and on the wickedness of the people of Shechem. So the curse of Jotham came on them.

※【God's punishment】11-14 The hearts of the people were like hard stones. They turned their backs and stopped up their ears on the words of the prophet. Thus God was very angry. Similarly God also showed His wrath on Abimelech and made him died due to the retribution. God had called them but they would not listen. Later when they called on God, God would not listen. God would scatter them among the nations so the good land became desolate. Abimelech and the wicked would face their tragic ending.

**Isa 19 / Rev 22 Main theme: Take lesson and remove evil, save man in one heart and be blessed without disasters**

 **-Worldly / Be holy**

(1)【With idols brother will fight against brother】1-4 The Egyptians will lose heart and be handed over to the cruel master so we may take lesson to remove evil. There is living water and will be fruitful if we let the Lord reigns.

(2)【Grab the world will be withered and mourn】5-10 Blessed is he who keeps the prophecy, be the Lord's servant and leads men to God.

(3)【The worldly wisdom is foolish and cannot accomplish anything】11-15 We will be rewarded if we consecrate and obey the Word, and work together with God. The Lord will accomplish His work.

(4)【Willing to repent will be saved and favored】16-18 Those who are rebellious till the end will be destroyed.

(5)【Been beaten and return will be healed】19-22 Witness for the Lord, lead men to the living water and proclaim the Lord's true Word without addition and subtraction.

(6)【Be in one heart for the Lord will bless others】23-25 When the time comes, be holy and united, have partnership in the gospel and wait watchfully for the Lord's coming.

**Central point of the wheels: Be wicked and will be avenged; obey the Word will be blessed**

O Lord, may You save me from hypocrisy and wickedness so I may thirst for the living water to keep the Word and consecrate to grab to save the souls and be ready for your coming!

**Jdg 10 / Zec 8**

**Main theme: Confess and cry out to the Lord, do good courageously will gain revival**

 **-Remove evil / Seek good**

Golden verses: Jdg 10:16 Zec 8:13

A discussion on removing evil and seeking good – on one side it concerned when the Israelites cried out to God and confessed to remove other gods in their distress, God still cared for them and delivered them. On the other side it concerned the prophecy of revival of Zion which encouraged the returned people to be courageous to build the temple and turn from evil to do good. All the people came to plead for God's favor. This showed God was very jealous for Zion! We too, ought to consider God'smind to intercede fervently for the churches of today!

**A. Suffered thoroughly and return to God, obey and be blessed to build up the temple courageously**

Deliver (Jdg 10:1-9) – Revive (Zec 8:1-13)

1.【God sends deliverance】1-2 After Abimelech died, God raised Tola (worm) a judge whom men would treat as a worm and for which the world was not worthy of them. But he was used by God to save the Israelites from the hand of the enemy. This showed God's unchanging love for the people.

※【God returns to Zion】1-3 The word of the Lord Almighty came to Zechariah showing He was very jealous for Zion and was burning with jealousy for her. God promised to return to Zion and dwell among the people so the holy city would be called the City of Truth and the mountain of God be called the Holy Mountain. Though the people had repeatedly sinned against God, He still raised up judges to save them. This showed how zealous was God's heart for the people! The judges whom God raised were full of God's love. They sacrificed and denied themselves to save the people so God still dwelled among them.

2.【Forsake God and worship evil then God punishes】3-9 God also raised Jair (watchful, watcher) as a judge to save the people. But after he died, they did evil again and served the Baals and the Ashtoreths and also the gods of Moab, Ammon and Philistia. Thus God was angry with them and put them into the hands of the Philistines and Ammonites. They were greatly disturbed and oppressed. The people were in great distress.

※【Be bold to build up the temple and God blesses】4-13 The Lord Almighty declared the scene of the revival of the holy city. God would save His people from the countries of the east and the west. Not only were the streets filled with men and women of ripe old age, there were also boys and girls playing there. Therefore we ought to listen to the encouragement of the prophet and be strong to build the temple. Do not be afraid for God will bless the remnant without cursing them so they may enjoy the abundance and peace. But to the people who are sinful and worship evil, God will punish them so they will be disturbed and oppressed without peace.

**B. Confess and cry out, turn from evil and do good, plead for God's favor**

Confess (Jdg 10:10-18) – Do good (Zec 8:14-23)

1.【Confess and cry out】10-15 In distress and suffering, the people cried to God and acknowledged they had forsaken God to serve other gods. As they had repeatedly sinned against God and unwilling to be disciplined, God gave them to plead their chosen gods. The people still cried to God and confessed their sins and asked for His deliverance.

※【Turn from evil and do good】14-19 The Lord Almighty declared their fathers sinned, God was determined to bring disaster upon them like the situation of the age of the judges. Now God had determined to do good, only if they would confess their sins and call to Him, shun evil and do good, speak the truth and be at peace. God would deliver them so the fasts would become happy festivals for Judah.

2.【Remove the sin and be favored】16-18 Then the Israelites got rid of the foreign gods and served the Lord. And He could bear Israel's misery no longer and rescued them. The Ammonites gathered in their camp to attack the Israelites. The leaders of the people discussed to invite Jephthah to come out to be their leader to save them from the Ammonites. (Jdg 11:4-11)

※【All people seek grace】20-23 The people shunned evil and did good. They turned back to their God. God promised all people would come to seek God's grace. Everyone would go at once to entreat God. The nations and the people of the powerful nations would also come. Ten men would take firm hold of one Jew to go with them to be favored because they heard that God was with them. When the people got rid of the foreign gods, God would be with them and raise a leader for them to attack the enemy. We ought to shun evil and seek to do good, remove all foreign gods, and then God's promise of revival will come!

**Ps 1 / Rev 10:1 Main theme: Do not follow evil but the way of love, there is mightiness to bear choice fruit**

 **-The way of love / Mightiness**

On one side there was a mighty angel exhibiting God's majesty coming down from heaven. On the other side was a man who loved God's law and meditated day and night. He took root in the Lord and was far away from evil. Thus he bore fruit abundantly. They both glorified God greatly.

(1)【Do not walk in evil but love the Lord's words only】1-3 We ought to imitate the Lord and the descendants of Jonadab. Though they had gone through all sorts of trials, they firmly kept God's word without swerving. This kind of people will be powerful. They bear fruit timely and are led by the Holy Spirit to run a righteous path to accomplish the will of God. This is because their power comes from the God in heaven just like Stephen was able to obey God's will courageously and his face shown like an angel.

(2)【The wicked is blown away and perish】4-6 The wicked only has an outward appearance like the Pharisees. They are well versed in the Scripture but inside are full of evil. They listen to the Lord's words but do not act upon them. They set the foundation on the sand, so when the wind and rain come, they collapse. On the day of judgment, they will be unable to escape from the severe punishment. They court their destruction.

**Central point of the wheels: Forsake evil and love the Word, be courageous to build up the temple, do good and be blessed**

Dear Lord, may You make my heart be burning with jealousy for your temple, to love what You love, to hate what You hate and lead men to gain salvation!

**Jdg 11 / Zec 9**

**Main theme: Be righteous and humble, and deny yourself to offer to the Lord. How great is the Lord's grace?**

 **-Destroy the enemies / Return (Offer / Shine)**

Golden verses: Jdg 11:35-36 Zec 9:8

A discussion on destroying the enemies and returning – on one side it concerned God trained Jephthah with affliction so he might be deeply oppressed and disdained, harassed and helpless and then be ascended after triumphant victory. On the other side it concerned God promised He would destroy the nations so the people might return and overcome to shine and glorify God. God used grain and new wine to train a group of devotees like the daughter of Jephthah who is willing to sacrifice to accomplish God's will.

1. **The lowly will be ascended, God's eyes will guard; to be against God will be destroyed**

Suffer (Jdg 11:1-28) – Put hope (Zec 9:1-12)

1.【Humble and suffer, God will make him ascend】1-11 Jephthah was born of a prostitute. Though he was a mighty warrior, he was disdained, driven out and robbed of everything. He led a life of escape. Due to the attack of the Ammonites, the elders of Israel invited Jephthah to come back to be their leader. Jephthah suffered and humbled. He was chosen by God to be the commander to save the people from the enemy. He deeply knew he was unworthy. Thus he retreated before God in Mizpah (watch tower) and repeated all his words through prayer before God.

※【Put hope and wait then God punishes the enemy】1-5 When all the eyes of Israel and men were on God, the oracle of God against Aram, Phoenicia and Philistia would be fulfilled. Though the nations had great wisdom and heaped up gold and silver, God would destroy their power on the sea so they were ashamed and corrupted. Jephthah suffered and was forsaken. He humbled and was obedient. So when the time came God exalted him. The nations were arrogant and self-deceptive. They were humbled. (Mt 23:12) In his suffering Jephthah looked up to God. He was close to God. He prepared himself and waited till God's will was completed. The oracle of the prophet would also be fulfilled.

