



“The Lord Raised Up a Deliverer”

Show Notes & Transcripts

Podcast General Description:

Follow Him: A *Come, Follow Me* Podcast with Hank Smith & John Bytheway

Do you ever feel that preparing for your weekly *Come, Follow Me* lesson falls short? Join hosts Hank Smith and John Bytheway as they interview experts to make your study for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints’ *Come, Follow Me* course not only enjoyable but original and educational. If you are looking for resources to make your study fresh, faithful, and fun--no matter your age--then join us every Friday and Saturday.

Podcast Episode Descriptions:

Part 1:

What does it mean that the Lord delivers people unto a covenant? Dr. Dana Pike explores the pattern of repentance, covenant making, prosperity, covenant-breaking, captivity, and then the Lord raising deliverers and judges in the Book of Judges. In addition, we discuss the difficulties of violence in the Hebrew Bible as well as review what has happened with the Israelites and the Divided Kingdom.

Part 2:

Dr. Pike continues his discussion of Gideon, and Deborah in the Book of Judges. Dr. Pike explores the story of Samson in the Book of Judges and shares his testimony as a scholar and man of faith.

Timecodes:

Part 1

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- 02:54 Deuteronomy and Judges: An Overview
- 04:14 1 Chronicles and 2 Chronicles
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- 14:55 The Redactor’s influence in Judges
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Part 2

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- 03:56 Deborah as a prophetess
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- 08:30 Jael and the tent spike and the Lord “following through”
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Biographical Information:



Dana M. Pike (dana_pike@byu.edu) was a professor of ancient scripture at BYU when this was written. Dana M. Pike is a professor of ancient scripture and ancient Near Eastern studies at Brigham Young University. He was born in Boston and raised in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. His family joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when he was twelve years old. He came to BYU as an undergraduate, where he earned a BS degree in anthropology/archaeology. He then earned a PhD in Hebrew Bible and ancient Near Eastern studies from the University of Pennsylvania. Since coming to BYU in 1992, Pike has taught two years at the BYU Jerusalem Center, has worked as one of the international editors of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and has served as coordinator of BYU's Ancient Near Eastern Studies major, as publications director of the Religious Studies Center, and as an associate dean of Religious Education. He is currently serving as the chair of the Department of Ancient Scripture. Pike's research interests focus on the Old Testament and the Dead Sea Scrolls. He has published articles for academic and Latter-day Saint audiences. Lately, he has taught courses on the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the history and culture of ancient Israel. He lives with his wife, Jane Allis-Pike, in Mapleton, Utah. They have three children and seven grandchildren.

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Hank Smith:	00:00:01	Welcome to Follow Him. A weekly podcast dedicated to helping individuals and families with their Come, Follow Me study. I'm Hank Smith.
John Bytheway:	00:00:09	And I'm John Bytheway.
Hank Smith:	00:00:10	We love to learn.
John Bytheway:	00:00:11	We love to laugh.
Hank Smith:	00:00:13	We want to learn and laugh with you.
John Bytheway:	00:00:15	As together, we Follow Him.
Hank Smith:	00:00:19	Hello, my friends. Welcome to another episode of FollowHIM. My name is Hank Smith. I'm your host. I'm here with my mighty man of valor, co-host John Bytheway. Welcome, John Bytheway, to FollowHIM, another episode.
John Bytheway:	00:00:35	Only you would say that. The audience is laughing with us as they look at me and try to make those adjectives fit.
Hank Smith:	00:00:43	John, you are a mighty man of valor that comes from Judges 6:12, because we're going to be spending our time in the book of Judges today, talking about what happens to the Kingdom of Israel after the death of Joshua. So we needed a great mind to help us make sense of all this, John. So who is with us today?
John Bytheway:	00:01:04	Yes, we are grateful to have Dr. Dana M. Pike, and this is a face and a voice that I'm familiar with, because I love watching those round table discussions. Dana M. Pike is an Emeritus Professor of Ancient Scripture and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at Brigham University. He received his Bachelor's in Near Eastern Archeology and Anthropology from Brigham University and his PhD in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Studies from the University of Pennsylvania. And after seven years as the coordinator for the Interdepartmental Ancient Near Eastern Studies Major, and four years as an Associate Dean of Religious

Education, he served three years as the chair of the Department of Ancient Scripture. And I know, Hank, you've told me he's done a lot of work on the Dead Sea Scrolls.

- Hank Smith: 00:01:55 Definitely. I would say the best mind in the church on the Dead Sea Scrolls.
- John Bytheway: 00:01:58 Wow.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:01:59 I'll deny that.
- John Bytheway: 00:01:59 Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 00:02:00 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 00:02:01 He and his wife, Jane, have three children and eight grandchildren. Our listeners might have heard us talk about the Sperry Symposium they have every year and they usually compile a book. He wrote a chapter called The Poor and the Needy in the book of Isaiah. That's in one of the Sperry Symposium compilations called The Covenant of Compassion. He's also a contributing author to a book we've mentioned here before From Creation to Sinai. You wrote about the Book of Numbers in that one. Also, there's a book, I know I've got it, Jehovah and the World of the Old Testament, where he was one of the editors. So we're just thrilled to have such a great mind with a perfect background for what we want to talk about today with us. So thanks for joining us.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:02:41 Thank you for inviting me. It's nice to be here.
- Hank Smith: 00:02:43 Dana, we are in the Book of Judges today and, I don't know, give us a bit of a preview here. Joshua dies, and it sounds to me that things go downhill.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:02:54 In many ways, they are presented as going downhill for sure. I listened to Hank, a comment that you made at the beginning of the video cast on Deuteronomy. And you said something like, "I don't usually wake up and think, I'm going to turn to the book of Deuteronomy for inspiration." And I thought to myself, first, I thought, "How could that be? There's some great stuff in Deuteronomy."
- Hank Smith: 00:03:17 That's true.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:03:17 And number two, wait till we get to Judges. It's a challenging book. It's an important book in a series of books that overview

Israelite activity in the land of Canaan following Joshua and Israelites entering into Canaan. And there's some dramatic stories, people know Samson, people know Deborah and Gideon. There's some real challenging and troubling things here, and we're not used to the violence and the immorality and other things that are presented here. And I think one of the great questions to always ask when we're studying scripture, no matter what it is, why is this here? I mean, what is it supposed to be doing? What is it supposed to be telling us? Or where is it leading us? There's some good lessons along the way. I hope we can find a little inspiration as we go along here.

Hank Smith: 00:04:04 Did you say earlier when we were chatting that the book of Deuteronomy is kind of the lead up to the Book of Judges? Does the writer assume you know Deuteronomy?

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:04:14 I would say so, yes. But let's put it this way, in a thumbnail sketch, there are two kind of overviews of Israelite history that we have pros narrative accounts. One is first and second Chronicles. We don't typically spend a whole lot of time with that. And that was produced probably in the 400s BC after the Babylonian exile returned from exile, rebuilding the temple and what have you. A priestly kind of an ideal sort of depiction of David and Solomon, and temple related things and the Kings of Judah. But the one that we typically deal with, the overview that we typically deal with is what we have in Deuteronomy through Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings. This is an academic term, right? Scholars have made this up, it's referred to as the Deuteronomistic History, and Deuteronomistic should just flow off your tongue, but it may not.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:05:13 The suffix -istic on the end is trying to tell you that it's Deuteronomy like. The sense is that the teachings, the principles, the vocabulary even in the book of Deuteronomy were utilized in the redaction of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings. Now redaction is another word that church members may not use a lot, but a redactor, somebody who brings together various ancient sources, combines them, puts his or her own voice in, produces a new literary work. This is something that Latter-day Saints are very familiar with because Mormon in producing The Book of Mormon is the classic example of somebody who produces a redaction, right? He's giving us a historical overview. He quotes from people. He utilizes a variety of records, but as we say, there was no Book of Alma before Mormon produced the Book of Alma. There was an Alma, there were records from Alma. Mormon had access to Alma's material.

- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:06:15 But the Book of Alma is Mormon's creation, not Alma's creation. And typically these redactions are produced to make a point or to make some points. There's an agenda. Mormon tells us, "I'm doing this to show what happened to the Lord's people when they left the Lord, to bring people to Christ," and what have you. In the Bible, we have a faceless redactor, right? We don't have somebody saying, "I'm the person who put this together," or, "We are the group of people." And we don't have them laying out specifically what their intent is, but they use Deuteronomy as a foundational text and orienting text. Here we are talking about Judges, the language, the theology, the doctrinal thinking and perspectives influence very heavily the book of Joshua, the Book of Judges, to a lesser extent Samuel and definitely Kings. And so that's this historical overview.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:07:09 And when you get to Kings, you'll have to talk about how somebody at the end of that historical period of centuries kind of looks back and says, "How does this all fit together?" So I'm giving you the standard academic approach. Whatever their early history was, they end up being put together in this lengthy overview in the late 600s, definitely into the middle 500s and Babylonian exile. And that's kind of where the Book of Kings comes to an end. Judges is part of a bigger whole, W-H-O-L-E, right? It's part of a bigger overview influenced by the book of Deuteronomy and the thinking, the teachings, the doctrine, but it fits. Now, I left out Ruth. I'm just going to mention, and that's next week's assignment, I know. But Ruth in the Hebrew Bible is not up with Joshua, Judges, Samuel. It's in a separate section called The Writings.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:08:03 So that's not typically included in what's called the Deuteronomistic historical overview, but it depicts people who are said to be living in the time of the Judges. So that's why in our Christian Bibles, it's moved up to be with the Book of Judges. And you'll get to all of that when you discuss Ruth. If we're talking about the Book of Judges as a redaction, a work that's been produced later, looking back and trying to make sense out of this. It's clearly religious or theological history. And this principle shows up in the Book of Mormon multiple times as well.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:08:38 If we keep the covenant we've made with the Lord, if we keep the Lord's commandments, he'll bless and prosper us. If we don't, then certain bad things are going to happen. Some of them are promised as curses in Leviticus and in Deuteronomy. If we violate our covenant with the Lord, this is what we can expect. We ought to just quickly say, in case folks don't remember, "There's one God, it's Jehovah. The Israelites have

made a covenant to love him and to serve only him, to be loyal to him, not to go chasing after other gods. That the Lord has chosen Israel to be his people, his representatives in the world." And that shows up again and again, in this Deuteronomistic History or historical overview.

- Hank Smith: 00:09:20 Dana, I think this is a critical skill here. I do this in the Book of Mormon all the time. As we read Mosiah, Alma, Helaman, I say, "Listen, we're not getting a camcorder view of what happened. We're getting a point of view from a future author, Mormon, hundreds of years in the future, looking back who is telling us a history, but also trying to teach us lessons." You can analyze your narrator saying, "Oh, our narrator, our redactor you said wants us to learn this, wants us to do that." And it seems like this skill is crucial in reading the Bible too. We're not getting this as it happens. We're getting a later author looking back, trying to teach their current audience some lessons from history.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:10:02 Again, we can use Mormon to help us out here even with the Bible study. He keeps saying, "I'm not giving you even 1% of what I could," and the same is true in the Bible. Think of the Book of Judges, maybe it's a couple of centuries of time. All kinds of things could have been included, but what was included was chosen to help fit the depiction that the redactors are trying to portray the lessons they're trying to teach, how they're going to highlight and illustrate those lessons.
- John Bytheway: 00:10:31 Is the conventional wisdom that it was Samuel who wrote this?
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:10:36 There's an old Jewish tradition that Samuel was the author. Most people do not think that's the case. The approach is that this was finalized sometime in the early to mid-500s BC, right? Looking back at what happened, kind of a, how did we get from entering into the land and getting set up, and Solomon built the temple and look at where we are now. Again, not completely unlike Mormon's efforts to show, look at what happened to us in the Americas. If we're getting more specific with the book itself, somebody has collected a variety of older stories, whether they were in oral form or they had written access to them in some form, we don't know. And there are a number of themes in the Book of Judges that seem to be prefiguring. We might say David, in a positive light and the Benjaminites and Saul in Gibeah, which was Saul's hometown and his capital. And Saul becomes the first king of Israel further in the story.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:11:35 In a negative light, some people wonder if an early addition of the Book of Judges was produced maybe during the reign of David or shortly thereafter, maybe after Solomon's reign.

Because Dan becomes an important cultic site under Jeroboam I, after the kingdom's divide at Solomon's death, Jeroboam I is the king of the northern Kingdom, sets up golden calves and Dan and Bethel as alternate worship places. And these are clearly viewed in the Deuteronomistic historical overview. These are viewed as really negative things, right? Way off track from what the Lord wanted. Some of us are old enough to remember having cameras, but we put film in the camera.

- Hank Smith: 00:12:15 If you were born in the 1900s.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:12:17 Right. You finish the roll of film, you have to take it out and you've got a whole series of negatives, and then they're developed and turned into positives. But when you look at the negatives on their strip of say 35 millimeter film, here's one negative and it's got a frame or a border around it, and here's the next negative, and here's the next negative, but they're held together by this border. And that's really what I think we have going on in the Book of Judges is that we have a series of accounts, series of stories, but they're held together by this framework, which we think is later, which is influenced by the thinking and the language of the book of Deuteronomy. This sort of undergirds this whole historical overview of which Judges is part.
- Hank Smith: 00:12:58 The redactors are likely southern Kingdom, because they're putting kind of a negative slant on the northern Kingdom. I've never known that, that's so helpful.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:13:08 It doesn't have to be a major emphasis in our study, but if you read through it, you'll see Judah, a few times it's mentioned in the Book of Judges is usually fairly positive and northern tribes.
- John Bytheway: 00:13:19 Conquerors.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:13:21 Yeah. Northern tribes and northern locations get portrayed in a negative light pretty regularly.
- Hank Smith: 00:13:28 I'm fascinated by having the redactors purpose in mind as we read, because that's to me one of the great things about the Book of Mormon is keeping Mormon's purpose in mind as we read.
- John Bytheway: 00:13:39 Mormon just keeps saying, "Thus we see", we get those, "Oh, that's why this is here." And I don't know if it comes as often here.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:13:48 I will say it rarely comes in the Bible. If we don't have a lot of those explicit, thus we see here's the moral to the story. Biblical redactors, we assume figured that you could figure out what the moral to the story was. They're going to lay out the story and what you bring to the text, Are you male? Are you female? Are you rich or poor? Are you free or a slave? Have you been abused as a child or not? And all these terrible things and all these good things that happen to people in a lifetime shape what they bring to the text. And so they're assuming, and I'd love, we'll get into a couple of these stories. What do you think? What's the message here? What are you supposed to take from this? Because they don't specifically tell you, they're assuming you will deduce what the message is.

Hank Smith: 00:14:31 John, I always hate it when I learn so much that I expose how much I didn't know.

John Bytheway: 00:14:36 Oh, that's every time we record for me, Hank.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:14:40 Don't we believe in eternal progression and keep learning, right? Keep growing.

Hank Smith: 00:14:45 This has already made me love it so much, because I love reading the Book of Mormon that way. I love reading to analyze the narrator, and so now I can do that here.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:14:55 So there's an interesting passage. It's in Judges chapter 18, again, showing kind of the influence here of the redactor or later editors, if we're going to say. Judges 18, looking at verse 30 and it says, this is part of a story that's been narrated in chapter 17 and 18. So this is kind of the end of the story. The children of Dan set up the graven image, and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, and this is really meant to be read as Moses. And we can talk about this later if we get to it. But to make my point, he and his sons were priests to the Tribe of Dan up in the north of the Galilee region, until the day of the captivity of the land. And most people assume that this is the 730s or the 720s when the Assyrians take over the northern part of the Kingdom of Israel.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:15:41 So we've got the northern Kingdom, the Assyrians take over the northern part of that in the 730s and then completely conquer the northern Kingdom of Israel in the 720s. So most people think the final form of this book is produced after the 700s. And as I said, the standard approach is that the final form is produced even after the destruction of Jerusalem in the 500s, but again, by southern redactors. But they're trying to say the captivity of the land the only time we really know about that,

and it's a little vague granted, but the only time we really hear about the captivity of the land is in the 700s. There are little bits and pieces of clues about that.

- Hank Smith: 00:16:23 So Dana, is the author pro King and pro Jehovah? Because they're trying to set us up for this idea of, yes, we need a King, but over and over, I mean, if they wrote Joshua 24:15, choose to serve the Lord.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:16:37 So yeah, and I'd say Joshua, the last couple sermons that we have from Joshua in chapters 23 and 24 of that book, very much this Deuteronomistic influence. Jehovah's the only God, choose him, be loyal to him, don't chase after other gods, right? As for me and my house, we're going to worship the LORD Jehovah, and Judges very much the same, pro Jehovah. And look at all the problems when they worship other gods in addition to Jehovah. And I'm going to mention that now, we oftentimes it says, "They forsook the Lord and chased after other gods." We don't think that the Israelites ever stopped worshipping Jehovah. The problem we think historically was that in addition to Jehovah, they're bringing in worship of other deities alongside him, complicating the problem for those who follow the perspective in Deuteronomy that there's only Jehovah and you only worship him. Don't go running after these other gods.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:17:30 But in antiquity, right? People were polytheistic primarily. They wouldn't say, "Oh, forget Jehovah. Let's worship Baal," it was, "Oh, we've got Jehovah. We'll cover our bases by worshipping Baal as well." Bring them both into our little Pantheon, if you want to say it that way. Book of Judges definitely pro Jehovah and it turns out in its final form to be, yeah, we need a human king, not just the heavenly king.
- Hank Smith: 00:17:54 When I've done my cursory reviews of it's always been Jehovah or a king. We don't want Jehovah. We want a king. And that Samuel does seem to say that a little bit. He says, "Look, kings are a bad idea. Let's not do it."
- John Bytheway: 00:18:08 Let God be your king, sounds Book of Mormon to me. No, we'll have the reign of the Judges, but the Judges are judging according to laws that God gave us. God is our king. These are his laws.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:18:20 Well, and even the book of Deuteronomy warns about future kings. And if there is a future king, then they ought to abide by the law of God. They ought to read God's law regularly. They shouldn't have lots of horses and lots of property, and all this other stuff that Deuteronomy warns about everything that's

going to happen. And Samuel in 1 Samuel 8 is going to warn about everything that ends up happening.

John Bytheway: 00:18:43

He'll take your sons, he'll take your daughters.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:18:46

I think I said earlier, part of the question that the Book of Judges raises is, who do we worship? And then, who is our king? And if we have a human king, what kind of a human king are we going to end up having? Think of Deborah, right? We don't hear a lot about her, but she's depicted as a prophet and she's righteous. She's faithful, what have you. Other Judges are just spiritual bums. They're just completely off the rails as far as the prophetic perspective that's portrayed in Deuteronomy and in other books. We're going to have a mixed bag. Sadly, most human leaders have a lot of flaws and make the most of the situation, But the warning is always here. If they'll follow the Lord, if they'll represent him, if he's the real King behind the Judge or behind the Monarch, then things will go well. And if that link is severed or twisted, we're going to have problems.

Hank Smith: 00:19:43

That is something I've seen before, is that idea of, look when the wicked rule, the people mourn. It's bad. Okay. I feel like I have a much stronger understanding of what we're jumping into here.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:19:55

Let's do a quick overview of where we're going to go. So the Book of Judges divides nicely into three sections. We could call them three portions, chapter one, chapter two, and the first few verses of chapter three are really introductory material. And of setting the stage, giving us chapter two gives us the program notes. And we can walk through those in a minute of what we're going to be seeing in the play or the opera or whatever, right? We've got the program notes. So the rest of chapter three through chapter 16 and the core of the Book of Judges. This is where we have accounts about Judges. We need to talk about that term. And then chapter 17 through 21, those last five chapters are often called the appendix. There isn't a judge mentioned at all in those five chapters. These are two stories that have been appended to this collection.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:20:45

Now, all of the Come, Follow Me assignment, the chapters that are part of Come, Follow Me are taken from that core section. Well, we get two and three, kind of the program notes. And then, most of the chapters then are from this core section, reading about specific judges and their activities, kind of an intro, the accounts about the judges and kind of the outro as we might call it nowadays.

Hank Smith: 00:21:07 So three separate sections, chapters one and two, a little portion of three introduction. The main section with the, is there 12 judges?

John Bytheway: 00:21:17 Yeah.

Hank Smith: 00:21:18 These 12.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:21:19 There are 12 judges. Some we hear more about than others. And I have to assume 12 is not a coincidence. It's a big number in Israel. Again, when we're talking about redactors maybe they said, "Okay, we're going to throw in two verses about this judge."

John Bytheway: 00:21:34 So that we'll have 12.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:21:35 Yeah. It's kind of symbolic in a way, right? There may have been more. There may have been less. I think we need to talk about a few couple of issues quickly in relation to that. The Hebrew word is shopet, shopet comes from the verbal root shaphat, which means to judge. And so it's a good translation. The challenges when we look at the Book of Judges, most of them aren't judging in the way we think about judges like arbitration and dealing with cases and rendering decisions, and what have you. The only time in the Book of Judges we have that is in Judges four there's one half of a verse about Deborah sitting under a palm tree, and people coming to her and she renders judgment on questions or issues that they're dealing with.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:22:19 Again, we have to ask ourselves is the Book of Judges representative of what judges did across the board? Or has it just selected examples of judges who happen to not do much judging the way we think about it? But they're leaders, and in a number of modern translations now have chosen the word chieftain, because these people function is, I don't particularly like that, but they're military leaders, the Lord chooses a leader to help deliver the people from their oppression. This is how they're depicted in the Book of Judges. When we get to Samuel, he's called a judge, he's a prophet and he's a leader. He even does a little bit of fighting, right?

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:22:59 So I guess the main point is that there's variety among judges and we see some people gathering others with them to help in the fight. Samson kind of goes it alone. So even within the military leader, depiction of judges, there's a certain amount of variety that we encounter in the Book of Judges. We can't harmonize all the chronological information in Judges with the

overall picture. And then if we bring in archeological information and records from Egypt and other places, and try to make sense out of all of this. Scholars end up by saying, "Yeah, it probably wasn't really 480 years. It was probably 200 years." Judges one and a half to two centuries. Some of these we'll see in the framework of Judges, a lot of times it'll say in the land rested for 40 years or the land rested for 20, which is half of that, or for 80 years, which is twice that, right?

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:23:58 Most people don't think those are meant to be taken literally, but more, "Yeah, it was a short time or a long time or a really long time, but we don't know". Most people think, and I happen to agree with this, that the Judges are not sequential. When we read the book, it sounds like, okay, this guy, and then this gal, and then this guy, and then this guy, and they come one after another. Most people think they're not sequential, but there probably was some overlapping. And part of the reason for that is that we don't think, if you read the book carefully, they're never described as universal judges through all the land of Israel, they often will call two or three tribes, maybe one tribe, maybe four or five tribes.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:24:39 But we never hear about all the tribes getting together and fighting together against their oppressors, and being under the leadership of one individual throughout the book. So the general approach to this nowadays, academic approach, I'll underscore that, is that these are regional judges that overlap that probably not one after another, just the way it's laid out. But again, this is kind of a mix of the world behind the text and the world of the text. Trying to make sense out of, how do we put this all together?

John Bytheway: 00:25:12 That's interesting. So they could have been spread out over enough land that it's not like everybody knew who the judge was at any given time. They could have been, I like what you said, regional judges.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:25:24 It's ironic that the only time all the tribes get together in the Book of Judges is in chapter 20-21, where they're about to wipe out the Benjaminites because of something that happened in the town of Gibeah. That's at the very end of the book, the way it's been formulated for us. So the rest of the time we don't hear about them all together. Our perspective is the teachings and the principles in Deuteronomy. And look what's happening, we're using that as our lens to look at history and evaluate and interpret history, and to make points again about, so let's just call it two centuries, right? We got two centuries at a time. They could have blown it off in a page and said, "Well, nothing really

happened for two centuries and the same, it came along," right?

- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:26:07 But they really want to forcefully bring home the point that Israelite activity produces certain outcomes. They're going to illustrate that well in the Book of Judges to show how, again, we get from here to here. That's a good way to get into the book. When we start Judges one, which is not in the assignment, but it's helpful to just mention quickly.
- John Bytheway: 00:26:30 I read the first seven verses and thought, when verse seven ends as I have done so God has requited me. Did God want him to cut off toes and thumbs of all of these kings?
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:26:45 This is Adoni-Bezek, right? So he's saying, "I've done these bad things and now God," generically, probably from his perspective, this is restitution. "I did these bad things to other people and God's made this happen to me. I had my thumbs and my big toes cut off as well." So Judges 1:1, now after the death of Joshua. So that's our link to what we read about at the end of chapter 24, it came to pass the children of Israel, asked the LORD, and I don't want to beat this to death, because you've probably covered this in other episodes. But LORD, all in caps, is our clue that this is the divine name Jehovah or YHWH, it's Y-H-W-H or yod he vav he in Hebrew, the four letters. Tetragrammaton as we say, the four letters of the divine name of God. And rather than writing Jehovah here or Yaweh they put the LORD.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:27:36 So we get a title in place of a name. We could just read Yaweh or Jehovah every time we see LORD in caps, but this is interesting. The children of Israel ask the LORD, ask Jehovah, saying, "Who shall go up against the Canaanites first to fight against them?" So what questions come to your mind when you read that?
- John Bytheway: 00:27:53 They have to drive the Canaanites out of the land, who is going to go do that?
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:27:58 Yes. How do they ask the LORD? It just says, "Oh, they ask the LORD." One of the interesting things about the Book of Judges is there's not only no political leader, there's no overall major religious figure in the Book of Judges.
- Hank Smith: 00:28:12 Joshua is gone.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:28:14 There's a priest and a prophet get mentioned here and there, an angel shows up occasionally, but there's very little explicit religious leadership that's portrayed in the Book of Judges. Most people think when it says, "They asked the LORD, that they're using the Urim and Thummim. The Aaronic high priest would've been involved," doesn't say for sure. So that's a good guess. And since I said Aaronic high priest, this is a footnote, right? I make this regularly. Latter-day Saints here, high priest, they often think of high priest. The office in the church is restored. And this dispensation, when we're reading the Old Testament, high priests, especially from Exodus onward, which is the bulk of the Old Testament. We're always talking about the Aaronic high priest.

Hank Smith: 00:28:57 He's running the show in the tabernacle.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:29:00 As far as the tabernacle and the ritual activity, that sacrifices and other things that take place there. Yeah. And you'll get a little bit of this in the beginning of second Samuel as well. David asks through the Urim and Thummim, "Should I go up? Where should I go?" So we think that's what's going on here. And who's going to go up first? The Book of Joshua ends with a fairly positive depiction of the Israelites coming in and taking over the land of Canaan. There are some hints that that wasn't the case, but we sort of read it that way. And then when we get to Judges one and we get the reality check, wow, they haven't conquered the whole land. They haven't done everything that the Lord asked them to do as far as driving out or killing people.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:29:40 And so here they've got to finish the process and there's a lot of finishing to do. So who's going to go up first to fight against the Canaanites. And the LORD says, this is verse two, "Judah will go up first. I've delivered the land in his hand," now Simeon in verse three goes up with Judah. And eventually historically the Tribe of Simeon sort of gets absorbed into the Tribe of Judah, which is interesting that they're together here.

Hank Smith: 00:30:04 When it says, "Judah shall go up," it means the tribe, correct?

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:30:07 Yes.

John Bytheway: 00:30:08 Yeah. The Tribe of Judah.

Hank Smith: 00:30:09 Not some person named Judah.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:30:11 This is all tribal related at this point. The point here is that the conquest is continuing. It's not a finished product at this point,

right? So the ongoing conquest or the ongoing invasion, and again, depending on your perspective, the Israelites are coming in and taking over this place and killing people and establishing themselves. And the Bible presents that as the Lord's will for them at this time. But there are challenges in dealing with and questions about those kinds of issues. And some of these historical challenges, it says in seven and eight, well, verse eight, "Children of Judah fought against Jerusalem. Smote it with the sword, set the city on fire."

- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:30:54 We're going to read that later in Judges and even in Samuel, that the Israelites do not control the city of Jerusalem until 2 Samuel 5 when David takes it. So does this mean they kind of went in and smashed the place and burned it and then let the inhabitants, the Jebusites take over again and continue to live there for a couple centuries? Or is this optimistic or they had a little victory and it became a major note here? It's hard to know. There are just some historical questions that we can't answer.
- John Bytheway: 00:31:28 I was going to ask you, the Jebusites were the ones who were there at this time. Did they call it Jerusalem or is the redactor calling it Jerusalem?
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:31:38 No. We have even in some Egyptian texts from this period and a little bit earlier that refer to the city in a form of what we would say was the name Jerusalem. So we don't actually hear about Jebusites outside of the Bible, which doesn't mean they didn't exist, right? But we do have the name. The Bible says it was called Jebus or Jebus, right? And again, as a footnote, there's no J sound in Hebrew. When we say Jebusites, it would've been the Jebusites. Jebus, Jebus. It was called Jerusalem early on. According to Egyptian texts, the Jebusites are depicted in the Bible as the inhabitants of Jerusalem. It would've been a small city state. Again, the land when Joshua and the Israelites come into the land, there is not one unified Canaanite kingdom. These are a whole series of city states, a major city controlling the villages and towns in its area.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:32:37 And these city states, as we call them, would've interacted with each other as best they could, sometimes fighting, sometimes peacefully, right? But Jerusalem would've been a small city states and small city up in the highland country, even when Joshua and Israelites come. So they go up, Judas depicted as being successful. And then by verse 22, the focus shifts over 21 to Benjamin and 22 and following Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh. And much of the focus from then on out is going to be on the tribes of what end up later in history becoming the Northern Kingdom Tribes.

Hank Smith: 00:33:16 And it's saying Judah is successful, gets them out of the mountains, not out of the valley. And it seems like the other tribes aren't able to drive these non-Israelites out of the land. Is that kind of the summary here of chapter one, they weren't able to completely govern the entire land?

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:33:35 Yes, very much the case as that's being depicted. Verse 19, chapter 1:19, the LORD was with Judah. And this is another major theme in the Book of Judges, but also in the Bible, right? This concept of what we call the divine warrior, that God is the one who's fighting for or against sometimes Israel. And regularly throughout the book, he drove out the inhabitants of the mountain, but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley because they had chariots of iron. And this does not mean that the chariots were all constructed out of iron, right? They're wooden chariots, but the wheels had iron rims. And again, if we're doing world behind the text archeologically, this time period is called the Iron Age I. Once we get the time of David, we get into what's called the Iron Age II, right?

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:34:25 But Iron Age I is the early use of iron in the middle east, the near east, as we call it. We hear in Samuel that the Philistines had more access to iron and iron production than the Israelites did. But even here, we're getting this clue that the Canaanites, some of them anyway have chariots with iron wheels, which means they were sturdier. They could go over the rocky terrain, even in the valleys better than of just wooden wheels could go. The Israelites end up primarily in the mountains or the highlands, the hill country. The Canaanites continue to live in, grow their crops in, be successful in maintaining control over the valleys, which generally are more fertile and more productive.

Hank Smith: 00:35:10 Verse 28 says, "It came to pass when Israel was strong that they put the Canaanites to tribute and did not utterly drive them out." So is it saying they didn't do what God asked them to do?

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:35:21 Yeah. And we've got several verses that are coming up that sort of reinforce this since they didn't do what the initial program was.

John Bytheway: 00:35:30 Yeah. We'd rather just take a tribute from them than drive them out, "Hey, pay us taxes."

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:35:36 Yes. And we're going to see a couple verses as we go along that we'll highlight that reinforce this idea. Not only that they weren't able to drive them out, but then there's a kind of a religious twist put on it that the Lord says, "Okay. If you're not

going to do it my way, I'll leave them there. And they'll be thorns in your sides and help to prove you whether you're going to be faithful or not."

- Hank Smith: 00:35:58 So maybe the idea is here that since you're not going to do what the Lord asked you to do, there's going to be long term consequences that you're going to have to deal with, which is an important life lesson.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:36:09 I'm going to assume that the Lord knew this was going to be the way it turned out.
- Hank Smith: 00:36:13 Are their children going to pay the price for this? Or is it going to be them?
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:36:16 Well, mostly it's their children, right? Mostly their children and their grandchildren and great-grandchildren, which brings us to chapter two, because there's an important verse that we want to read. Well, there's several important verses, but we want to get to verse 10. Chapter two starts, the angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim. Gilgal is this little site down near Jericho. You remember in the beginning of Joshua, the Israelites camp at Gilgal, when they first crossed the Jordan river into the land of Canaan and then they go against Jericho and elsewhere, right? So you remember this name Gilgal already, right?
- Hank Smith: 00:36:51 Yeah. You're supposed to.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:36:54 Bochim is the name of the place that they're assembled. We're going to read that how the name came about in verse five. But it says in verse one, "An angel of the LORD," so this is the LORD in caps, which Jehovah or Yaweh, an angel. Now the Hebrew word, maybe you've covered this in past episodes. The Hebrew word is malak, and it means messenger. You don't know initially whether it's a human messenger sent by the Lord or whether it's a divine messenger sent from the Lord. And context is really the only way you can tell. And our English word angel comes from Angelos, the Greek term, which also means messenger. So angels, as we call them, are divine messengers sent from God to deliver messages. Is this a human messenger or a divine messenger? There's a debate over that, because we don't have any really extra clues that help us know.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:37:46 I don't want to beat this to death, but I want to show you something here. So the angel comes, the messenger comes and says, "I made you to go up out of Egypt, brought you into the land, which I swore to your ancestors. And I said, 'I will never

break my covenant with you.'" So who's talking here? It's being presented as the Lord speaking. So there's an angel or a prophet, we could say this is the principle of divine investiture, right? Somebody is speaking on behalf of the Lord as if he is the Lord. And we think it's a he, you shall not make a league or a covenant, verse two, with the inhabitants of this land. Go in and throw down their altars, et cetera, et cetera, the end of verse two. But you have not obeyed my voice. Why have you done what you've done?

- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:38:24 So there is kind of that rhetorical question. Wherefore I also, verse three, I will not drive them out from before you. If you're not going to do a better job of putting your own efforts into this, I'm not going to be here to help you. The people will be as thorns in your sides and their God shall be a snare unto you. And the people lift up their voice and weep at the end of verse four. And the verb happens to be from Bochim, right? So they call this place, verse five, Bochim because that's where the people are weeping, and Bochim means the weepers. So couple of quick points to make about this. One, again, somebody speaking as if he's the Lord. Two, we see this over and over and over again, it's in Joshua, it's in Judges, it's later on in the prophetic books.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:39:12 Why did the Lord deliver the Israelites from Egypt? Well, one, he does deliver them from Egypt. So he has the power to deliver them. And two, he took them out of Egypt to make a covenant and have this relationship with them, right? So deliverance and covenants are major themes that get brought up again and again and again, in the text. If you want to take a break from all the details and say, "How does this relate to me?" Every Sunday, with exception of conference Sundays, I take the sacrament. I renew my covenant with the Lord. And I think of the fact that the Lord has delivered me, in this case from sin and death, right? But these themes of deliverance in covenant are spread throughout the historical and prophetic books of the Old Covenant. And it makes a wonderful way to think application wise, he did it for them. Nephi, and other Book of Mormon prophets do this, right? He did it for them. He can do it for me too, and he does do it. Does do it for me.
- John Bytheway: 00:40:05 I really like that you put those together, because I've never heard them put together deliverance and covenant. Of course, I really like that you put those together. So I delivered you, keep the covenant.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:40:18 Yeah, and it's not just delivering for the sake of delivering, right? As other people have said, he delivers them into or unto a

covenant opportunity, which we read about at Sinai and all that took place there. And I mentioned this when I talk about the book of Numbers and all the murmuring and everything else that goes on there. But it works throughout the rest of the historical overview. In Exodus 24, the people say, "We'll do everything the Lord commands us." They enter formally into a covenant. They don't do such a great job. Why do we have the sacrament every week? Because we don't do such a great job. I'm thinking of President Nelson saying, "Repent every day" that the Lord and the prophet know that we're fallen. We have weaknesses. We're going to make mistakes. We're going to sin. And we need to get back into harmony with, be reconciled with the Lord and Heavenly Father.

- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:41:09 So I think it's really helpful to watch where those themes pop up again and again, right? Deliverance, I have the power to do this, but I did it on purpose so we could be in this relationship, make this covenant together.
- Hank Smith: 00:41:21 Dana, I got to tell you, this sounds like my life right here. Okay. We made a deal. I told you I would come through for you, and you said you were going to come through for me, and then you didn't come through for me. Why? Why didn't you do what you promised to do? I'm like, I can see why the people they weep.
- John Bytheway: 00:41:41 Do you know why you're in this spot right now? What we're talking about right here reminds me of the first paragraph in the Come, Follow Me manual on page 101. It says, "We all know what it's like to make a mistake, feel bad about it, and then repent and resolve to change our ways. But in some cases we forget our early resolve. And when we face temptation, we find ourselves making the mistake again. This tragic pattern is typical of the Israelites experiences described in the Book of Judges." That's I think what you just described there. Influenced by the beliefs and worship practices of the Canaanites, whom they were supposed to drive out of the land. The Israelites broke their covenants with the Lord and turned away from worshiping him. Anyway, it kind of sounds like a pride cycle pattern, similar to what we talk about in the Book of Mormon.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:42:26 Yes. And as we keep going in chapter two, we're going to get that cycle laid out for us. And biblical scholars don't use the word pride cycle, but cycle is regularly used to describe this going through this cycle as we'll see it outlined here. So yeah, good. Glad you brought that in. The next few verses in the Book of Judges chapter two, we got a recap. Chapter 2:7, people serve the Lord during the time of Joshua. Saw all the works that the Lord did. Joshua died. And then we get this verse that's

often cited in chapter 2:10. And also, all that generation were gathered unto their fathers, right? Their ancestors. So they've died, they're put in the tomb. And there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD Jehovah nor yet the works, which he had done for Israel. I always struggle with this, right? On the one hand, why didn't they know the works of the Lord?

- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:43:15 Well, they didn't live through them, but you would've hoped their parents or grandparents taught about these things. But as time goes on, those great events, like the Red or Reed Sea, the wilderness, the Mount Sinai, the Covenant, building the tabernacle, Joshua coming into the land and the Jordan River said to have stopped, cross on dry ground as symbolic follow up to the Red Sea episode. They didn't live through those, and as time goes by generations move along and people that haven't had those personal experiences, those events from the past seem to have less power in their lives.
- John Bytheway: 00:43:51 That reminds me so much of the Book of Mormon. There was another generation that arose that weren't there to hear the words of King Benjamin. Perfect question. Why didn't they know? And it seems like so much of what the Lord is doing in these Old Testament chapters is setting up reminders and feasts and everything to remind them of all the things that he's done for them.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:44:12 Yeah. Yeah. So on the one hand, it reminds me now, not only a parent, but a grandparent. I have a responsibility, my wife and I, to talk to our children and grandchildren and to continue to remind them about the great things the Lord has done in our lives, as well as further back in history is in the scriptures. But at the same time, it reminds me that every generation, every person has their own agency. We can't control that, but called upon as parents to do all we can to teach and to encourage.
- Hank Smith: 00:44:40 It reminds me of Joshua four where they were supposed to set up the 12 stones on the other side of Jordan and over and over come to this place and your children will say, "what are these stones for?" And you're to tell them, "Let your children know what God did." He foresaw this chapter 10, this next generation doesn't know.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:44:58 Yes. And the generation after that. Well, the rest of chapter two from verse 11 to the end, again, this is what I call the program notes, a lot of people refer to them this way. And I don't want to get lost in the details, but it's going to tell you what's about to happen with these cycles. So verse 11, the children of Israel

did evil in the sight of the Lord and served Baalim. Quick detail, so Baal is the Canaanite storm god who brings the rain and which brings crops and supports life. I don't want this to sound too negative, but for some reason, the church's Bible dictionary, even online as of yesterday still has, Baal is the sun god of the Canaanites, that is wrong. And if you think he's the sun god, it messes up a whole lot of stories in the Bible, right?

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:45:45 He's the God of rain, rain and storm, which then produces fertility, life for crops and people, and what have you. Baalim is the plural form, I'm saying Baal, it may sound odd, right? They serve the Baals, and the question is, people a lot of times, different manifestations of Baal. Well, I had an experience with Baal at this town or at this town, or he did something wonderful for me over here. So we're going to call Baal Berith and Baal Peor, and we hear about this occasionally in the biblical text. Nowadays, and I think more correctly, this is just being used as code for, they worship lots of male, Canaanite male deities. So lots of other gods, especially male gods. And we're going to have the female equivalent in verse 13, right? So not to leave out the other side of the equation there. So verse 12, they forsook the Lord God, brought them up out of the land and they followed other gods from all the people's roundabout.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:46:42 Verse 13, and they forsook the Lord and served Baal, here in the singular, and Ashtaroth, that's a feminine plural form on the end of this, Ashtoreth as it's sometimes given elsewhere in Hebrew. We generally think that this is Astarte, Babylonians called her Ishtar, a Canaanite's fertility goddess, but here it's in the plural form. So the sense is we think that the text is just trying to say, "Listen, they're worshiping specific gods, but we can just kind of lump them all together and say lots of other male gods, lots of other female gods," part of the world in which they lived here.

John Bytheway: 00:47:19 I think a lot of people that might not remember this in the Book of Judges might remember Elijah and the priests of Baal, same guy?

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:47:26 Yes, same fertility God, 1 Kings 18. And what do they want? There's a drought for three and a half years. And if you think Baal is the sun god in that story, it doesn't work. They're waiting for rain to come and Baal can't produce the rain, but Jehovah, Yaweh does produce the rain that ends the drought. But because he's the God of storms and rain, it was pretty easy for Israelites, we think, based on the perspective given in the Bible to say, "Well, things aren't going so well, and I've been praying to Jehovah. So maybe I should bring Baal in and pray to him too.