2.【God will judge】12-28 Jephthah first sent messengers to see the king of the Ammonites. The king of Ammon was arrogant and unreasonable. He insisted that the Israelites had forcibly occupied their land. But Jephthah had quoted the fact and cited the history. He exposed his falsehood and showed Israel had not occupied their land. They gained the land by God and overcame the Amorite king. Jephthah tried peaceful means before resorting to force and greatly witnessed God's deed. He let the Lord, the Judge, decide the dispute.

※【God will look after】8-12 God would thoroughly remove the pride of Philistia so they might submit to the people of God. He also promised to defend His house against marauding forces and keep watching over it. The Ammonites were also like an oppressor who attacked without reason. But the truth would overcome. God would keep watching and He would judge. Daughter of Zion ought to rejoice greatly for the righteous King came riding gently on a colt to save and proclaim peace to the nations. His rule extended to the ends of the earth. Jephthah humbled and suffered like an obedient colt used by God. He deeply understood God's will. He held fast to the truth and exalted God as king. God's covenant never changes! God promised to release the exiles so the captives would return to His fortress. He would restore twice as much.

**B. Return and overcome the enemy, offer completely to shine and glorify God**

Offer (Jdg 11:29-40) – Glorify God (Zec 9:13-17)

1.【Vow to offer and overcome the enemy greatly】29-33 The Spirit of God came upon Jephthah and he led the troops attack the enemy. In the fierce fighting, he vowed to God. If God would put the enemy in his hand and return in triumph, the first one to meet him would be sacrificed as a burnt offering, (the original text was whatever) God was with him and he devastated the enemy. The Ammonites were subdued by the Israelites.

※【Refined and return with power】13-15 After the people were refined and returned, they were like the sword of the warrior full of power. After Jephthah was refined, he was full of power by the Spirit of God. He vowed to sacrifice and had a great victory. Similarly God promised to protect His people so they might devour the enemy and conquer the nations.

2.【Willing to sacrifice】34-40 Jephthah returned in triumph. Unexpectedly, his only daughter danced to the sound of tambourines to meet him. He tore his clothes and was very miserable. But he could not break the vow he made. Her daughter was willing to sacrifice herself when saw that God has avenged their enemies. She only requested to roam the hills and weep with her friends for two months. The father and the daughter were in one heart. They had in mind the will of God and saved the people from the enemies.

※【Shine and glorify God】16-17 God promised to save the flock of His people. He treated the restored people as the jewels in a crown which could shine. The daughter of Jephthah was willing to sacrifice and offer herself. She was like jewels that shone to glorify God. Those who love God will be like the sun when it rises in its strength. (Jdg 5:31) How attractive and beautiful is God! He thrives the young men and women with grain and new wine to be the workers of the age. The mighty warriors of Christ are like the daughter of Jephthah who love God and men. They are willing to sacrifice and offer themselves for the heavenly kingdom.

**Ps 2 / Rev 10:2 Main theme: Do not be afraid that man will go against God, read the Holy book and seek to gain all the people**

 **-Go against / The holy book**

(1)【The scroll was opened】The little scroll referred to the book of Revelation which is laid open. Whoever are purified and thirst to seek it will understand. (Dan 12:10)

(2)【Understand God's words and pray to gain the land】1-9 We may understand God's will from the holy book. The Lord will come again to be the king. Do not care if all people are against God but understand the Almighty God and plea by His promise for the nations and the ends of the world as our inheritance.

(3)【Now be wise and do good】10-13 Do not be complacent, asleep or drunk. We ought to serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. We shall shun evil and do good by God to accomplish His work lest when He comes, we will be punished and cry with gnashing teeth.

**Central point of the wheels: Be humble and offer, the scroll is opened, destroy the enemy and gain the land**

Dear Lord, I am willing to learn from You to be a humble colt, to offer completely and overcome everything to glorify You and shine!

**Jdg 12 / Zec 10**

**Main theme: Do not contend with man, pray to God for grace to overcome the enemies and revive**

 **-Do not contend / Pray for grace**

Golden verses: Jdg 12:6 Zec 10:12

A discussion on do not contend and pray for grace – on one side it concerned the Ephraimites came to contend after the fight. Jephthah was thus enraged and slaughtered his brothers. On the other side it concerned we ought to pray for spiritual rain from God so revival might come and the people would return to overcome the enemies. This teaches us to be more careful and watchful after we won any fight. We ought to unite with God to overcome our inner enemies, die completely to our old self, do not be angry, do not contend and plead for the Holy Spirit (Lk 11:13), face the enemies with one heart so the church may revive.

**A. Do not contend and be angry, pray for spiritual rain, be bold to attack the enemy and God is with us**

Contend and be angry (Jdg 12:1-6) – Pray for rain (Zec 10:1-5)

1.【Be angry with each other and contend】1-3 After the battle the Ephraimites came out again to quarrel irrationally. They complained that Jephthah did not call them to fight against the Ammonites. They threatened to burn down his house. Jephthah did call them, but they did not come out to the battle. Thus he was angered and fought back. He thought himself was righteous and assured. He was not willing to hold his anger and give in. He failed greatly.

※【Pray for spiritual rain together】1When the rain in the springtime comes, ask the Lord who makes the storm clouds. (Jn 7:37-39) He promised to give showers of rain so the fields would prosper. Therefore we ought to stop the quarrel and live in peace so the fire of love will burn in us. Let us plead for revival in one heart for the Holy Spirit promised by God. We will be in disaster if we fight against each other and let the fire of anger burn. (Pro 17:14; Heb 12:14)

2.【Kill the brothers out of flesh】4-6 Then Jephthah called together the men of Gilead by the standards of this world and fought against the men of Ephraim. (Jas 4:1) The Ephraimites had once laughed at the men of Gilead they were renegades from Ephraim. The people of Gilead were not willing to be mocked, so they took the chance to revenge. Thus the Gileadites captured the fords of the Jordan and would not let the Ephraimites cross over. They made an excuse that they could not pronounce the word correctly. They seized them and killed more than forty thousand Ephraimites. Therefore we ought to be careful. If we hate each other and kill our kindred, we have fallen into the trap of Satan and will be destroyed by each other. (Gal 5:15) We ought to imitate the Lord to be gentle and humble in heart, and then we may win over men and save them.

※【God is with us and we may trample the enemies】2-5 The Holy Spirit came and exposed all the falsehood of the idols and the diviners. Men would no longer follow the heresy and the false dreams. They gave comfort in vain. God would punish the leaders and care for His flock. He would lead them to return. God would be with them so they would be like a proud horse in battle to trample on the enemy. How could the Gileadites trample on their kindred? We ought to have the jealousy of God to turn the anger towards the enemy and not be trapped into the plot of Satan to kill our own brothers!

**B. Return and revive, deliver the people by God and walk in the name of the Lord**

Deliver (Jdg 12:7-15) – Return (Zec 10:6-12)

1.【deliver the people by God】7-15 Jephthah only led Israel for six years and died. After him came Ibzan (labor) as the judge. Thereafter came Elon (strong) and Abdon (servile) respectively. They destroyed the enemies by God and saved His people.

※【Be strengthened by God】6-12 God promised to strengthen and save the house of Judah and Joseph so they would be compassioned and return. Their heart would be glad and rejoice in the Lord. God would save His people so they would be as numerous as before. The pride of Assyria and the power of Egypt would pass away! God would bring His people back from Assyria and Egypt. They would be strengthened in the Lord and in His name they would walk. (Col 3:17) Though Jephthah risked his life to fight and saved greatly, he did not make every move in the name of God. Thus after the victory, he failed greatly and created a tragedy by killing his brothers.

**Ps 3 / Rev 10:3 Main theme: Do not look at anything, pray to the Lord by faith and it far exceeds our expectation**

 **-Call on / Cry out**

God's angel was like the watchman in Isa 21:8 ‘And the lookout shouted, “Day after day, my lord, I stand on the watchtower; every night I stay at my post.”’

(1)【Do not fix your eyes on the environment and do not listen to men's words】1-2 God's children are the object of attack of the enemies. Therefore we shall not fix our eyes on the environment and do not listen to men's word, but keep watch over ourselves and all the flock day and night.

(2)【Cry out to God by faith】3-6 I deeply believe if I cry aloud to the Lord, He will answer me. He will not only save me but also bestow glory on me.

(3)【Please deliver me and your people】7-8 God favors all who call on Him richly. He will not only grant you your wish, but more than what you have asked and thought. Just like the prayer of Esther, He turned the great trouble to great revival and all the people were blessed.