And maybe between the two of them, they can figure out how to bring more rain so we can fill up the cistern. So we can have a harvest. So the animals survive. So we can drink water all summer and fall till it rains again."

- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:48:14 So that seems to be what's going on here, right? Again, not leaving Jehovah, forsake, really means they abandon him. What I'm suggesting and most people think is the case is that they're not abandoning him. I don't worship you anymore. It's abandoning the appropriate way to worship him. Abandoning the perspective and Deuteronomy that you're only loyal to Jehovah, no other gods.
- Hank Smith: 00:48:39 I'm pretty sure that was commandment one, if I remember right. Thou shall have no other gods before me.
- John Bytheway: 00:48:46 Well, I've got other gods. I'm just putting one as a priority, right? And that wording makes more sense now when you're saying that, or if they love Satan more than God. They love God, but they love Satan more than God. But just the idea of, there's still others, I think that makes more sense with a lot of what we're reading here. There's other gods, and they're trying to have it both ways or many different ways, depending on their needs.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:49:11 For them, it feels like it was a little fluid. I'll try to be faithful, but if I need to bring in some help, okay.
- Hank Smith: 00:49:18 I love that you say for them, because that's definitely us as well, right? It's a little fluid. I love the Lord, right? I want to read something from Elder Oaks. He says, this is a talk from October 2013 General Conference called No Other Gods.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:49:34 Sounds biblical. Yes.
- Hank Smith: 00:49:35 Yes. Yeah. "What other priorities are being served ahead of God by persons, even religious persons in our day? Consider these possibilities, all common in our world, cultural and family traditions, political correctness, career aspirations, material possessions, recreational pursuits, power, prominence and prestige." The principle is not whether we have other priorities. The question posed by the second commandment is, what is our ultimate priority? Are we serving priorities or gods ahead of the God we profess to worship? So I like how you said that, Dana, it's kind of fluid. I love the Lord. I just was wondering if maybe I could bring this other thing in here.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:50:21 And that statement from Elder Oaks sounds like an updated summary of what President Kimball taught a long time ago about modern idolatry. And he uses a lot of the same examples of how we, our focus, our time and our energy gets shifted to things that are of this world and less relevance in the long run. Important as they may be in their own rights, they can't dominate our lives. Chapter two continues on, we've got the Lord gets angry then. So the people fall into sin, especially here, apostasy worshiping other gods in addition to Jehovah, and improperly worshiping him. An oppressor is going to come, the Lord sells them into the hands, verse 14 of spoilers. People who come and plunder them, another translation, their alternative, their enemies roundabout. This is mostly, generally they're immediate neighbors not coming from hundreds of thousands of miles away.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:51:14 Oh, they cry out to the Lord. Verse 16, the Lord raises up a judge or raised up judges, leaders to deliver them out of the hands of their oppressors. They wouldn't always follow the judges. They'd go whoring after other gods. Verse 17, we're back to this. I mean, there's the cycle, right? Sin brings oppression, cry out to the Lord, some sort of repentance you'd like to think. The Lord sends a deliverer, they're delivered in their land and the people have rest for X number of years. And then, of course in their peace and prosperity, they slide into their old ways. And the cycle starts all over again. Some portions of Israel, maybe more than others, some areas sooner than others.

Hank Smith: 00:52:00 We just hit repeat on that 12 different times for the next few chapters. Just repeat, repeat, repeat.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:52:06 Yes. In one form or another anyway. And that's generalized, there's no doubt about that. And as we can say as we go along, why do the people continue to fall into these ways? Well, it's individuals making individual choices or families making family choices. And then soon that kind of infects and influences a larger group in the community and our tribe or what have you. It's the same situation we see in modern religious history as well.

Hank Smith: 00:52:35 Dana, when I go back to Judges one then, where it says, "They didn't do what the Lord asked them to do." Am I to maybe learn from this if great grandpa doesn't do what the Lord asked him to do, then grandpa, dad, son, grandson, great grandson are all going to suffer. John, we've brought up Elder Holland's, A Prayer for the Children over and over and over, right? The idea that the

payments come out of your children's and your grandchildren's pockets in far more expensive ways than you ever intended.

- John Bytheway: 00:53:05 You make a slight deviation, they might make it even further. We talked about this with my family the other day, where it talks about visiting the iniquity onto the third and fourth generation. And it doesn't sound like it's fair with agency, but there's a footnote says, If the children follow the course their father's followed, then they will have the same bad consequences type of thing. That made a lot more sense to me because the children might fix it, might turn it around, which the pride cycle suggests they do. It's not the same people doing this every time. It's going through generations and we are backed up for a couple of centuries and watching it happen. Is that fair?
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:53:43 Yeah. Yeah. I'd say so.
- Hank Smith: 00:53:45 This is like reading the Book of Helaman, almost.
- John Bytheway: 00:53:47 Yeah. It's like pride cycle, pride cycle.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:53:50 God's covenant people struggling to live in the world, right? So, all times in all places. Look at chapter 2:20, just to wrap up the chapter two, "The anger of the Lord was hot against Israel," This is a great idiom, right? Because in Hebrew it says the nose of the Lord was hot against Israel. This is a standard line. His nose got hot. He said, "Because this people have transgressed my covenant, which I offered this opportunity to you, which I commanded your ancestors. They haven't hearkened to my voice. I also will not hence forth drive out any before you," of the nations, which Joshua left when he died. Verse 22, "That through them, I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk therein as their ancestors did or not," the word prove or test or try, because those are alternative translations of the verb here. Show up multiple times in the Book of Judges. You might think of Genesis 22:1, right?
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:54:47 So the Lord was going to test or try Abraham with the sacrifice of his son. You could think of Abraham three, right? We'll send them down and prove them now, but there's a lot of proving that goes on. And in this case, the Lord saying, "I'm going to use the leftover Canaanites as a way to prove the Israelites. Can they live in the world, but not be part of the world?" And we know the story, things don't go so well for many of them. But sometimes people are proving the Lord. Gideon's going to say, "I need a sign before I can go forward. I'm a little shaky here. Give me a couple of signs. And so is the Lord really going to be

with me?" And so it's interesting in the biblical text that can go in both directions. The Lord proves us but sometimes people are said to have proved the Lord.

- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:55:32 Will he be faithful no matter what? And of course the answer from our perspective is yes. He's always faithful no matter what, that's the biblical depiction as well. But if we go into chapter 3:1, These are the nations, which the Lord left to prove Israel by them will show up a few more times. So yeah, they don't drive them all out, so he doesn't help them finish the charge, and now this is what we're left with. Chapter 3:4, "They were there to prove Israel, whether they would follow the Lord or not." Can we do chapter 3:7? I want one more thing about Canaanite gods here. This is chapter three, five, six and seven, right? "The children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites" and all these other -ites, that are just for our purposes, they're subsets of the general overall Canaanite population.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:56:19 They took their daughters to be their wives. So Israelite men are marrying Canaanite women and gave their daughters to their sons and vice versa and served their gods. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and forgot the Lord their God, and served Baalim and the groves. Baalim we've already mentioned, the plural form of Baal probably just gods in general, other gods. And then the groves, this will show up multiple times in the next few weeks reading as well. And I hope if your viewers aren't used to regularly looking at the footnotes and I still use paper a lot. So it's easy just to glance down at the bottom of the page. If you're on your phone or your tablets, you have to click the link. It's not as quickly visible, but I was noticing as I reread Judges, there are a number of occasions, almost every page there's one, if not two or three annotations in our footnotes that say H-E-B, right?
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:57:15 Heb for Hebrew, the Hebrew means this or the Hebrew says this. So they're trying to help you deal with the King James English, which sometimes is less than accurate, or we say things differently nowadays than they did long ago. So I would encourage folks to regularly look or glance at the notes to get a little help along the way, especially as you're reading King James. So back to verse seven, the Baalim and the groves. Groves is the rendition here, tells you in the footnote for 7D, Hebrew is Asher wrote, which is the plural of Asherah. Asherah is Canaanite goddess as well. Mother goddess associated with fertility and other things. So sometimes we see the Grove because Asherah was associated. One of her symbols was a tree, tree with branches, typically life.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:58:08 There are occasions where we have depictions of a tree of Canaanite remains, material remains showing a tree with lions or animals, ibexes around it. We think it's, again, the mother goddess giving life to creatures. Canaanite goddess, Asherah, Hebrew, the word, the noun is Asherah. But is rendered here as groves, Septuagint picks up on the tree idea. So the trees shrines to her. So she's often depicted by the symbol of a tree or a post or pillar or something, artificial tree or a real tree. And we're going to see even examples as we go along. They cut down the Asherah, they burn the Asherah or whatever, right? So the Israelites, as well as Canaanites are using a stylized tree, it sounds like, putting it near altars to help them focus on Asherah as well as Baal or Jehovah or other deities, right? So here again, there's a plural form of that. So again, we're thinking, okay, just the gods and the goddesses of these other peoples.

Hank Smith: 00:59:14 I want to sum up here that the Lord is, look, you didn't keep your covenant, look, you're serving other gods. So I'm going to not punish you so much as to, you've got some important lessons that you are going to have to go through and they're going to be somewhat painful. That's what it feels like to me is we're setting up for some very painful lessons.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:59:39 Some testing and trying is going to take place. And we hear, which is often the case in the news, not just in the scriptures. The negative element tends to get a lot of the attention. So when I read Judges, I'm always going to be thinking, this isn't talking about every single Israelite is way off the rails. We can use for thinking the Latter-day Saints nowadays, right? There are some that are very faithful, there are some that are sort of faithful, there are some that come occasionally and then keep most of the commandments. There are some that are-

Hank Smith: 01:00:10 Fighting against the Lord and the prophet.

Dr. Dana Pike: 01:00:13 We don't have secularism in antiquity, but we have alternatives to religious approaches, as we've already said, right? And some people are more in harmony with this perspective that Deuteronomy and the prophets present. And some people are less in harmony with that, but there are always good people. When we think of Ruth, here's a family and the town of Bethlehem, it happens to be the town from which David will come from eventually. But here is a family and there are good people trying to lead good lives and trying to worship the Lord. We get a pretty negative view as we go through Judges. But I would say, keep in mind, this is not all folks, but this unfortunately becomes a lot of people. And whether it's the

majority or not, I can't tell, but eventually we have to reconcile the fact that the negative aspects are getting the press.

John Bytheway:

01:01:10

Please join us for part two of this podcast.



John Bytheway:	00:00:02	Welcome to part two of this week's podcast.
Dr. Dana Pike:	00:00:07	We'll have to run through Ehud to get to Deborah.
Dr. Dana Pike:	00:00:10	In Chapter 3, Verse 10, "The Spirit of the Lord came upon him." This is our first judge whom we're skipping over really quickly, Othniel.
Dr. Dana Pike:	00:00:19	And you could ask yourself this question; we're reading about judges. You said there were 12. How were they chosen? Who picked the judges? It's not a lottery system, we never hear about elections. This is the standard feature.
Dr. Dana Pike:	00:00:32	And it's not mentioned in the case of every judge, but several of them, this is our line, and it's going to happen later with young Saul, as well, that we read the Spirit of the Lord came upon the person. They're gifted with divine assistance, capabilities, people seem to recognize that and attribute it as gifts from the Lord to this person to help them out.
Dr. Dana Pike:	00:00:51	So, verse 10, "The Spirit of the Lord came upon him," he judged Israel, he went out to war. There's the judging that we end up hearing about, is the, "I'm a military leader. I'm going to help free my tribe, my neighboring tribes from the oppression of these neighbors who live around us."
Hank Smith:	00:01:06	I wrote a talk called Five Temptation Killers, and I used this story from Ehud and Eglon, and I said, "Eglon represents addiction, and Ehud is you, and how do you stab addiction and get rid of it?" And Ehud escaped this Eglon, who was this Jabba the Hut type character.
Dr. Dana Pike:	00:01:25	Ehud does his thing and the land rests. This is Chapter 3, Verse 30. "Moab was subdued, the land had rest for four score years": 80 years.
Dr. Dana Pike:	00:01:35	And then in verse 31, here's our only information about a fellow named Shamgar; "The son of Anath who slew Philistines, killed

600 men with an ox goad and helped deliver Israel." And we're done with him and we've moved on to Deborah in Chapter 4.

- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:01:49 And actually, chapters four and five deal with Deborah. Chapter four is the prose narration of these events, chapter five is poetry. And if you look at 5:1, then saying Deborah and Barak, the Israelite military leader with her, they sing a song. And hopefully, this reminds readers of Exodus, Chapter 15.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:02:08 In chapter 14, "The Lord delivers them through the Reed Sea"; the Red Sea. They get to the other side, the Egyptians are destroyed. And they sing about it in Exodus 15, "Moses and the people ... "
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:02:18 And then Miriam helps lead some of the women in singing; in that setting. Here, we've got Deborah and Barak singing praises to the Lord, recounting the events, describing the Lord's power and how it was He who won the battle; this divine warrior motif that it's God and the hosts.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:02:38 He's called "The Lord of Hosts." And we sometimes think, "Yeah, that's all the angels sitting around him." That can be in some cases, but "hosts" is also a very common military term in the Old Testament or the Hebrew Bible; "The hosts came out in numbers to fight."
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:02:52 And as we go through here, as I mentioned, this divine warrior, it's God who's fighting, it's God who's ultimately responsible for delivering Israel as it's being portrayed here.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:03:02 And there are a few little differences between what's in chapter four and what's in chapter five. I think Come Follow Me only included chapter four, but if you want to read the poetry ... And I'd always say, if you're reading biblical poetry, it's much more enjoyable, and I think it's more educational, to read it out loud and to read it slowly as poetry.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:03:21 Here's the narration. Chapter four, verse one, "The Israelites did evil in the sight of the Lord. After Ehud had died, the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin, the king of Canaan." He's the king in Hazor, which is a major Canaanite city a little bit north of the Sea of Galilee. So in the Upper Galilee, as we call it. His general is Sisera. They're oppressing the Israelites up in the north.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:03:46 Anyway, verse three, "The children of Israel cry unto the Lord." And he has, Sisera, this Canaanite general, has 900 chariots. 20 years has oppressed the children of Israel.

- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:03:56 And now we're in verse four. We're introduced to Deborah, a prophetess. We've heard Miriam described as a prophetess; Deborah here; later on, in the book of Nehemiah, Noadiah, a woman we don't know much about, is described as a prophetess; Huldah in Second Kings is called a prophetess; Isaiah's wife is called a prophetess.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:04:16 And for Latter-day Saints that often raises the question, "Well, they don't have the Melchizedek priesthood. How can they be a prophetess?", I mean, I would take it at face value that these women were blessed with the gifts of the spirit, and somehow are calling from the Lord to represent him and speak for him and serve his people, however that worked; formally institutionally. Perhaps different than how we're used to thinking of a prophet nowadays, but definitely had a role to play at different times in Israelite history.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:04:46 Chapter four, verse four; Deborah, the prophetess, again her husband's name, she judged Israel at this time. Again, I'm thinking this is part of Israel for a particular period. Maybe there are other people already judging in other areas as well.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:05:00 She sits under a tree, a Palm tree, and it became known as "The Palm tree of Deborah", because that's where she would sit regularly between Ramah and Bethel and Efram, the territory of Ephraim, and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment, to make decisions.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:05:16 I mentioned earlier, this is the only time in the Book of Judges where we actually have a reference to a judge judging or deciding or arbitrating, dealing with cases that were brought to her. Maybe this happened a lot and we just don't hear about it, but that's always the question.
- John Bytheway: 00:05:31 They sound more like military leaders in most of the book.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:05:34 The depiction primarily has a military focus in the Book of Judges.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:05:40 And this is what I find interesting in verse six; she sat and called Barack, who's an Israeli military leader, and says, "Hasn't the Lord God of Israel commanded you," essentially, "Saying, 'Go down to Mount Tabor, get thousands of men from Naphtali and Zebulun,'" these tribes up in the Galilee region, verse seven, "'I will draw unto you ...'" So this is, "I, the Lord," right? "Hasn't God said, 'I will draw Sisera to you, and I, God,'" verse seven, "'Will deliver him into your hand?'"

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:06:10 So she's saying the Lord has spoken already, probably through her, we don't hear about anybody else, and she's saying, "How come you're not doing this? Get with the program, assemble the troops, the hosts from these tribes, and get to Mount Tabor," which is in the Jezreel or on the edge of the Jezreel Valley, again, where the Canaanites are controlling.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:06:31 As many people have said, chariots in antiquity were kind of like tanks in modern warfare, right? These are powerful things. And if your horse is pulling your chariot through a group of infantry people, they're going to get run over, they're going to get hurt. It says 900 chariots. This is a pretty mighty military contingent that Sisera has.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:06:52 How does Barak respond to what Deborah says? "If you go with me," verse eight, "Then I'll go. Otherwise, I'm not going. I'm not going to lead out here, because this looks hopeless. And if you, Deborah, go with me, Barak, then I have a sense that the Lord will be with us and he'll do what he says you're saying he will do."

Hank Smith: 00:07:13 Right.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:07:14 So she said, "Okay, I'll go."

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:07:15 But what does she say? Verse seven; "I'll go, but you better know right now, the victory won't be for your honor, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman."

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:07:29 Now you might think, at this point, that Deborah's going to be the one who's the woman who's kind of cheered on for the victory. But as we read through the chapter, we find out that there's another woman involved as well.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:07:43 The story unfolds. They go out, they meet in the valley, they fight. Verse 13; Sisera gathered all his chariots, the 900 chariots, they're fighting in the valley.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:07:53 Verse 14, Deborah says to Barak, again, her Israelite military leader, "Get up. This is what the Lord said he's going to do. The Lord has delivered Sisera into your hands." So again, this is attributed to divine intervention here. "Has not the Lord gone out before you?"

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:08:10 Verse 15. So, "The Lord discomfited ... " And if you don't know that word, there's a note that explains that's Old English for "put into a panic," right? So he caused a panic and the

Canaanite forces are fleeing, and Sisera hops off his chariot to run away, to save his own life.

- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:08:31 And then the next verse, 18, and the next few verses, are this fairly well known account where he runs to a tent. It's Heber and Jael. Heber is out getting fast food or something, and Jael is home. And Sisera says, "Listen, I need a place to hide. Put me in here, and if anybody comes, tell them I'm not here."
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:08:53 He's exhausted from hours or a day of fighting. So verse 19, she opens up a bottle of milk. Again, this is probably an animal skin of goat milk or something. She says, "Here, have some milk. Maybe it'll help you get even a little drowsier." He lays down, he gets covered up.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:09:10 And then in verse 21, Jael is her name, Heber's wife, took a nail of a tent, so she takes a tent peg, and a hammer, or a club, as some people render it, in her hand and went to him while he's laying asleep in the back of the tent, and drove the nail right through his head and nailed him to the ground.
- Hank Smith: 00:09:29 Wow.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:09:29 He was asleep and he never woke up, right? He was dead.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:09:33 Barack pursued Sisera. Jael comes out to say, "Hey, I've already taken care of this."
- Hank Smith: 00:09:37 I love that.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:09:38 And this is the woman who's going to get the glory for killing the Canaanite general.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:09:43 So verse 23, "God subdued, on that day, Jabin, the king of Canaan," Sisera was the general, "Before the children of the Lord."
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:09:52 Then we go into the poetic song in chapter five that kind of re-narrates, in its own poetic way, celebrates the victory.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:10:01 So you might say, what can I get out of that narration in chapter four? What lessons could I learn?
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:10:06 The Lord says, "I'm going to help you if you go out and do your part," Deborah encourages Barak, they go out and do their part, and the Lord comes through. I mean, this is kind of an underlying theme, but it's worth highlighting over and over. The

Lord's going to follow through on what he says if we're willing to participate with him.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:10:27 You might think I'm trying to make something nice out of a story that doesn't have anything nice, but that seems to be the principle, that the Lord brings about his purposes and will deliver you if you're willing to work with him.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:10:40 It may take time and there may be violence or challenges or hardships along the way, but Judges is going to tell us the Lord always comes through.

Hank Smith: 00:10:48 Yeah.

Hank Smith: 00:10:48 And then there's also this idea from Barak in verse eight; "If thou will go with me, then I will go," meaning, I know you're inspired of God. I go where you go.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:10:58 I'm feeling concerned and I need help and support, and you're the person who can provide that, to represent that to me, which is not unlike when we get into chapter six with Gideon.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:11:09 He needs reassurance multiple times. He's depicted in chapter six and seven as quite fearful. That changes in chapter eight, and he seems to have overcome that with God's help, but he's a little ... More than once needs a little extra help and reassurance along the way.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:11:27 And that's not such a bad lesson either; that if we feel the need for help and reassurance, it's okay to say that. It's okay to be honest and ask for that.

Hank Smith: 00:11:34 I like that, Dana.

Hank Smith: 00:11:36 So all of five is a song.

John Bytheway: 00:11:38 Dana, could you sing that for us just in Hebrew?

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:11:41 You don't want me to sing. Thank you anyway for the offer.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:11:47 When you get to chapter five, verse 31, it's the last verse in the chapter, "Let all your enemies perish, oh, Lord. Let them that love him be as the son when he goes forth in his might," it kind of flips the language, and we think the Him now is the Lord, right?

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:12:02 "And the land had rest for 40 years." Again, there's that narrative framework tacked on at the end to tell us some multiple of 40, right? In this case, it is 40.

Hank Smith: 00:12:12 I bet I know what's going to come next.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:12:15 Oh, well, then why don't you read chapter six, verse one for us? So we'll see if you're right.

Hank Smith: 00:12:20 I'm guessing if there's rest in the land, then they're going to do something wrong. Let's take a look.

Hank Smith: 00:12:24 Chapter six, verse one. "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian, seven years."

Hank Smith: 00:12:32 So it's almost a, "Here we go again."

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:12:35 We think it's constructed or formulated that way purposefully to show the ups and the downs or the going around of the cycle.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:12:43 So Midian is depicted in Genesis 25 as one of the sons of Abraham and Keturah. We know Jethro and Zipporah and their family, the Midianites, were Midianites.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:12:55 But the Midianites are this group of people that are moving up and down out of Northwest Arabia, moving up along the Eastern side of the Jordan River Valley. Occasionally, they come into the Western side of the Jordan River into the land of Israel proper; the Jezreel Valley and other places, we hear about them.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:13:14 So, yeah, Midianites is this shifting group of people over centuries. And the Amalekites, likewise. And for our purposes, that's probably enough.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:13:23 But chapter six, verse five, these people are like grasshoppers for multitude. They're all over the place. And the Israelites in verse six are crying unto the Lord, as we know the cycle.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:13:33 And in this case, it's one of the few cases where we hear about a prophet. Chapter six, verse seven and eight, the Israelites cry to the Lord for help because of the Midianites, and the Lord sent a prophet unto them, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel"

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:13:45 Now this is going to be presented in first person again, the prophet speaking by divine investiture as if he is the Lord.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:13:52 The end of verse eight, "I brought you up from Egypt, brought you out of the house of bondage. I delivered you from the Egyptians, brought you here and tried to drive out the people and give you the lands." Verse 10, "I said unto you, 'I am the Lord. I'm Jehovah, your God. Fear not the other gods of the people,' but you didn't obey me."

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:14:11 "And there came an angel." Verse 11. Now we're going to be introduced an angel. It's a messenger. Again, you decide if it's a human or a divine. We find out as we go along.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:14:22 We're introduced to Gideon's father, whose name is Joash. They're living in the territory of Manasseh. It sounds eventually like this is a divine angel or a divine messenger, an angel in the sense that we think.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:14:36 But here's the verse that you started this videocast with Hank; "And the angel of the Lord appeared," 6:12, "Unto Gideon, and said, 'The Lord is with you. You are a mighty man of valor.'"

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:14:46 Gideon said to him, "Oh my Lord." This is "Lord" not all in caps. So it's, "Oh my Lord," he's talking to this divine messenger, "If Jehovah is with us, then why are we having all these problems?" So, "You're saying the Lord is with us, but I'm not seeing it exactly."

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:15:05 So this is an interesting little conversation that he has with the angel. "Didn't the Lord bring us up out of Egypt? But now the Lord has forsaken us and delivered us into the hand of the Midianites."

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:15:13 You can decide whether Gideon's worldview is out of whack, or this is more rhetorical, like saying, "Yeah, well, if he's really with us, we sure are having a lot of hardships with these Midianites."

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:15:22 Verse 14; now it says, "The Lord looked on him and said ... " And there's a challenge here; is this really the Lord talking to him, or is it the angel speaking as the Lord? It just says, "The Lord is talking to him."

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:15:36 And it goes back and forth a little here, but Jehovah says to him, "Go in this, thy might, and thou shalt save Israel." This is his call, so to speak, right? " ... Save Israel from the Midianites. Haven't I sent you?"

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:15:48 And he said, verse 15, "Oh my Lord," sounds like he's talking to the angel again, "Wherewith?" Or, "How am I going to save Israel? I'm from this poor tribe, from a poor family. I'm the least in my father's house." Verse 16, the Lord, Jehovah, says, "Surely I will be with you." That is meant to be very encouraging to him.

Hank Smith: 00:16:08 That's Moses.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:16:09 Yeah. A lot of people who get calls from the Lord to do hard things, right?

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:16:13 The promise; "Surely I will be with you. You shall smite the Midianites as one man." And he said, "If now I have found grace, show me a sign."

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:16:23 Now this isn't the fleece, that's not till chapter seven, but he's already saying, "I'm a little anxious about this. I'm maybe a little doubtful, fearful. I need a little reassurance."

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:16:33 So he is going to make a meal, if you will, puts it on the rock, the angel goes up in the fire, and he thinks, "Whoa."

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:16:42 Verse 22. "When Gideon perceived that this was really a divine angel of the Lord, he said, 'Alas, oh, Lord, God, for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face ...'" And there's this tradition throughout a number of biblical texts that to see God or an angel meant you might die. We're going to hear this again with Samson's parents as well in a few chapters.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:17:04 Verse 22, Alas O Lord, God, Lord is not all in caps, but what is?

Hank Smith: 00:17:08 God is.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:17:09 It's the word God is all in caps. And this happens actually several times in Judges, and dozens of times throughout the Old Testament, and that's your clue that in this case we said that The Lord all in caps, is a substitute title, the Hebrew word that's pronounced is Adonai so that you don't say Yahweh, right? So Lord in caps tells me it's the divine name, but the practice became I'm going to say The Lord as a title for God, instead of the divine name itself.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:17:40 Well, here we've got Alas O Adonai Yahweh. So rather than the translators, and it's the same in modern translations as well, rather than saying O LORD, LORD, all in caps, they've put God in place of the divine name Yahweh, and capitalized it, so you'll know that is the divine name. It's Adonai Yahweh, O Lord,

Yahweh, but the translators have put O Lord, God so that they don't have to use their usual substitution, which is to put Lord all in caps.

- Hank Smith: 00:18:17 Because it would say, O LORD, Lord.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:18:19 O LORD, Lord-
- Hank Smith: 00:18:20 Wow, yeah.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:18:22 One all in caps one not, then that would look weird to people. And so again, there are all kinds of challenges in translating an ancient text for modern readers, right? And that's just kind of a fun example.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:18:33 An easy place to see this also is in Amos 3:7, a verse that Latter-day Saints like a lot, it's the same situation, God is all in caps. Surely, The Lord, GOD, will do nothing, right? God is all in caps there, because it's the same Hebrew, it's Adonai Yahweh. Either way, Gideon is saying to the Lord, "Wow, I haven't quite expected that. I've seen an angel and maybe my life's in danger, I just wanted a little bit of a sign.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:18:58 Verse 24, Gideon built an altar to the Lord, to Yahweh, Jehovah, and called it Jehovah Shalom, and it's still there if you happen to be in that day. So Jehovah Shalom is one of the few times the word Jehovah is spelled out in English in the Old Testament, and Shalom most people will know, is the Hebrew word for peace that connects back to verse 23, which we just skipped over.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:19:20 "The Lord said unto him, Peace be unto you", don't fear, you're not going to die. So he builds an altar and names the altar Jehovah is Peace, because he's promised peace or wellbeing, right, is another way to render Shalom.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:19:35 Anyway, he's given a charge, he is told to go throw down the altar of Baal, which his father has. This is the end of verse 25, "And cut down the grove that is by it," this tree or this symbolic representation of a tree that's meant to represent Asherah. So you've got an altar to Baal and a representation of Asherah, and he's supposed to go cut these down. And he's a little nervous about this, so he gets 10 of his friends and they go out at night, and they knock down the altar, they cut down the Asherah, and then the people get up in the morning in the town and say, "Hey, what happened? Who's come in and messed up our altar and wrecked the Asherah?"