**Central point of the wheels: Do not contend or be angry, pray for revival, overcome the enemies and be strengthened by God**

Dear Lord, may You pour out your spiritual rain and revival and we shall ruin Satan's plot in one heart and walk in your name!

**Jdg 13 / Zec 11**

**Main theme: Be careful to obey, deny yourself to shepherd the flock; woe to the foolish shepherd**

 **-Be careful / Deny yourself (obey/shepherd)**

Golden verses: Jdg 13:12 Zec 11:7

A discussion on being careful and denying yourself – on one side it concerned the couple of Manoah was chosen by God to be a spiritual woman in labor. She ought to be careful to obey, to set apart to be holy and without defiling by evil to prepare for Samson, the son of the age to deliver the people from the suffering of the Philistines. On the other side it concerned Zechariah obeyed to shepherd the oppressed flock. He represented Christ who denied His life to be a good shepherd. God's workers ought to be spiritual women in labor and good shepherds to deny themselves and obey, and to pay the price for the flock.

**A. Be careful to obey and shepherd the oppressed flock**

Reveal (Jdg 13:1-14) – Judge (Zec 11:1-9)

1.【God reveals】1-3 Israel did evil again and forsook God. Thus God put them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years of suffering and oppression. God had regard for the affliction of His people. So He sent His angel to appear to the wife of Manoah (rest) who was sterile. But God promised her to conceive and have a son.

※【God judges】1-3 The prophet prophesied when the people of God abandoned Christ their King, God's fire of judgment would devour the rich pasture of Israel. The whole nation would wail. The stately cedar and the pine trees represented the leaders of evil would fall. The people suffered all the oppression and were being judged. God raised up a deliverer for them and thus sent an angel to appear to the wife. While those who rejected the Lord to be their deliverer would be judged!

2.【Be careful to obey】4-14 The angel admonished the women to be careful to obey. No wine or other fermented drink was to be drunk. She ought not have consideration for the flesh, nor to indulge in natural lust, nor to be contaminated by the secular. She could not eat anything unclean. The son that she bore had to turn from the world and set apart to God from birth to be a Nazirite for God all his life. He could not use razor on his head. He would be the deliverer of Israel. Manoah saw his wife was favored. So he prayed to God and he was also answered. The angel appeared again to command them to be careful to obey God's word said to the woman. (Num 6:1-12)

※【Obey to shepherd】4-9 The evil shepherds bought and sold the flock. They only cared to fatten themselves and did not have compassion on the flock. God would get rid of the three shepherds (including the king, the priest and the prophet) within one month. He got weary of them. Zechariah was chosen by God. He was careful to obey. He represented Christ was the good Shepherd who denied Himself to shepherd the afflicted flock. He took two staff named Favor and Union in his hand representing the people had to unite with God. Judah and Israel would unite together to be Favor. They would be united and be protected. The couple of Manoah was also chosen by God. They were to be careful to obey to set apart for God and accomplish God's will.

**B. Blessed is he who gives thanks and offers; woe to him who betrays and forsakes the Lord**

Offer (Jdg 13:15-25) – Fatten one self (Zec 11:10-17)

1.【Give thanks and offer and God accepts】15-20 When the angel appeared to the couple, they were very grateful. They begged to treat the angel but were rejected by him. Instead he instructed them to prepare a burnt offering to God. Manoah offered a young goat with the grain offering and was accepted by God. Then the angel ascended in the flame. Seeing this, the couple fell with their faces to the ground and worshiped God. They were surprised at God's amazing deed.

※【Ungrateful and betray the Lord and God rejects】10-14 The prophet broke the staff called Favor showing God rejected His people and put them to the foreign nations because they rejected the Savior and even sold Him for thirty pieces of shekels. This became the blood money and was thrown to the potter. (Mt 27:3-7) Then the prophet broke the staff called Union abandoning the brotherhood between Judah and Israel. This was the result of their rejection of the true Shepherd. The couple of Manoah loved the Lord and sacrificed and was delighted by God. The chosen people forsook the Lord and sold the Lord. They were rejected by God. Jesus was the burnt offering and the grain offering who broke Himself for our sins. How can we fail the love of the Lord to forsake and sell the Lord!

2.【God blesses】21-25 The couple of Manoah was blessed by God. He accepted their sacrifice. They were surprised and joyous. Their gratefulness was hard to express! Later on, the woman gave birth to a boy and named him Samson (strong, sunlike). The boy grew up and was blessed by God. The Spirit of God stirred him and he became a judge of Israel.

※【God sends disasters】15-17 The prophet later on prophesied a foolish shepherd would be raised up to persecute the flock. He would eat the meat of the choice sheep and desert the flock. God would send disasters so his arm would be withered. His right eye would be totally blinded referring to the kingdom, the power and the wisdom of the anti-Christ would be destroyed. God raised up Samson to be the judge to save the flock from the affliction of the enemy. Later on he did not listen in trembling and was overcome by the sinful lust like the foolish shepherd. The result was tragic!

**Ps / Rev 10:4 Main theme: Be righteous and godly, humble and obedient will understand the mystery**

 -**Be righteous / Be humble**

(1)【Do not turn to delusions but be righteous and godly】1-5 We ought not turn to delusions. Instead we should pursue righteousness and holiness to fear the Lord in a godly manner and do everything before God.

(2)【Be humble to obey】4 John head the voice from heaven and obeyed immediately without writing down the mystery of the seven thunders. In everything, do not follow our desire but follow the Lord's command.

(3)【The benefits of being godly and humble】6-8 This kind of instrument that is holy and obedient will be a delight to God. He will be close to God and be answered. All people will be blessed due to him. God will fill his heart with joy. He will understand the hidden things and gain abundance. He will enjoy the peace from the Lord.

**Central point of the wheels: Be godly and righteous, careful to obey and deny yourself to shepherd the flock**

Dear Lord, may You make me turn from the secular and be holy, be careful to obey and deny myself to shepherd the flock to accomplish your will!

**Jdg 14 / Zec 12**

**Main theme: Deprave for going after lust; pray to God fervently and all the land will revive**

 **-Deprave / Revive**

Golden verses: Jdg 14:13 Zec 12:10

A discussion on depravation and revival – on one side it concerned Samson went after lust. He coveted and was fond of women of foreign nations. He despised God's grace and disregarded His command (Deu 7:2-9). Thus he failed and depraved. On the other side it concerned Jerusalem, though was surrounded, the people cried out to God in their distress. They were contrite and delivered. Thus they overcame the enemies. We ought to put to death the misdeeds of the body by the Spirit (Ro 8:13) and do not be afraid of the attack of the outer adversaries. Then we will be delivered.

**A. Following lust will deprave; be a flaming torch and overcome**

Fail (Jdg 14:1-9) – Overcome (Zec 12:1-6)

1.【Be led astray and deprave】1-4 Samson was chosen by God when he was in his mother's womb to set apart for God to be a Nazirite. But he was not alert and did not tremble in fear. He went down. His heart swerved to evil. He followed the natural lust of the eyes and loved a Philistine woman. He even disregarded the objection of his parents and insisted to marry her. Thus he depraved.

※【Reeled and injured】1-3 Zechariah was pure in heart and loved God all his life. He was able to see visions and oracle repeatedly and became the spokesman of God's will. Jerusalem was besieged by the enemies and became a reeling cup of the nations. Samson was led astray by sin and trapped in test. He was defiled. He himself was reeled and he also made others reel! God would make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations so all the people who gathered to attack her would be injured. Samson followed his natural lust and married a woman of foreign nation. He could not save his people. Instead he was harmed by the enemy and as a resulted he was trapped in sin.

2.【Killed a strong lion but failed under a woman】5-9 The devil was like a lion and roared at Samson. The Spirit of God came upon him and he tore the lion apart with his bare hands. However, he failed before woman's charm which was more ferocious than a lion. After some time, he went down again to marry the woman. But he did not know he had fallen into the trap of the enemy and was ensnared. He saw there was honey in the dead lion and he scooped out to eat. He also gave some to his parents to eat. But he did not understand the true meaning of taking honey! If he was not led astray but was diligent to eat honey (Ps 19:9-10), he would certainly be sanctified by the truth to gain freedom.

※【Be a flaming torch and consume the surrounding enemies】4-6 God would have regard for the house of Judah so they might return and trust in the power of the Lord Almighty like a firepot in a woodpile to consume right and left all the surrounding people. They would overcome and triumph! Samson was apparently strong but internally dried. He was entangled by sin and united with the secular. He did not trust in the Spirit of God. Then how could he overcome? The leaders of Judah were first cleansed of the filth by a spirit of judgment to be a torch full of the power of the Holy Spirit to destroy the enemies. (Isa 4:3-4)

**B. Despise God and be disgraced; favored for being broken and contrite**

Disgraced (Jdg 14:10-20) – Contrite (Zec 12:7-14)

1.【Despise God's grace】10-14 Samson went down according to the customs of the foreign nations to set the feast. He was given thirty companions to celebrate with him. But he did not know he fell into the vigilance and surrounding of the enemy. His parents had also compromised and followed to go down. In the seven days of feast, Samson indulged in happiness and gave them a riddle. The loser would be punished for thirty linen garments and thirty sets of clothes. 'Out of the eater, something to eat; out of the strong, something sweet'. He was unable to identify the enemy and ourselves and despised God's grace!

※【Experience salvation】7-9 God would save the dwellings of Judah and protect the people of Jerusalem. They would be strong like the Angel of God. God would set out to destroy all the nations that attacked the holy city. God would protect His people by His wall of salvation. Samson despised God's grace and his parents compromised to intermarry with the enemy. Thus they failed and were ashamed before their enemy. His heart had swerved to evil like a city whose walls were broken down! (Pro 25:28)

2.【Was cheated and disgraced】15-20 The wife of Samson was exploited by the enemy. She cried the whole seven days of the feast and pressed him to explain the riddle. Samson finally failed before the enemy. But due to God's compassion, the Spirit of God came upon him in power. He killed thirty Philistines and stripped them of their clothes. Samson failed and was disgraced in the carnival of his wedding feast. His wife was given to his friend.

※【Be contrite and favored】10-14 In the last days God had prepared a spiritual feast for the chosen people. He would pour out a spirit of grace and supplication. They would look on the one they had pierced (the Savior whom they had forsaken). They would mourn and be contrite. All the people would be favored and saved. (Ro 11:25-26) The worldly wedding feast can only give us a moment of joy and soon turn to nothing! Before his failure, Samson went away in wrath. But he did not wail and was not contrite. Nor did he turn from wickedness. The church ought to be contrite and turn from sin to prepare to welcome the feast of the Lamb!

**Ps 5 / Rev 10:5 Main theme: Pray watchfully to remove evil, make every effort to be perfect and God's hands will protect us**

 **-Pray watchfully / Lift up the hands**

(1)【Be watchful to remove evil every morning】1-3 We ought to be alert and pray every morning. May the Lord remove all our iniquity so our thoughts and words will be accepted by the Lord.

(2)【The wicked cannot dwell with God】4-8 All the acts of sinning and evil, lying and be crafty are detestable to God. I will try to reach perfection by the Lord, to gain His love and be close to Him to run a righteous path.

(3)【The ending of the wicked is miserable】9-10 The wicked rebel against God. Their heart and mouth are filled with destruction. They do not seek to do good and will be driven out by the Lord.

(4)【Walk righteously by the Lord and be blessed and rejoice】11-12 The righteous who are watchful in prayer and turn from evil to do good by the Lord will be protected by His hand. They will be blessed to rejoice and be happy. When we pray watchfully, the angel will raise his hands to work great and wonderful things!

**Central point of the wheels: Do not follow lust, be contrite and pray watchfully and overcome by God**

Dear Lord, may You deliver me from the corruption of my flesh, be contrite and favored, overcome my inner enemies and lead men to gain salvation together!

**Jdg 15 / Zec 13**

**Main theme:** **Thirst for lust and be forsaken; thirsts for salvation and is greatly used**

 **-Thirst for lust / Thirst for salvation**

Golden verses: Jdg 15:19 Zec 13:1

A discussion on thirsting for lust and thirsting for salvation – on one side it concerned Samson killed the Philistines. He still pursued lust and was tied by it. In return he revenged for his personal anger. On the other side it concerned at the last day God would open a fountain to cleanse sin and impurity for the remnants. God's power of salvation and the greatness of the Holy Spirit would remove the power of the false prophets and evil spirits. God promised the remnants would be refined and return and be treasured. This teaches us we ought to thirst and draw water from the wells of salvation and no longer thirst for lust like Samson.

**A. Die to the flesh, destroy the enemy ferociously, cleanse from impurity by redemption**

Lust (Jdg 15:1-13) – Salvation (Zec 13:1-6)

1.【Thirst for the cravings of the body】1-2 Samson saw his wife was robbed; he ought to have repented and take the lesson to cut off with the foreign women. But he was unwilling to give up. He took a young goat and went to visit his wife. But her father would not let him go in. He still would not give up. The one who sows to please his sinful nature will reap destruction!

※【Thirst for the fountain of salvation】1 God promised on that day a fountain would be opened which was the wells of salvation (Isa 12:3; Jn 19:34) to wash away the sins of the chosen people and the entire house of Israel would be saved. As a judge Samson was not satisfied with God. He did not have in mind of his flock. Instead he blindly pursued woman's charm and was unwilling to break away. He did not thirst for the living water of salvation so he might turn from sin and be sanctified. He did not trust in the redemption of the Lamb to reconcile with God. He was full of the natural lust and evil.

2.【Take personal revenge and be caught】3-13 Due to his wife was robbed and her father rejected him, he was furious in rage. He caught three hundred foxes alive. Then he lit the torches and let the foxes loose to burn the grain of the Philistines in order to vent his private anger. The Philistines also repaid evil for evil and burned her and her father to death. Samson thus took revenge and slaughtered them viciously. As a result the men of Judah were affected and could not but took Samson prisoner and gave him to the enemy. The enemy persecuted God's people and the false prophets were like the foxes. They injured others and finally injured themselves.

※【God avenges and removes evil spirits】2-6 The Almighty God would avenge to banish the names of the idols and the spirit of impurity. If anyone would still prophesy false prophecy, his own parents would stab him ruthlessly. But Samson was still unwilling to part with his lost wife. The false prophets would be disgraced and no longer lie to people. The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord and the false lies cannot stand. Though Samson was titanic, he could not lead the people to know God. Instead he made the people afflicted by the enemy. He did not care for their suffering but to vent his personal anger and was bound by sin and brought trouble to the people. On one side was God avenged for His people. On the other side was Samson revenged for himself.

**B. Call on to God, drink the living water, through refinement of fire and be pure gold**

Call on (Jdg 15:14-20) – Refine (Zec 13:7-9)

1.【Call on to God and drink the living water】14-20 Samson was bound by the men of Judah and sent to the enemy. The Spirit of God came upon him. He broke from the bondage and killed a thousand men with a fresh jawbone. This was completely the deed of God manifesting the power of the Holy Spirit. He had nothing to boast of. Then he felt very thirsty and was answered by God. But he did not truly gain the water of life. (Jn4:13-14; Rev 22:17) Though he was gifted, he did not trust in God to put the flesh to death. He still thirsted for woman's charm. Thus he was like a jawbone being thrown away by God ultimately.

※【Refined, call on and be granted】7-9 God struck the shepherd and the sheep would be scattered prophesying Christ suffered and the apostles fled from Him. Before they had the living water of the Holy Spirit, they failed. The chosen people would be tested like the silver and gold (Job 23:10) and only one third was left behind. They called on the Lord's name and were answered. After they were refined, they became the people of God's kingdom. The flesh of Samson had not been refined. Though he slaughtered the enemy, he was not willing to surrender to God. He did not thirst for the living water of the Holy Spirit. He did not set his mind on the desires of Holy Spirit but indulged in the sinful nature. He was like a jawbone being used by God for a time and being thrown away. Only those who are refined by God to die completely to the flesh will be like the apostles who were filled by the Holy Spirit. They would be mightily used by God to do the work of gold, silver and costly stones. They were forever remembered. (1 Co3:12-15)

**Ps 6 / Rev 10:6 Main theme: Pray fervently to the Almighty God, He delivers without delay**

 **-Pray fervently / Deliver**

The angel swore by the Almighty everlasting God and said there will be no more delay. Therefore we ought to be strengthened in the initial faith till the end.

(1)【Cry fervently】1-7 Understand that we have provoked God to anger and then cry persistently for the Lord's compassion, healing and deliverance. To feel sorry and wail for my own evil and beg for the return of the Lord's mercy to deliver me so I will not be destroyed by all my enemies.

(2)【The Lord delivers without delay】8-10 Do not be discouraged to cry out. The Lord's deliverance will not be delayed. The Lord will hear my cry for mercy and the enemies will turn back in sudden disgrace and be dismayed. The Lord will do the work to turn around all the things.

**Central point of the wheels: Die to the flesh, thirst for the living water, ask and be granted without delay**

Dear Lord, may You cleanse my cravings for lust, to drink your living water and overcome everything and take You as my satisfaction!

**Jdg 16 / Zec 14**

**Main theme: Be led astray and harmed, set apart for God and all people return to the Lord**

 **-Indulge in lust / Escape**

Golden verses: Jdg 16:30 Zec 14:9

A discussion on indulging in lust and escaping – on one side it concerned Samson was blindly covetous on sex and did not know how to escape. He was not alert and was finally controlled and utterly failed in disgrace before the enemy. On the other side it concerned at the last day all the nations would surround and attack the holy city. God contended personally and overcame the enemies. The remnants were redeemed and returned to God as holy. Christ will reign and all nations will come to observe the feast and worship. We ought to contend by the Holy Spirit, abstain from sinful desires, avoid sexual immorality, pursue holiness and be watchful to wait for the coming of the Lord. (1Th 4:3-4)

**A. Covet wealth and sex will be captured, escape from sin and God reigns**

Covet sex (Jdg 16:1-17) – Covet wealth (Zec 14:1-11)

1.【Covet sex and be surrounded】1-3 The flesh of Samson was corrupt. He coveted woman's charm. Though he was frustrated, he did not take his lesson. He did not hate evil and his old character was not changed. Then he went to Gaza and spent the night with a prostitute. As a result he was surrounded by his enemies all night. They lay in wait for him till morning to kill him. He slept till the middle of the night and woke up to break down the doors of the city gate. He carried the posts, the bar and all to the top of the hill that faced Hebron. His heart was like a demolished city gate without any bar and was intruded by the enemies at their discretion. (Pro 25:28) Samson was saved in his danger. But he still did not tremble in fear and was not alert!

※【Covet wealth and be captured】1-3 The chosen people coveted wealth and stored up treasure. When the last days came, God would gather all the nations to fight against Jerusalem. The enemies would ransack the wealth and houses. Samson coveted woman's charm and was also besieged by the enemy and was nearly killed. God promised to come down Himself to fight against them to save the people. Though Samson was repeatedly saved by God, he still was not alert!

2.【Was not watchful and was forced to divulge】4-17 Again Samson fell in love with a woman named Delilah (languishing). He fell into the enemy's trap and a snare of the natural lust. (Pro 7:21-23) Delilah took a bribe of high price from the Philistines. She tried four times to inquire of the source of Samson's strength. Faced with the sex trap from Satan, Samson was still drunk without any preparedness. He fell into a deep sleep. He was unable to withstand Delilah who prodded him day after day. Finally he fell into the trap and disclosed his source of strength.

※【Ought to escape and exalt God as King】4-11 On that day the Lord would come down on the Mount of Olives. It would split in two forming a great valley so the chosen people might flee from it, just like Uzziah king of Judah fled from the earthquake in those days. But Samson did not escape from the sexual lust. He was indulged in evil and as a result he was forced to disclose the mystery! The Lord will be king over the whole earth and His name the only name. There will be no more curses. In Samson's mind, natural lust was king. He did not exalt God as the king. He opened the door to a dangerous foe. He invited curses and was surrounded by the enemy.

**B. Failed and was disgraced; be holy to God and overcome ultimately**

Turn to victory (Jdg 16:18-31) – To God (Zec 14:12-21)

1.【Disgraced and disastrously defeated】18-22 Samson indulged in his sinful nature and reaped destruction! The enemy lay in wait for the whole night near him. But he was deep in sleep to death. Finally his head was shaved and God left him! The results were his eyes were gouged out and he was bound by bronze shackles. He was set to grind in the prison. This judge of the age was greatly disgraced and failed tragically! However he had the compassion of God. His hair grew again and his strength came back.

※【Contend and overcome】12-15 God used plague to strike the nations who fought against Jerusalem so they were with great panic. Their eyes became blind and their tongues rot. They attacked each other. But the chosen people were victorious. They captured their wealth. All the livestock of the enemies were stricken with plague. Samson was still fast asleep on the lap of Delilah. He did not contend with the sinful lust by the Holy Spirit and was subdued. He was greatly disgraced! But whenever he set his mind on what the Spirit desired, he was favored and became strong again.

2.【Turn failure to success】23-31 When Samson was caught, the enemy rejoiced greatly. The rulers of the Philistines assembled and offered sacrifice to Dagon their god. Samson was brought out to entertain and perform to three thousand men and women on the roof. Samson prayed to God to strengthen him just once more to revenge on the enemy. He was granted and turned failure to victory. His hands braced two pillars and pushed with all his might, and down came the temple killing all the people in it. He killed many more than while he lived.

※【Holy to God】16-21 The survivors from all the nations would worship the King year after year and celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. Whoever would not come up to worship would be afflicted with plague. The bells of the horses would be inscribed 'Holy to the Lord'. The house of God would be holy without any Canaanites. The Philistines gloated and rejoiced in revelry. This was short-lived. The joy of the ungodly would only last a short while. In Samson's failure, he repented and cried out. He set apart to God and was shown compassion to turn failure to victory! Regrettably, Samson was a judge for twenty years but he was not holy. He could not lead the people to set apart to God. Though he killed many of his enemies at his death, he died with them. He had not been protected which was a great warning. (1 Co 9:26-27)

**Ps 7 / Rev 10:7 Main theme: Consecrate and obey the Word, to cope with the enemies by God and the Lord's words accomplish**

 **-Pure / Accomplish**

God's mystery of salvation will be accomplished when the time comes. We ought to pursue righteousness and purity like David who experienced God's salvation being accomplished on him in distress.

(1)【Consecrate, obey the Word and cope with the enemies by God】1-9 May God rise up to deal with my enemies because I pursue righteousness and deliver those who have robbed me without cause. May God examine, judge and secure the righteous so the violence of the wicked will be ended.

(2)【Exhort the wicked to return lest they will encounter God's anger】10-17 God is the righteous judge. He will save the upright in heart. When the time comes, the righteous will rejoice in praise in the Lord. If the wicked do not turn back, they will be heavily punished and cry in gnashing teeth in God's rage. They will go down into the Abyss.

**Central point of the wheels: Die completely to the flesh, be holy to God and accomplish the mystery**

Dear Lord, may You let me trust in the Holy Spirit, avoid sexual immorality, set apart for You, triumph by the cross and exalt You as King!

**Jdg 17 / Mal 1**

**Main theme:** **Sacrifice wantonly and God is angered; obey the Word and serve the Lord and He is pleased**

 **-Do wantonly / Offer sacrifice wantonly (self-deceptive/cheating)**

Golden verses: Jdg 17:6 Mal 1:11

A discussion on doing wantonly and offering sacrifice wantonly – on one side it concerned there was no king in the days of the judges and everyone did as he saw fit. Micah made a shrine and idols at home and hired a priest. He sinned and was self-deceptive. He offended God greatly. On the other side it concerned the Israelites were ruined and depraved to the utmost after their return from captivity. The priests despised God and offered sacrifice in vain. They profaned His name and were cursed. This teaches us we ought to fear God, exalt Him as King and do not act wantonly.

**A. Do not act wantonly, do not let down God's love and exalt God as King**

Despise (Jdg 17:1-6) – Despise the grace (Mal 1:1-5)

1.【Despise God's grace】1-2 Micah was originally God's people. He lived in the hill country of Ephraim but he did not fear God. He did not keep God's commandments. He stole his mother's silver at his will. His mother lost her silver and cursed arbitrarily. When the son acknowledged he did it, she turned it to a blessing. They both despised God's grace and did not observe the commandments. How could they have any blessing?

※【Let down God's love】1-2 Israel was the prince of God. He was redeemed by God and led to the good land. But they did not understand God's love. They sinned and did evil and failed His love. Therefore God's oracle came to them through the prophet. Both Micah and his mother failed God's love. They despised His grace and stole at their will. They cursed and blessed arbitrarily. They turned from God's commandments.

2.【Wanton and indulging】3-6 Israel had no king and everyone did as he saw fit. Micah gave back the silver to his mother. She took out two hundred shekels of silver and gave to a silversmith who made them into an image and an idol. They made an excuse to sacrifice to the Lord and the image and the idol were put in Micah's house. Now Micah had a shrine. He indulged more in making an ephod and some idols and replaced the Lord with worthless idols. He also installed at his own will one of his sons as his priest. All these acts were the old self as king and each had turned to his own way. They had turned from the pattern of worship instructed by God. (Exo 25:40)

※【Turn to his own way】3-5 God hated Esau because he did not only despise the birthright. He coveted the secular and turned to his own way. God would make his inheritance a desolate. Even if he might rebuild, God would demolish. Micah rebuilt the foreign idols demolished by his forefathers and they were finally taken away. Esau will be called the Wicked Land, a people always under the wrath of the Lord. Micah indulged wantonly. He listened to his mother more than listening to God. He did not exalt God as King. He also turned to his own way just like Edom!

**B. Do not be self-deceptive, do not sacrifice wantonly and exalt God as great**

Self-deceptive (Jdg 17:7-13) – Sacrifice wantonly (Mal 1:6-14)

1.【Workers who work for food only】7-11 A young Levite left Bethlehem (House of bread) in Judah and wandered everywhere in search for a place to live. Accidentally he came to the house of Micah who invited him to be his priest. He promised to give him silver, clothes and food every year. The Levite was willing to stay and he became the priest of the shrine and a worker for food.

※【Blind and lame】6-11 The priests showed contempt for God. They did not fear God and sacrificed the defiled, the blind and the crippled to God. How would God accept them? The Levite did not keep his commandments. His spirit was like the blind and the crippled. He thought that godliness was a means to financial gain. He became a hired worker and a worker for food. How God wished to shut the temple doors, so that they would not sacrifice in vain. God's name was disgraced by them. But His name would be great among the nations.

2.【How can one be blessed for self-deception】11-13 Micah was self-deceptive. He saw the Levite was willing to live with him like a son who only listened to him and tried to please him in everything. He thought God would be good to him. The Levite was willing to be a hired worker like a puppet priest. He did not exalt God as holy and was also self-deceptive and deceived others.

※【Deceiving God brings curses】12-14 The priests profaned God's name and thought God's table was defiled. They were crafty. They brought the injured and crippled to God. How could accept them? Micah thought God would bless when there was a Levite to be a priest. He was self-deceptive and deceived God. He was to be cursed. God is the great king. His name is to be feared among the nations! We will be blessed only if we obey the Lord's order.

**Ps 8 / Rev 10:8 Main theme: Take the scroll again and make every effort to understand the Lord**

 **-The Lord's name / The holy book**

The voice from heaven commanded again to eat the holy book. The scroll is the book of the book. We ought to pay attention to the word of the prophets and then we may do well.

(1)【Thirst for the spiritual milk to understand the name of the Lord】1-2 The Lord's name is the Lord's Word. (Rev 19:13) The Lord is willing to reveal His Word to the humble and who thirsts like a little child to silence the foe and God's glory be manifested. (Lk 10:19, 21-22)

(2)【Thirst for the Word and obey the Word will have power】3-9 Be cared for by God and be crowned with glory and honor. Be made a ruler over everything so everything is put under his feet; just like Joshua was able to command the sun and the moon and Daniel was able to shut the mouth of the lions.

**Central point of the wheels: Be humble to thirst for the Lord's words, exalt God as King and do not act wantonly**

Dear Lord, I am willing to exalt You as King, to fear You in all my actions, to walk in your name. You must become greater; I must become less!

**Jdg 18 / Mal 2**

**Main theme: How can we be blessed if we are wayward and only care for benefit, cunning and violent?**

 **-Violent / Evil (Swerving / break the covenant)**

Golden verses: Jdg 18:3 Mal 2:5-7

A discussion on violence and evil – on one side it concerned the Danites sought for a place to settle but they used brutal ways to gain the land. They grabbed the household gods of Micah which led the whole tribe worship idols till they were captured and greatly sinned against God. On the other side it concerned the priests violated the command and broke the covenant. The people of Judah took daughters of foreign nations as wives. They were cunning to their wives and profaned the holy land. This teaches us we ought to exalt God as King, value God's words and His inheritance. We too ought to lead men to the right way and glorify His name.

**A. Gain the land wantonly, violate the command and break the covenant, and God will judge**

Wantonly (Jdg 18:1-20) – Violate the command (Mal 2:1-11)

1.【Do not exalt God as King】1-6 Israel had no king and everyone did as he saw fit. Until that time the tribe of Dan had not gained his land. (Jos 19:40-48; Jdg 1:34-35) They were still searching for their place of stay. They sent five warriors to spy out the land. The five men came to the house of Micah and inquired of the priest of the shrine about their journey. But they did not inquire of God or exalt God as king.

※【Ignore God's command】1-3 God gave the admonition to the priests but they did not listen or set it to their heart. God would turn their blessing to curse. God would rebuke their descendants like the offal and carry them off. The men of Dan also disregarded God’s commandment and gained the land arbitrarily. They only inquired of men and not of God. The young priest misused God’s name and replied with peaceful words. He did not exalt God as king and was self-deceptive and deceived others. He did not set the commandments in his heart.

2.【Grab the shrine wantonly】7-17 The five men spied out the land arbitrarily and came to Laish and found it was a land that lacked nothing whatever. So they went back to mobilize the whole tribe to gain the land. Thus six hundred warriors of Dan all armed for battle went to the house of Micah. They seized the image and the ephod and went away.

※【Fear and walk with God】4-7 God had set a covenant of life and peace with the Levites. They were to revere Him and walk in peace and uprightness with God. Their mouth ought to have true instruction so many people would turn back from evil. A priest is a messenger of God and men should seek instruction from his mouth. As the initial messengers, the five spies of Dan did not bear the reverence to God. They were like the blind leading the road. They seized and did evil. So how did they have life and peace?

3.【Be bent solely for profit】18-20 The six hundred warriors came in a menacing manner and seized the image. They would not allow the young priest to make a sound and forced him to go together. They told him he would be their father and priest. The priest was solely bent on profit and was willing to be a priest of a tribe. He did not even inquire of God and followed them.

※【Be partial】8-11Not only did the priests turn from the right path and forsake God’s covenant so many stumbled, they were also partial. They did not observe the Lord’s Word like the priest of the shrine who was blinded by greed and preferred to be a priest of the tribe of Dan. God caused them to be despised and the whole people were stumbled and fell in sin. God’s people even broke faith with one another. They profaned the covenant of God. They married the daughters of foreign nations and thus served foreign gods and profaned God’s name. The men of Dan seized the image in such a way also profaned God’s name.

**B. Be cunning, violent and set up idols will be surely be punished**

Violent (Jdg 18:21-31) – Cunning (Mal 2:12-17)

1.【Gain the land by violence】21-29 Micah was unwilling to lose the shrine and the priest. But as the men of Dan were powerful, he had to give way without pursuing. Then the Danites came to Laish and killed the people there and burned down the city. They named the place Dan. They used very brutal ways and forced to occupy others’ inheritance. They moved the boundary stone set up by the forefathers and violated God’s command. (Deu 19:14; Pro 22:28)

※【Be cunning to the wives】12-16 The men of Judah were cunning in their actions. They married the daughters of the foreign nations. (Neh 13:23-25) Thus even if they brought offerings to God, they would be cut off. Though they wept and wailed and flooded God’s altar with tears, God would not accept their sacrifice. They used violence to treat the wife of their youth which violated God’s will. The Danites gained the land by force and changed the name of Laish to Dan to preserve his own name. This was detestable to God!

2.【Set up idols and is taken captive】30-31 The Danites set up idols for themselves. Jonathan son of Gershom, the son of Moses and his descendants did not set apart for God and became the priests of the idols of the tribe of Dan for generations. They opposed to the ministry of the house of God in Shiloh. They provoked God to anger and were finally exiled.

※【Sin and complain will be judged】17 The people sinned but still complained about God. Their words wearied God and turned things upside down. They thought all who did evil were good in the eyes of God. They were such mocking, self-deceptive, arrogant and wearied God. The righteous God would judge them. They were like the tribe of Dan who set the idol and resisted the house of God stubbornly. They took evil for good and were disastrous! (Isa 5:20)

**Ps 9 / Rev 10:9 Main theme: Eat up the holy book, destroy evil completely and preach the Lord's grace extensively**

 **-Eat up / Preach widely**

Eat up the scroll and accept the Lord's words, deny yourself and follow the Lord, suffer in the flesh and preach the Lord's gracious speech by the mouth will make men gain life.

(1)【Be glad and thankful to preach the Lord】1-2 Do not hide the Lord’s grace but be willing to proclaim Him.

(2)【The Lord destroys my enemies and let me be sanctified】3-7 The truth will sanctify me and destroy all my inner enemies. The Lord is my king forever.

(3)【The Lord is the refuge】8-10 The Lord will save and protect whoever seek and trust in Him.

(4)【We ought to preach the Lord's salvation extensively】11-14 Let us exhort everyone to proclaim the Lord’s grace to the ends of the earth and declare the Lord saved me from the gate of death and all His praiseworthy deeds.

(5)【The wicked will return to the grave】15-17 The wicked do not trust in the Lord. They harm others and themselves.

(6)【The hope of the afflicted will never perish】18-20 When the time comes, the Lord will accomplish the hope of those who obey and proclaim the Word and the afflicted. The enemy will fall.

**Central point of the wheels: Eat up the scroll, lead men to the right and preach the Lord's name**

Dear Lord, may You let me eat up your scroll, exalt You as King, lead men to turn from evil and praise your name!

**Jdg 19 / Mal 3**

**Main theme:** **Woe to those who indulge and do wicked; refined and serve the Lord pleases God**

 **-Indulge / Refine**

Golden verses: Jdg 19:30 Mal 3:2-4

A discussion on indulging and be refined – on one side it concerned a Levite took a concubine. He indulged in the flesh and ate and drank debauchedly; thus created an appalling disgraceful thing which left a big breach. However, he shirked responsibility and did not repent. On the other side it concerned God sat down to refine the Levites. They were refined in the flesh and then served in trembling and offered sacrifice to God by righteousness.

**A. Do not be debauching, through refining take warning and turn to God**

Debauching (Jdg 19:1-15) – Refine (Mal 3:1-7)

1.【Indulge and be adulterous】1-3 Israel had no king and everyone did as he saw fit. There was a Levite who lived in the hill country of Ephraim. He did not exalt God as king and allowed the sinful lust to be king. He forsook God’s covenant and indulged to take a concubine. The concubine was unfaithful. She left him and went to her father’s house. He still had not awakened to take the lesson. He was unwilling to part with evil. He brought his servant with him hoping to persuade her to return.

※【Be watchful and get ready】1 The Almighty God had sent His messenger – John the Baptist to be the pioneer of Jesus to prepare the way and suffer to preach the Word. The Levites ought to be sent as messengers and set apart to be holy to lead men to God. But they indulged in grace. Christ was the messenger of the covenant who came suddenly to His temple to warn the chosen people to be watchful to prepare lest they became wanton in grace.

2.【Eat and drink debauchedly】4-15 The Levite came to the house of the father-in-law. He was warmly received by the father-in-law who repeatedly urged him to stay to eat and drink and enjoy. Such acts of pleasing the sinful nature and indulging in eating and drinking delayed their stay again and again. He was urged to stay till the sun set. Then they got up and left the place. When they reached Gibeah in Benjamin, the day was almost gone. There was no one to receive them so they could only sat on the street.

※【Refine the flesh】2-7 God would sit and use the launderer’s soap and the refiner’s fire to refine the Levites. Only by refining the corruption of the flesh, then they might offer in righteousness (Ps 51:16-19) and be accepted by God. God’s judgment would come soon, so how could we eat, drink and be complacent to live our day wantonly! In the days when the Lord is revealed, how can we be able to stand?

**B. Blessed is he who sacrifices and honors God; rebellious and let down the Lord bring disasters**

Do wicked (Jdg 19:16-30) – Honor God (Mal 3:8-18)

1.【Perfunctorily】16-21 Fortunately there was an old man in Gibeah who was willing to receive them and led them to his house. They were warmly received by the old man. They washed their feet and ate and drank. They were contented with temporary ease and comfort. They only cared for the ease of the flesh. They were not alert to be on guard and did not know disaster would come soon.

※【Seize God's belongings】8-12 The people were ungrateful. They robbed God’s offering and curses came to them. The Levite also depraved in grace. He also robbed the precious time and strength which ought to have been set apart to be holy and be given to God. When disasters came, he was still not awakened! He had fattened himself in the day of slaughter! (Jas 5:5)

2.【Catastrophe comes】22-26 While the Levite was enjoying in food and drinks in the old man’s house, the wicked men of the city surrounded the house and forced the old man to bring the Levite out to have sex with them. The old man tried to prevent them from doing this disgraceful thing. But the Levite sent his concubine out. Thus the woman was abused for the whole night till dawn. She fell down at the door. Catastrophe came and he was still not awake.

※【God will pour blessings】13-18 How blessed are those who fear God and love God! If they would bring the whole tithe to God, He promised to throw open the floodgates of heaven to them and pour out so much blessing that they would not have room enough for it! He would prevent pests. Their land would be a delightful land and all the nations would call them blessed. The Levite ought to have offered himself completely. But he was not godly and he was unrighteous to men. He stole God’s time and strength. He only sought the enjoyment of the flesh and cared only for himself at crucial moment to bring out his concubine. As a result his concubine was tragically abused and catastrophe came upon the whole house of Israel!

3.【How to present your books】27-30 The Levite planned to wake up early in the morning to continue on his way. To his surprise he found his concubine dead in the doorway. Thus he carried her back home and cut up the carcass into twelve parts and sent them into all the areas of Israel in order to stir up the anger of all the people. Regrettably he did not rebuke himself and sowed according to his sinful lust. He would reap destruction. How can we be accountable before the altar of judgment?

※【God will judge】13-18 The chosen people were rebellious and said harsh things. They thought it was futile to serve God and doing evil would escape disaster. God would judge on such contempt and turning things upside down. He would differentiate the good from evil. But those who feared the Lord talked with each other and God listened and heard and remembered in His scroll so they would belong to God and be shown compassion. The Levite ought to have rended his heart and judged himself. Instead he reported the lewd and disgraceful thing of the men of Gibeah to all the people to stir up a battle. He only knew to rebuke others but he did not rebuke himself. He did not have the least of fear for God. His sins were numerous and it was hard for him to escape the righteous judgment of God!

**Ps 10 / Rev 10:10 Main theme: Eat up the holy book, discern the enemy's plot and grab to save the dying sheep**

 **-See thoroughly / The holy book**

If we will eat up the holy words, obey and preach the Word with a suffering spirit, we will surely speak out gracious words sweeter than ever. If our body bears the cross and suffer, we may ask for the Lord's help.

(1)【The wicked pursues】1-11 The object of pursuit of the wicked are those who the love the Lord and obey and proclaim His Word. Their more vicious means is to set a trap to lie in wait and catch. (David was trapped in the snare of natural lust)

(2)【Ask the Lord to arise and destroy the enemy】12-18 God sees that the enemies trouble and are grievous. So He considers it to take it in hand to destroy them. But He will listen to the cry of the afflicted and accomplish the desire of the humble so many will be able to escape from the oppression and affliction of the enemy and gain the joy of salvation!

**Central point of the wheels: Refine the body, eat up the scroll, honor God and be blessed**

Dear Lord, may You let me eat up the scroll, die completely to my flesh, be watchful to prepare and lead men to repent to the true God!

**Jdg 20 / Mal 4**

**Main theme: Fail greatly for gathering in the flesh; remember the Lord's words will overcome**

 **-Fail / Overcome**

Golden verses: Jdg 20:27-28 Mal 4:2, 5-6

A discussion on failure and victory – on one side it concerned the Israelites faced the lewd and disgraceful act of the Gibeahnites. They gathered and discussed. Through failure they cried and sacrificed before God. On the third trial they overcame and punished the sinner. The Benjamites were finally disastrously defeated and got their due punishment. On the other side it concerned those who feared the name of God were like fighting warriors. They trampled the wicked and prophesied John the Baptist will be sent to lead men to God. This teaches us we shall act not by flesh and do not lose the loving heart, breach the gap and grab the heart of men.

**A. Not by flesh, fear the name of Lord and burn away all evil**

By the flesh (Jdg 20:1-23) – By God's will (Mal 4:1-3)

1.【How can one endure such lewd and disgraceful thing】1-16 The people of Gibeah did such a lewd and disgraceful thing and stirred up the anger of all the people who gathered the army and spoke up and gave their verdict. They sent men to investigate. The Benjamites not only rejected to surrender the wicked men, instead they mobilized their warriors to try to resist them. How can we allow this?

※【The arrogant and wicked will be burnt up】1 The Almighty God declared the judgment would come and burn like a furnace. It would burnt up all the arrogant and evildoers so they would be like stubble. They would be burned and not a root or a branch would be left to them. The men of Gibeah did such a lewd and disgraceful thing and ought to receive God’s severe punishment. Our God is a consuming fire. (Heb 12:29) The Levite was not even contrite. He blindly rebuked others and ought to receive the fiery judgment of God.

2.【Fail by the flesh】17-23 Israel mustered four hundred thousand warriors and took up battle positions against the Benjamites in Gibeah. But they failed because they only fought by the flesh without inquiring of God. The second time when they took up their position, they wept before God and God answered they might go up.

※【Overcome by the will of God】2-3 But for those who revere God’s name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And they will go out and leap like calves released from the stall to trample down the wicked; so the enemies will be like ashes under the soles of their feet. The Israelites did not seek God or revere God. They only fought by the flesh. As a result they failed. The returned people feared God and fought by God’s will. Thus they would win. The Benjamites did not surrender the wicked people. They resisted by the flesh and the result was being trampled like the wicked.

**B. Remember the Lord's words, cry and call, and God is compassionate, lead men to God**

Take lesson (Jdg 20:24-48) – Be sent (Mal 4:4-6)

1.【God is compassionate if we cry and call on Him】24-35 The Israelites were frustrated for twice and failed in the battle. They wept before God. They fasted and inquired of God. They confessed their sins and offered sacrifices. Thus God replied them to set an ambush. As a result, they turned failure to victory. The Benjamites were unwilling to repent and take lesson. They failed tragically and received the righteous punishment of God.

※【Remember the Lord's words】4 We ought to remember the law of God’s servant Moses. God gave the laws and decrees of righteousness and love. The Lord’s words are the origin of victory. Only by inquiring of God’s will and keep the Lord’s Word may we overcome. (Pro 21:31) The wicked men of Gibeah abandoned God’s commandments and did a lewd and disgraceful thing. They were unwilling to repent and so God would make them be accountable!

2.【Exterminate the kindred】36-48 The ambush of Israel killed all the people in the city and burned the city. The Benjamites were trapped and disaster was near. However, the Israelites continued to chase after the Benjamites and killed them. They had no pity for their brothers. Finally there were only six hundred men escaped. They did not bear the mind of God and nearly exterminated the kindred leaving a wide breach!

※【Lead men to God】5-6 God would send us the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord so the hearts of the fathers would turn to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers. This referred to the coming of John the Baptist. He came to preach the Word of repentance and led men to turn to Christ who was to come, lest when the Lord came, the land would be cursed. The Israelites blindly fought against the Benjamites without compassion. They had nearly lost a tribe. The purpose of the battle was to fight against evil and urged the Benjamites to repent and turn to God. How could they exterminate their kindred!

**Ps 11 / Rev 10:11 Main theme: Through test, obey the Word by the Lord and He will use mightily**

 **-Was tested / Mightily used**

Eat up the scroll, keep the Word firmly after tests, and God will use mightily so all people will be blessed because of him

(1)【Obey the Word by the Lord and do not fall into the trap】1-3 Observe the Word by the Lord and set the foundation on the rock without being targeted by the arrows of the wicked or flee to other mountains (other gods). This is because if we turn from God’s words, the foundations will be destroyed and all the work is wood, hay or straw.

(2)【God examines and tests】4-5 God observes and examines from on high if there are men who seek Him and observe His Word to accomplish His will. His soul hates the wicked.

(3)【God punishes the wicked and rewards the good】6-7 The wicked will drink God’s cup of wrath but the cup of the righteous are full of blessings! They will see His face and be able to prophesy to many peoples, nations, languages and kings. They will be mightily used. They will be used again and again. This kindness is greater than that shown earlier.

**Central point of the wheels: Refine the flesh, honor God and obey the Word and lead men to Him**

Dear Lord, may You build up groups of John of the age to preach the Word of repentance and prepare for the coming of your Kingdom!

**Jdg 21 / Mt 1**

**Main theme: Be contrite and pray, deny yourself to obey the will and grab to save the sinners**

 **-Intercede / Obey the will (breach the gap/save the sinners)**

Golden verses: Jdg 21:2-3 Mt 1:21

A discussion on intercession and obeying the will – on one side it concerned the Israelites wailed and mourned before God for losing the tribe of Benjamin. In love, a path is available when there is no way; hopeless turn to hopeful and thus breached the gap. On the other side it concerned God sent His only Son Jesus to come to the earth to accomplish His will, thus exhibiting His great love. On one side was to consider God's mind in wailing and hopelessness, and to remedy apart from the vow. On the other side was God's love worked deliverance apart from law. (Ro 3:21) This teaches us we ought to consider God's mind, intercede with love and deny ourselves to obey His will.

**A. Be contrite and intercede, deny ourselves to obey the will and return in harmony**

Intercede (Jdg 21:1-17) – Deny oneself (Mt 1:1-17)

1.【To be contrite and intercede for the brother】1-7 The Israelites had sworn not to give their daughters in marriage to a Benjamite. Thus they wept and prayed earnestly for themselves before God and to confess and intercede for their brothers as one tribe would be missing. They discussed with one another how could they establish a family to inherit the possession for those who were left.

※【Deny oneself to accomplish God's will】1-6 God chose Abraham and David. They denied themselves to obey the will and prepared for the genealogy of Jesus to accomplish God’s plan of redemption for mankind. Though Satan tried to destroy, through several foreign women Tamar, Rahab and Ruth who denied themselves to sacrifice to breach the gap, God continued the genealogy of Jesus to accomplish His will. Similarly, the people were contrite and interceded. They grieved for the Benjamites and also accomplished God’s will.

2.【Pursue harmony, lose then gain】8-17 The assembly discovered that the men of Jabesh Gilead did not go to swear at Mizpah. To abide strictly by the solemn oath (those who failed to assemble at Mizpah had to be put to death), they killed all the men and the women who were not a virgin. They brought out four hundred women who had never slept with a man and gave to the remaining Benjamites as wives. The assembly sent an offer of peace to the Benjamites and they forgave one another in love. They gained back the lost tribe. They discussed how they could provide wives to the remaining Benjamites and the survivors would have heirs so that a tribe of Israel would not be wiped out.

※【Return after being taken captive】7-17 After David reigned, he sinned greatly against God. But he repented deeply and purified himself. He was forgiven by God who accepted his good deeds. Various kings of Judah were exiled due to sin. After long period of refinement God comforted them (Isa 40:1) so they returned and were restored. The assembly sent an offer of peace to the Benjamites and they won their brothers.

**B. Deny yourself and obey, love breaches the gap and accomplishes God's will**

A loving heart (Jdg 21:18-25) – Obedience (Mt 1:18-25)

1.【A loving heart breaches the gap】18-22 They bore the mind of God and the love of God. They were determined to breach the gap of losing one tribe. There was the annual festival in Shiloh and this might let the remaining two hundred men each seize a wife from the girls who came out to dance. In this way, it would not be considered as giving their daughters to them.

※【The great love saves sinners】18-23 Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. (1 Ti 1:15) Mary was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. This fulfilled the prophecy of the prophet showing the great love of God who prepared salvation apart from the law. The assembly of Israel showed their love to the tribe of Benjamin. They thought of a way to save a tribe apart from the oath. God is love. Only love can breach a gap. Where there is no way, a path is found!

2.【Accomplish God's will】23-24 Israel nearly missed a tribe and this concerned God’s plan towards the twelve tribes of Israel. The assembly was contrite and they interceded. They pursued peace and love. So they found a way in despair. Thus the remaining survivors each seized a wife from the dancing girls and went back to their inheritance. They rebuilt the towns and settled in them to accomplish God’s will.

※【Obey God's will】18-24 Joseph was not only a righteous man. He was a godly man who denied himself and he obeyed God’s will. When he saw Mary was pregnant, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But God appeared to him in his dream and he obeyed God’s will. He took her home as his wife to accomplish God’s will so Mary finally gave birth to Jesus smoothly. The fathers or brothers of the girls who were seized also sacrificed so that the survivors of Benjamin would have a wife. Despite their daughters were lost, they obeyed God’s will and accomplished God’s will.

3.【There is no king and everyone does as he sees fit】25 The most prominent of the age of the judges was Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit. They did not exalt God as king, thus they depraved in their faith and ethics reaching to a point where it could not be added. This was until God had a plan for David to be king and he led the whole nation to exalt God as king.

※【All exalt God as King】25 Joseph and Mary were godly and obedient. They denied themselves and obeyed the will. They both exalted God as king. They did whatever God commanded them. After Joseph took Mary as wife, he had no union with her until she gave birth to Jesus and accomplished God’s will. Their godliness, their love for God and sacrifice became a shining example to all obedience to God’s will.

**Ps 12 / Rev 11:1 Main theme: The Lord's words measure; those who are godly and faithful, He will protect**

 **-** **The Lord's words / The measuring rod**

The Lord's word is the measuring rod. (Isa 8:20) The temple, the altar (the sacrifice and work) and the worshipers will be measured. Those who do not fit the measurement are in vain.

(1)【There is no one godly and faithful】1-4 Everyone has flattering lips and speaks with deception. The dangerous days of the end of the world has come.

(2)【The Lord will protect those who are godly and obey the Word】5-8 Everyone who wants to live a godly life will be persecuted. But God will save them from the test and protect them forever. He will not allow the wicked to act wantonly and arbitrarily. Though the real children of God have suffering on earth, they have the true peace in the Lord that cannot be taken away.

**Central point of the wheels: Intercede with love, deny yourself to obey the will and the Lord's words will measure**

Dear Lord, I am willing to be measured by You everyday, be contrite deeply, intercede with love, deny myself to obey your will and satisfy your heart!