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:20:13 Verse 29, "Who has done this?" And word gets out obviously, that it's Gideon, and so they say to his father in verse 30, "Bring him out, we're going to kill him." And his father, fortunately, stands up for him. Verse 31, "And Joash, the father of Gideon, says to all who sit around him, "Will you plead for Baal? Can't he take care of himself? If somebody comes and wrecks his altar, can't Baal do something about this? Who's appointed you to come and act for him?" The middle of that verse 31, "Let him plead for himself, or contend for himself, because somebody cast out his altar."

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:20:51 Verse 32, "Therefore on that day, they called him, Gideon Jerub-Baal, because saying let Baal plead against him." So Jerub-Baal, the literary explanation is, let Baal plead, right? So as we read along, we've got Gideon and Jerub-Baal, two different names for the same person, that's the origin of the name Jerub-Baal as is presented to us.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:21:15 Verse 34, "The Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon," there's our sign that the Lord's going to be with him to magnify him. He calls people from Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali in verse 35, as well as Manasseh, so there were four tribes, but there are 12 tribes. Again, this seems to be a regional activity, not everybody together. And they're ready to fight, but he's still not quite sure he can do this.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:21:41 So verse 36 Gideon says, "If you will save Israel by my hand, give me a sign." Verse 37, "I'll put the fleece out, the sheepskin, the wool fleece out on the floor, and if in the morning there's dew on the fleece but the ground is dry, then I'll know you really want me to do this and you'll help me do it, Lord." So what happens? It doesn't.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:22:05 Verse 39, Gideon said to God, "Don't be angry, don't let your anger be hot against me, I will speak unto you this once," I mean, one more time.

Hank Smith: 00:22:13 One more time.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:22:15 "Let me prove," and so here's Gideon saying, "Let me prove you this once with the fleece, let it now be dry only on the fleece but all the ground be dew." So we repeat the sign with a twist, and God did so verse 40 that night. It was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on the ground. So Gideon now feels like, "Okay, the Lord showed me he's going to be with me, let's go," and they gather to the spring of Harod, which is on the edge of the Jezreel valley, and this is the setup, right?

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:22:45 And you know the setup in Chapter Seven. This in an important chapter, Gideon ends up assembling thousands of men to fight against the Midianites, and what's the Lord say to him? Way too many-

Hank Smith: 00:22:57 Too many.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:22:57 ... people. I mean, that's a surprise, right? You'd want all the guys you could get I would think, right.

Hank Smith: 00:23:02 Usually you want to outnumber the enemy, yeah.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:23:04 So the Lord says way too many people, and the question is why does the Lord tell him to get rid of some of the fighters, fighting men?

Hank Smith: 00:23:10 People won't believe, they'll think it was them and not the Lord, right?

Hank Smith: 00:23:14 Exactly.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:23:14 Right.

Hank Smith: 00:23:14 Yeah.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:23:15 He said, "I don't want this to look like you did it yourselves, I want people to appreciate that I, the Lord, delivered Israel with you, but I'm the power behind this." And so you can read that, and there's the means he devises in Chapter five and following, right? That they put their heads down into the water to drink, that they lifted up into their hands to lap it out of their hands, and they separate 300 out of that into verse six and verse seven.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:23:46 The Lord says to Gideon, "By the 300 men that lap, I will save you." All right, so again, this is all presented as if it's the Lord who's doing the ultimate delivering as the ultimate power, "I'm going to save you from the Midianites." And so Gideon still is a little nervous, and so that night he's told to go down to the camp, to the Midianite camp, "And if you're really worried, take your buddy with you."

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:24:11 Verse 10, "If you fear to go down, take Purah, your servant with you," and so he does, and the two of them sneak into the Midianite camp and overhear these two Midianites talking, "Well, I had a dream." Verse 13, "When Gideon was come, behold there was a man that told the dream to his fellow, and

said, "Behold, I dreamed a dream," this is standard Hebrew grammar, right? We hear it in the book of Mormon as well. "A cake of barley tumbled into the host of Midian, and came into the tent and knocked down the tents."

- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:24:38 And this fellow says at verse 14, here's the interpretation, "This is nothing except, it's the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel, and God is going to help him deliver the Israelites from the Midianites."
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:24:50 So Gideon goes back and thinks, okay this is the fourth time he's a sign of some sort, that God is going to be with him, right? So he gets everybody, his men together, the 300, they divide into three groups, and you know the story. They have trumpets, it says trumpet, the Hebrew word is shofar, this is the ram horn that they've turned into a horn to blow, in one hand and they have a clay pitcher with a torch in it in the other hand.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:25:16 And what's interesting here is, they don't have any weapons. If you've got both hands occupied, you don't have your sword, you don't have your arrows, you don't have your dagger, you've got the trumpet, the shofar, and you've got the pitcher as it says, the jar with the torch in it, the light, and that's it. Whose going to do the fighting? Well, it's God that's going to do the fighting, as we read the stories.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:25:35 So he says, "I'm going to blow the trumpet and break the jar and it'll be light, and you do the same thing all at the same time, and we're all going to shout." The end of verse 14, the sword of, and sword of is in italics, because that's not in the Hebrew text here. "It's for Yahweh, Jehovah and Gideon."
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:25:55 And then we get down to the end of verse 20 where they actually do this, and they all cry out, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." Well, Gideon apparently doesn't have a sword, but the point is it's the Lord whose got the weaponry, the power, and all the host of the Midianites are afraid. They think there are way more than 300 Israelites, and they take off and Gideon and his men follow them and kill them along the way, and he's victorious is the point of this, or God helps him to be victorious, and they to be victorious, them.
- Hank Smith: 00:26:27 Well, I liked where you kept saying, you said, he needs reassurance, and the Lord gives him reassurance. He is someone so far, that his faith has a short shelf life, right? That he has these reassurances, he feels excited, and then it kind of wanes quickly I guess. That doesn't seem to be a bad thing.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:26:48 Yeah, yeah. It may wane, it may just... For him it wasn't sufficient to keep going. I can remember going way back when I was in love with the woman who became my wife and I became her husband, I thought... I said, "Lord, I really love Jane, but is this a good thing? Is this what you want? Is this going to be productive for her and for me? Is it a good thing?" And I got a good feeling about it and a week or two later I'm in the temple and saying, "You know, I know I've asked this before Lord, but would you bless us in this relationship? Is this a good thing?"

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:27:24 I can't tell you how many weeks I must have offered that same prayer, and the answer was always yes, but I just wanted a little more assurance. I guess I was nervous, fairly young, and I guess I'm not alone in having had some experience similar to that where people have said, "Lord, let me ask you one more time, what do you think about this? Are you okay with this?" So yeah, I get that, I get that.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:27:49 Other lessons, the Lord is merciful and willing to work with him. He's been chosen, so the Lord doesn't just throw him out the door. He hasn't done anything completely haywire way off the rails, he's not out in the weeds somewhere. He's trying to do what the Lord's asked him to do, but he needs that extra assurance, that extra strength, and the Lord's willing to work with him. I think that's a great lesson.

Hank Smith: 00:28:11 I like Chapter six where he says, "Who am I, I am a nobody, but the Lord sees a mighty man of valor." Well, that's often how you might see yourself, "Who am I, I'm a nobody?" And the Lord said, "Oh, you just watch."

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:28:24 I can make more of you than you can make of yourself, kind of a thing.

Hank Smith: 00:28:26 Than you can make of yourself, yeah.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:28:27 Yeah. And we have other examples of that in scripture as well, we've already read Moses, but we'll see others as well. I like the part we just read in Chapter seven. Ultimately, it's the Lord who's going to fight our battles and help us to be successful in our mortal life. Back in the '70s maybe, Elder Hanks gave a talk on the sword of the Lord and of Gideon, and used this chapter.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:28:48 But the sense that it's the sword of the Lord and of Gideon, well, who's the major power here? It's the Lord, and if we bind ourselves to the Lord through covenant, and if we remain in that covenant relationship, and covenants are all about

relationships and the way we're talking here in the Bible, you're in the relationship with Jehovah alone, or you're bringing other gods into the relationship and messing up that primary relationship.

- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:29:12 But here, in a relationship with the Lord, he's got the power to deliver us. I mean, I have that trust that the Lord will overcome everything eventually. The passage in Isaiah that gets picked up in Revelation about dry every tear from our eyes. I mean, I accept that, so I trust that the Lord can deliver me even though we have challenges, and problems, and accidents, and hardships, and heartbreaks, and all kinds of things along the way.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:29:36 So if I'm looking for applications, those are two that I need some reassurance, and I trust that God will ultimately deliver all of the faithful children of His here on the earth.
- John Bytheway: 00:29:48 Just in the manual it makes a little comment about looking at Judges six through eight, it says, to receive the Lord's miracles in our lives, we must trust in his ways, even when his ways seem unusual. All of us have gone through something where we've looked back and went, "Whoa, oh, I was really being helped or guided back then, and I didn't realize it." That's how a faith-building pattern has been for me to look back and go, "Wow, I was being helped back then, I thought it should have come out like this, but it turned out being better."
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:30:16 We've already mentioned this passage earlier, but let me just focus as we drive by here. Chapter 8:22 and 23.
- John Bytheway: 00:30:22 The drive by scripture study.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:30:23 Yeah, sadly. "The men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us." You've led us to victory, we're successful, you're the man. You rule over us, and we'll set up a dynasty for your son and your son's sons because of what you've been able to accomplish." And he says in verse 23, "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you, the Lord," this is Jehovah, "shall rule over you." Gideon says, "This is not the time to start a monarchy, the Lord is still our King and we're going to keep this religious/family-based kingdom of his going."
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:30:57 Now, it doesn't last for long. Already in the next chapter, somebody's going to try the monarchy out. But so you think, "Yeah, good for you."

Hank Smith: 00:31:06 I noticed that as soon as Gideon is dead, the children of Israel turned again and remembered not the Lord their God. So we're back to our cycle here at the end of eight.

John Bytheway: 00:31:16 Yep.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:31:17 Correct, yes. We get the program notes telling us the cycle continues. Chapter nine is a little bit of a detour, we hear about a fellow named Abimelech, he's the son of Gideon who has 70 sons. And this fellow is the son of Gideon through a concubine and he decides he's got his mother's from Shekham and he's got connections, and so he decides, "My dad doesn't want to be king, I'd be happy to be king." And here's a warning as well.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:31:45 This wasn't part of the reading, but whenever somebody wants to be king, you have to step back and wonder.

Hank Smith: 00:31:50 Yeah.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:31:51 So he gets some of the Shekhamites to help him and proclaim him king, and he thinks he kills all of his stepbrothers, the 70 sons, or at least 69 of the sons of Gideon, but one gets away. His name is Jotham, and he runs up on the mountain by Shekham, this is verse seven, chapter nine verse seven, and shouts out this parable, an anti-monarchy message and he's saying, "If you make this guy a king, it's going to come back to bite you."

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:32:15 And it does in the story. The Shekhamites have problems because of this, and eventually Abimelech at the end of chapter nine is in military action, and a woman on a tower throws down part of a millstone, and it breaks his skull and he dies. And here's, sad to say, but we're living in a patriarchal society that looks at women sort of as second class in many contexts, so here at the end of verse 54, Abimelech who's just had his skull bashed in, says to his armor bearer, "Take your sword out and kill me, so it won't be said that a woman slew me. I don't want to die at the hand of a woman."

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:32:53 Now, Sisera, didn't have a chance to say that back at the end of chapter four, when Yaal killed him.

Hank Smith: 00:32:59 He got taken through the temple.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:33:01 Chapter 10 and 11 were not part of the suggested reading in Come Follow Me. Chapter 11 has a story that I love, because it's a problematic account that's related here. When I say love it's not because it's nice and warm and fuzzy by any means, but it's

thought provoking I think. And I often spend time with students on this, it's the story of Jephthah the Gileadite, Gilead is the region east of the Jordan River valley. He's the son of a harlot, we hear in chapter 11 verse one, so already we're supposed to think his social status is lesser. And he's not treated well by his family, but oh, there's oppression and everybody knows Jephthah is a really talented guy in battle, so let's get Jephthah to help deliver us from the Ammonites.

- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:33:52 Verse 30, "And Jephthah vowed a vow under the Lord, under Jehovah and said, "If you will without fail, if you will certainly deliver the children of Ammon into my hands when I go out to fight them,"
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:34:04 and again, with other help, then it shall be that whatsoever. Some translations render it, whosoever, comes forth from the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from fighting the Ammonites, surely that shall be the Lords and I will offer it up as a burnt offering." And this has a fairly well known passage. So he vows this vow, "Whatever comes out of my house first, I give it to the Lord as a burnt offering." And the Hebrew word really is Ola. It's the word that's used for burnt offering throughout Genesis, throughout Exodus, throughout the rest of the Bible. There's no question what he's talking about. So he goes off and he fights verse 32 and following, and everything's grand. We don't hear much about the fighting, but he's successful in subduing the Ammonites.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:34:45 Verse 34, Jephthah came to Mizpah unto his house. This is not the Mizpah north of Jerusalem, is another Mizpah over east of the Jordan river, unto his house and behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and dancing and singing. He's all excited. Dad has come home. He's in one piece, he's healthy, he's successful. She's celebrating. And his response, verse 35, rents his clothes in distress and says, "Alas, my daughter, you have brought me very low. You are the one who troubles me. I open my mouth unto the Lord and I can't go back." Our standard explanation is that these folks were living in houses that had little courtyards and open areas into the house. They're called pillared houses, three or four rooms, couple of rooms parallel in one in the back. And the chickens and goats and sheep would be wandering in and out of the house.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:35:36 And we typically say, "He's assuming that whatever animal comes out, I'm going to offer to the Lord. I don't care if it's the biggest or the best or what." But in this case, it's his daughter. And so she says, verse 36, "My father, if you've opened your mouth to the Lord do to me what you've promised him, but do

me this little favor. Let me have two months to go out on the hills and with my friends and hang out and say, gee, I'm never going to be married. I'm never going to have children." And that's what happens. Verse 39. At the end of two months, she returned to her father who did to her according to the vow, which she had vowed.

- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:36:11 Now it doesn't say he actually killed her and burned her body as a sacrificial offering, but that's the intent of the passage. Boy that makes us squeamish. And then so we some says, as well, maybe he really didn't do it. It just says he did it. I think the authors are expecting you'll believe that this is what he did. And so the question I always ask my students is did he do the right thing? Should he have kept his vow to the Lord? His daughter certainly supports him in doing that and she's going to die. Which is more important, taking a human life as an offering or keeping your promise to God?
- Hank Smith: 00:36:49 And to God who doesn't want human sacrifice.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:36:52 Let's go back to Deuteronomy 23 for one minute.
- Hank Smith: 00:36:55 Be more careful, Dana.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:36:58 Well, that's a lesson. Be more careful with what you vow for sure. And if you're going to enter into a sacred covenant or make a vow, make sure you know what you're doing for without a doubt. But look at there are a couple of passages we could read. We'll only read this one, Deuteronomy 23 versus 21 through 23. John, if you have that, you want to read that please?
- John Bytheway: 00:37:20 Yeah. When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord, thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee, and it would be sin in thee. But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee, that which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform, even a freewill offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the Lord thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:37:47 There's a context for that passage as well. You could also read, we won't look it up at Ecclesiastes, chapter five, verses I think it's two through five. And Ecclesiastes probably doesn't have quite the same authority as Deuteronomy does, but it says essentially the same thing. So my point is in the biblical tradition, Deuteronomy, Judges 11, Ecclesiastes 5, there's this sense that if you make a vow, you better do it. So I'm still back

to the question, did he do the right thing? Well, in their world, he feels bound by that. Now I am going to say, I don't think he did the right thing. But in his culture, in his religious world, that was the expectation.

- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:38:27 And even his daughter, as I said, is supportive of that. Lessons to be learned clearly be careful what you vow. In this case, we often say, he should have been more specific, whatever animal comes out, not whatever, whoever comes out from my door. Secondly, when we get to chapter 20, 21 at the end of Judges, if we get that far, it wasn't part of the reading in Come Follow Me. The Benjaminites something horrible happens in Gibeah, a town in Benjamin. It ends up provoking a war is the only time we hear about all the tribes together. The 11 tribes get together and almost wipe out Benjamin.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:39:04 And they have vowed a vow that they're not ever going to give their daughters to the Benjaminites. So they have to concoct a couple of different ways to help keep the surviving Benjaminite men alive and have spouses for them so they can marry and reconstitute the tribe of Benjamin. And so they say on the one hand, we've made this vow. We can't break the vow we've made, again, reflecting this mentality, but we're going to find another way around it. And so I often wonder if it worked for them at the end of Judges. Why couldn't it work for Jephthah in chapter 11 in the middle of the book of Judges. Find a way around this. You know what I meant, Lord, here's my best heifer.
- Hank Smith: 00:39:48 You know what I meant? And it wasn't that.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:39:50 Give it freely instead of my daughter. It's thought provoking, but it's worth considering the significance of the vows we make. And when we make a promise, are we that committed to doing what we have promised and following through, especially if we're talking promises or vows that we've made to the Lord.
- Hank Smith: 00:40:10 Absolutely. Yeah, it's a story I've never even heard.
- John Bytheway: 00:40:16 Hank, I've heard you joke about you don't like cats, your wife loves cats. So you compromised and now you have two cats, right?
- Hank Smith: 00:40:23 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:40:24 Maybe that's what he meant. Whatever comes forth out of the doors of my house to meet me, let it be whiskers. Let it be whiskers, right?

Hank Smith: 00:40:32 Yeah. Please, please say. Does Jephthah, does he just fundamentally misunderstand the Lord's character? He would say, "The Lord wouldn't want me to do this, I know him."

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:40:48 I think it's an analogous situation in Genesis 19. And when we get later to Judges 19 and 20 or hospitality, which is a great principle in their world. Premier principle, that if somebody's out on the street and needs a place to stay, you bring them into your house, you feed them, you put them up overnight, whatever. But in Genesis 19, and at the end of Judges, hospitality goes amuck. Just goes crazy where they're willing to do anything to support the principle of hospitality, even when it's the abuse of women. I see this as kind of the same, an example of kind of the same thing where, yeah, vowing a vow. You never break your vow. You keep it no matter what, but in this case, there had to be another way around this. Don't follow through and commit what I consider to have been a greater sin by killing his daughter. Yeah.

Hank Smith: 00:41:38 Strength becomes a weakness when you take it too far. Let's get to Samson.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:41:45 13 through 16 is about Samson. And interestingly, chapter 13, really isn't much about Samson at all. It's about his parents and the divine interaction that relates to promises about his birth. It's worth reading that carefully. Again, we're talking in this case about Danites, but if we look at chapter 13, verse one, children of the Lord did evil, we're back to the cycle. Here's the formula. Again, in the sight of the Lord and the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines 40 years. So the Philistines are non-semitic people living in the Southeast coast of the Mediterranean sea. They've been in the area probably only about 100 years or less by this time. Nonetheless, they're moving from the coast up into the valleys.

Dr. Dana Pike: 00:42:29 The Israelites are trying to move into the valleys down towards the coast, because the land's so nice. And the Philistines are bothering the Danites who get this little segment of territory off to the side of Judah, an angel of the Lord, verse three. And again, it's the Hebrews messenger. You have to wait and find out is he a divine messenger or a human messenger, but comes and finds this woman who turns out to be the mother of Samson and said, "You're barren, but you're going to bear. You shall conceive and bear a son." Verse four. Now, here's the

catch, "Beware, don't you drink any wine or strong drink or eat anything unclean." This is unclean according to the mosaic law, right. What's ritually accepted, or not ritually accepted in law.

- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:43:12 Verse five. You will conceive. No razor shall come upon his head for the child shall be a Nazarite from birth or from the womb. And he will begin, and here's the qualifier, right, he will begin to deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines. Now, Samson doesn't succeed in accomplishing that, Saul doesn't succeed in accomplishing that. This is an ongoing process, but he's going to be part of that. And so she tells her husband, "Hey, I had this experience. This man of God, this messenger of God came and kind of looked angelic, divine. And he gave me this promise that we're going to have a baby. And he's supposed to be a Nazarite from the womb. When he comes out he's considered a Nazarite." So we could stop and say, what's a Nazarite? You may recall back in Numbers six.
- Hank Smith: 00:43:59 We talked about this just a little bit, but I would love for you just to, it was a way for non-Levites to commit themselves to the Lord. Is that right?
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:44:08 Yeah. In Numbers six, we've got as part of the Mosaic instructions, the Lord says, "If people want to put themselves in an extra sacred relationship with me for a certain time," and it's depicted there as relatively temporary. Latter-day Saints like to use the analogy of full-time missions. I'm going to commit myself full- with the Lord for a couple of years. And when I'm done, then I go back to regular life. There's sacrificial offerings that are supposed to conclude the Nazarite vow. When you step out of that extra dedicated or set apart status of devotion to the Lord, it doesn't mean you're more or less devoted, but you're putting yourself in a certain status and you agree not to do certain things, right. So the three things that are mentioned in Numbers six are you won't cut your hair. You won't drink wine or strong drink or eat any of the grape vine products. And you won't touch dead people, which would render you ritually unclean. Those are the three that are mentioned. Here, we've got an unusual situation where Samson's mother is told that Samson was a baby and through his whole life, whether he wants to or not is going to be a Nazarite and expected to be living by these restrictions. And in the accounts that follow it's only the hair that really is the restriction that has the most importance attached to it. He touches the dead lion. He drinks wine, nothing seems to happen, but in his case, it's the hair that's the secret of his strength. That's that connection to the Nazarite vow. Verse 24, the woman has a son. They call his

name Samson. The spirit of the Lord began to move upon him. And we're already from Samson baby to Samson, adult.

- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:45:51 And chapter 14, he's gone down to Timnah and sees one of the Philistine women and says, "Yeah, I want to marry her." And true to his culture, he goes back to his parents and says, "Arrange this marriage for me. I don't know much about her, but she's good looking. And she's a Philistine. So what, I should be marrying an Israelite in my culture that would be expected." His parents say to him, "Aren't there nice Israelite girls among the Danites that you could marry?" "No, I want her." And so they make the arrangement and the story goes on, but this is his wife. He goes off. This is the story of the wedding feast that lasts for a week. And he tells a riddle and says, "If you can't guess my riddle you'll give me 30 outfits. And if you guess my riddle, I'll give you 30 outfits of clothing."
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:46:40 And the Philistines are saying, "Yeah, we don't want to be in debt to this guy, but we can't figure out the riddle he's given." Kills a lion and he goes back and sees it later. And the Carcass of the lion is this beehive, a swarm of bees and the honey. And it's sweet. And that becomes the basis for this riddle that he tells at the feast beginning in chapter 14 verses 10 and following. And they can't figure it out. So they press on his Philistine wife to get Samson to tell her the answer to the riddle so that she can tell them so that he'll lose the wager instead of them losing the wager. And on the seventh day, it's announced that they figured it out what, this is the end of verse 18, what is sweeter than honey and what is stronger than a lion. He's upset.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:47:24 For the Lord, again, it's attributed to divine action. The spirit of the Lord comes upon him and he goes down to Ashkelon, one of the major Philistine cities kills 30 people takes their outfits and brings them back and said, "Here, paying the wager." Well, of course they're upset. They're upset because 30 Philistines have died in the process. He leaves there and goes back to his home for a while. His father-in-law gives his wife to a Philistine guy. He comes back later and finds out. He's upset. This is all high drama here. And you're supposed to be thinking what's with this guy? How did he get to be a judge and have the spirit of the Lord come upon him? Or in chapter 15 and he catches 300 foxes and took, it says fire brands. It's torches, right. So he ties two foxes together, their tails together with a torch in the middle.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:48:11 So you got 150 pair of foxes running around with torches, through all of the fields. And they burn the corn. As it says in verse five. I hope by now, after Joseph in Egypt, everybody knows corn in King James means grain. It's not corn on the cob

like we think of it. So wheat and barley were the two most common grains in the ancient, near Eastern world, in the biblical world. And so it burns down there's stuff. And by the way, it burns some of the olive trees in the vineyard. So now the Philistines are upset because of what Samson's done. He was upset because of how he was treated, right. This is just this round and round. So he goes to a place and this is worth commenting just briefly in, over in Judah. And verse nine, the Philistines went up and pitched in Judah and spread themselves in Lehi.

- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:48:55 The Hebrew word is Lehi. It means Jawbone. It's the name of the place. And we find out why it's called that as we go along. But the men of Judah say to Samson, "Listen, we don't want the Philistines beating up on us because of you. So we're going to tie you up and turn you over to them. We won't hurt you, but we'll give you to them." And that's what he agrees to. Verse fourteen's, he's come to Lehi. The Philistines shouted against him. The spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him. He broke the flax bands with which he was bound. Verse 15, and he found a new jawbone, of an axe. He found a Lehi of an ass, a donkey, and put forth his hand and took it and slew a thousand of the Philistines with it. And Samson said with a jawbone of an axe, heaps upon heaps, probably heaps of bodies, right.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:49:41 With a jawbone of an ax, have I slain a thousand men? It's like, well, all in the day's labor, right. A thousand guys have lost their lives here. And I want to pause here. I always do this with students. I was coming out of a family therapist office one time and I happened to see this on the wall. And again, it's not a funny context, but it's a clever use of this scripture. So this is what the sign said on the wall in this therapist's office, "Samson slew 1000 Philistines with a jaw bone of an ax." Judges 15. Every day, thousands of relationships are destroyed with the same weapon, with a jaw bone of a donkey in a relationship. Right. So, okay.
- Hank Smith: 00:50:21 Keep your jaw closed, John. I'm glad I didn't use that as your adjective today.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:50:28 The chapter 15 ends with, he's thirsty. He says to the Lord, "Don't let me die of thirst. I've been trying to defeat the Philistines." So God creates a spot in the valley there, and water comes out and he names it the spring of calling out. Right. The one who calls out for God's help. So this is about the only time where Samson actually, as its depicted. We always have to say that, where he calls on God for help. The rest of the time, this is

just Samson doing his own macho thing. And again, this picture is much different from some of the other judges, right.

- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:51:03 He doesn't call other tribes for help. He doesn't call anybody for help. He's just doing his own thing, not all that successfully in the long run. And then the rest of the 16, then, is about Delilah. It never actually says that she marries him or that he marries her. It never actually says, is she a Philistine? But we assume she's a Philistine, and he loves her. And this is the first time and the only time, this is Chapter 16, Verse 4, came to pass after all these escapades, that he loved a woman in the Valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. And it's really the only time we hear about Samson loving somebody, other than himself.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:51:39 The Philistine leaders say, "We're going to do this scenario again, like with his wife at the first. Find out from him how he's so strong and what we can do to defeat him." And so three times, "We'll give you a lot of money if you help us out."
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:51:52 And so three times she asks, and he makes up something and says, "Samson, the Philistines are on you." And he hops up and breaks the bands. She keeps pressing on him. After the third time, finally we're in Chapter 16, Verses 15. "How can you say I love you when your heart isn't with me? You've mocked me. You've lied to me these three times." Verse 16, it came to pass when she pressed him daily with her words for who knows how long and urged him. His soul was vexed unto death.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:52:21 He just said, "What's the point of living? This is just more than I can take." So he tells her, Verse 17, all his heart explains the Nazarite vow, can't cut my hair. If I do my strength is gone. She realizes that he has told her all her heart.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:52:37 So she rings up the Philistines, as if she had a phone, and said, "He's told me all his heart. I know this time this is the truth." And so they come, and she helps, and they cut his hair off that night. And he jumps up, and he's got no strength, and the Philistines gouge out his eyes and take him down to Gaza, where he had ripped the gates out and taken them away. And he's put in the prison house, helping to push a grinding stone around to grind the grain. His hair starts to come back, and after a while they're having a big party at the Temple Dagon, a grain god. And hey, what happened to that guy named Samson? Let's bring him in, and let's make fun of him. Let's mock him. Let's see if he's as strong as he used to be. And so they tie him up to the two central pillars that are holding the upstairs up, and you know the story.

- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:53:25 This is Chapter 16, Verse 28. Samson calls out, "Lord God." Here we have him calling to the lord again. "Remember I pray just this one more time. Give me strength to avenge myself against the Philistines, who've gouged out my eyes." He's tied up. He exerts his strength. Verse 30, and he pulls down the pillars. All the people fall down from upstairs and onto the people that are downstairs. And the dead, which he slew at his death, were more than those that he slew in his lifetime. So he kills, what, 2 or 3,000 people here at the end. And that's the end of the Samson story.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:54:01 And so we can ask the same questions. What lessons could you possibly learn out of that, Doctrine & Covenants Section 3, Verses 3 and 4. "Remember, remember that is not the work of God that is frustrated but the work of men", people. "For when a person may have many revelations, powers to do mighty works, yet if they boast in their own strength and set at not the councils of God and follow after the dictates of their own will and carnal desires, they must fall and incur the vengeance of a just god upon themselves." For me that connects with Samson. Samson is a tragic figure. We're going to have lots of tragic figures in the Bible, but here's one. Blessed from birth with strength and opportunity, promises, a calling. And at least, again, the way he's depicted in Judges, the carnal, the worldly, the ... I do my own thing. I don't care so much about other people, especially about women, even about Israelites. Definitely I don't care about Philistines, right? Just kill a few here, kill 1,000 there, whatever. Or it's a portrayal of a sad, tragic person, follows after his own will and carnal desires, must fall. And he fell literally under the load of the second floor of the temple.
- Hank Smith: 00:55:12 Yeah, I was going to say marry well. To go back to Chapter 14, when his parents said, "Maybe you could marry in the covenant. How about that?"
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:55:19 We've seen this, but many of the lessons in the Book of Judges and elsewhere are negative examples. Hopefully we're learning from negative examples that have been provided for us.
- Hank Smith: 00:55:29 I think the manual talks about strength comes from your covenants. Samson lost both his physical strength and his spiritual strength, because he violated his covenants.
- John Bytheway: 00:55:39 I like what you brought in, though, about section three, because that's the loss of the 116 page manuscript. And it was a mistake, and it was wrong, and the Lord taught a lesson there. Here we're looking at this. All right, what can we be taught here?

That's a great footnote. I'm going to put that at the end of this story. Otherwise you're kind of like okay, nice story. What do I do with that?

- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:56:01 It doesn't say, and thus we see, right? We're supposed to be able to extract the moral to the story, but it takes a little time to think about it. And different people, depending on what they bring to this story, are going to see different things, resonate with different things. But there are some life lessons to be learned.
- Hank Smith: 00:56:19 Judges finishes with saying a couple of times, "In those days there was no king. Every man did that which was right in his own eye." That just sounds like Samson. Do what's right in your own eyes. Samson, that's kind of his motto in life, I'll do what I think is right.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:56:34 Yes, yes. Tragically, you see the outcome of that kind of approach to life, where covenant community doesn't seem to be valued, where personal commitments to covenants does not seem to be valued. I mean you could argue, did he want to be a Nazarite? Did his parents raise him saying, "Hey, God says you're going to be a Nazarite?"
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:56:53 Sometimes people grow up in Latter-day Saint homes and say, "This isn't for me. I'm going to choose a different way." And they may not be so wild and crazy as Samson turns out to be, but people choose different paths. On the one hand, it's easy to knock Samson. On the other hand, I'm going to try to have a little respect for a person who chooses to go another direction for whatever reason they choose. I'm glad that we believe in a spirit world, and I hope he has had plenty of time to reflect and repent and to come around, according to as we understand things. Fortunately that's not the end of life.
- Hank Smith: 00:57:32 There's very little humility. If you maybe put Samson next to Gideon, Gideon, who needs reassurance, Samson seems to need zero reassurance. Yeah, he runs his own show. So there's an important lesson there.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:57:47 As we mentioned, that's the end of the Judges stories in the Book of Judges.
- Hank Smith: 00:57:51 And then you said there was an appendix, right?
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:57:53 Chapter 7, yeah. That's what it typically gets called. Chapter 17 and 18 narrate a story, and then 19, 20, 21 narrate another

story, and that's the end. But very much in this case religious perversion, we would say. So you can read about all of that, and along the way multiple times, as you've already noted and including the very last verse of the Book of Judges, 21, Verse 25. In those days there was no king in Israel. Everybody did what was right in their own eyes. There's no human king, and that's the setup for the monarchy that's coming in 1 Samuel. But there's also not a whole lot of allegiance to the heavenly king, Jehovah, either.

- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:58:35 And so you've got these despicable accounts, I mean just terrible accounts of people doing terrible things to other people, are designed, I think, as we've said before, we need a human institution to help with our challenges but also designed to show us that, if we leave Yahweh, Jehovah, our heavenly king, look what becomes to us?
- Hank Smith: 00:58:57 Things spiral.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 00:58:57 And there are some scripture passages and teachings that say, It's one thing if you just don't live well. But if you make covenants to live well, and then you turn against the lord and violate your covenants, one, you, your life is often worse. And two, your judgment is more severe, because you're violating the promises, divine promises that you've made to a divine being. So bad things have happened, and again, this illustrates over and over that Deuteronomistic principal that's also in the Book of Mormon. If you keep the commandments of the lord, you're obedient, you're faithful, you'll prosper in the land, and God will help you. And if you don't, he won't. And I know that's really black and white and can be fudged all kinds of ways, but there is an underlying principle there that really has something to teach us. And it shows up again and again in the scriptures.
- Hank Smith: 00:59:49 I've heard it called the doctrine of retribution. It shows up in the Book of Mormon a lot. I was thinking, as we've been looking at these chapters, about the idea of the god of the Old Testament seeming harsh. And I'm going, well the people seem pretty harsh too. So he was dealing with them in the same measure of harshness they were dealing with each other, perhaps.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 01:00:10 It is a hard book. And again, as I said, most of the lessons we learn are from negative examples, some positive. In talking about divine justice or divine retribution, what have you, could I read this quote? I found this when I was doing an article on Micah. It just expressed nicely. It's by a fellow named Daniel Simonson writing a commentary on the Book of Micah.

Dr. Dana Pike: 01:00:31 Consider prophecies in Micah about bad things happening in the future, and I just like the way he expressed this. I'm sure you probably have thought about this, but this is his statement. "A god who is never angry would be a god who has no compassion and no empathy for those who suffer at the hands of others. God's anger is the other side of God's love and concern. To be in a relationship with a god who truly cares about people and what they do means running the risk that god may sometimes be angry. The good news is that the anger is never the last word." And when I read that, I really stopped and thought.

Dr. Dana Pike: 01:01:11 I said, "Yeah, I mean I get angry at other people for doing bad things to my kids or my grandkids or whatever."

Dr. Dana Pike: 01:01:16 And he doesn't use the word, covenant, but he says, "to be in a relationship with a god who cares about people." We can easily say to be in a covenant relationship with God involving sacred promises, understand that when I other people break those sacred promises, there're going to be consequences. It would be nice to say God never gets upset. He never gets angry, whatever. But the way at least scripture and prophets depict God, we have plenty of examples where this is the case, that God's justice is going to come into play, or the principal of justice comes into play. And even in the Book of Mormon, in Alma we're taught that mercy can't rob justice. Now Jesus provides a way to meet the demands of justice, but everyone does not take advantage of that opportunity. So again, a god who's never angry would be a god who doesn't have compassion or empathy for those who suffer at the hands of others. And the Old Testament has plenty of examples of stories of people who suffer at the hands of others.

Hank Smith: 01:02:15 Before we let you go, let me ask you a question. Here you are. You're a Bible scholar, one of the best I know and a believing Latter-day Saint. How have those two worlds come together for you? I think our listeners are interested in ... Here is someone highly educated, well studied. I think our listeners would be just a little bit interested in that story. I know you come from New England, convert to the church.

Dr. Dana Pike: 01:02:40 I was 12 when my family joined the church. So I studied the Hebrew Bible, ancient Jerusalem studies in school. I learned lots of tools, theories, approaches, how to deal with this, how to think about that, that would be part of anybody's Biblical studies program. Some people come out of that thinking wow, I never heard of this before. I guess it's true, and I was believing the wrong thing, so I'm out of here. Some people come through and say, and hopefully this is me, "I see some valuable tools

here. I don't have to take the whole perspective." I had professors who were agnostic. I had professors who were atheists. I had professors who were believing Jews. My main professor, Jeff Tige, would put on his yarmulke every time we opened the scriptures and read, because that was in his faith tradition, a sign of respect for the holy word of God as he had it and accepted it. What's helpful, what's important to me, I mean thinking about redactors, thinking about other kinds of things. I didn't grow up thinking about that.

- Dr. Dana Pike: 01:03:43 I learned about those kinds of things, perspectives that people have and putting the text together, or the text isn't perfect. It's got corruptions in it as it's been transmitted. I mean there's a whole host of different things to think about in relation to studying any scripture text, even modern, almost 200-year-old scripture texts like the Doctrine and Covenants. There're questions we should be asking ourselves. I guess in my personal experience, my faith is what is the most important thing. My wife and I have said this to each other. Our relationship with the Lord is the most important thing in our life. You're next as my spouse, and then everything else proceeds out from there, the kids, the grandkids, occupation, ward callings, what have you. But first and foremost, it's the Lord and me in that covenant relationship that I've mentioned now, it feels like 100 times in this broadcast. And everything grows from that. Listen, I know people who went to graduate school and lost their faith. For me, academics, the academic approach has a lot of value. But it's not an either or. Doctrine and Covenants is full of this.
- Dr. Dana Pike: 01:04:48 Take from the best books and study history and geography and learn languages and all these things, learn even by study and by faith. The Doctrine and Covenants is full of divine injunctions to see what's in the world and to have the Holy Spirit as your guide to choose what's good and helpful and productive, beneficial and to separate between what's good and what's not and to choose the good and to reject the rest. I've tried to have that as my course in life and am grateful to the blessings that have come to me because of that.
- Hank Smith: 01:05:22 You have certainly inspired me for many years, and I'm sure have inspired many today with your depth of knowledge and your faithfulness. Both of them are incredibly impressive.
- Hank Smith: 01:05:35 Well, we loved it. We are so grateful that we've got to spend time with Dr. Dana Pike today. Wow. What a great day. We want to thank our executive producers, Steve and Shannon Sorensen. We love you. And our sponsors, David and Verla

Sorensen. And we hope all of you please join us next week on another episode of followHIM.

WHY IS WHO I HANG OUT WITH SO IMPORTANT?



- Hank Smith: 00:05 Hello, everyone. Welcome to this week's followHIM Favorites. If you've been following this year, you know that John and I take a single question from this week's lesson to use as our followHIM Favorite. This week, we are in the Book of Judges. The question this week is about Samson and how important it is to date well, to marry well, to surround yourself with good influences. Does it matter who my friends are and who I date and who I marry? How much does it matter? I think the story of Samson can answer that dramatically. Don't you, John?
- John Bytheway: 00:42 It's a tough one to talk to kids about, taking a hard look and saying, "Do I need to change my friends?" I love that word that you use, Hank, the influences. And you know the example I like to use with teenagers is driving. Because they're all very excited about getting their driver's license and stuff. If you're in somebody else's car, you're going where they're going. Are you an influencer or are you influenced? And President M. Russell Ballard said once, "We must influence more than we are influenced." Really requires a bit of honesty to say, "What are my friends doing to me?". Are they taking me where I want? Are we all helping each other get where we want?" If my friend's driving the car, it's okay, because we both want to go to a good place or not. So, it's a great question. Do I influence or am I influenced?
- Hank Smith: 01:28 Excellent. Yeah. There's only, that I know of, three people in scripture who had their birth announced by an angel. Two of them are well-known, John the Baptist and Jesus. The third is Samson. It's Samson. And nobody could pick him out, right? When I asked, no one could pick him out. Why, what happens? I think Samson's major downfall comes early in his life when he says "I want to marry someone who is not of my faith". And his parents try to say, "Is there someone of our faith you could marry?" and he decides, "No, I'm not going to do that." And then things kind of just keep spiraling there with the people that, because of this marriage, the people he's surrounded by, bring about his downfall.

Hank Smith: 02:13 So, it does matter who you are surrounded by, who you date, and who you marry. We would love to say, "Oh no, it doesn't matter. Life will be the same, no matter what." And by the way, when you do switch friends or switch when you decide to end a relationship, we're not saying those people are evil. You don't have to go through your friend group and go, Telesstial, Telesstial, outer darkness, Telesstial, you don't have to do that. You can just say, look, this situation is not good for me. This circumstance, it just does not work. So I hope the Lord will take care of you. I hope good things for you, but I cannot stay here. Do you remember in the Book of Mormon? There's this point where King Noah can do the right thing. Do you remember this? King Noah can do the right thing and let Abinadi go. And he was about to do it.

John Bytheway: 03:00 And he gets influenced...

Hank Smith: 03:02 His priests. His friends. They push him to do the wrong thing. How crucial it is, John, to surround yourself by people who are going to hold you up instead of trying to pull you down.

John Bytheway: 03:13 It's a righteous desire. If you would like more influences, good influences in your life, pray for them. I just think it's a good thing to pray for. Heavenly Father, I need friends and I need friends who will strengthen what I believe or influence me in good ways. And I will try to influence them in good ways. And when I look at my own life and my children, it's one of the things I'm most grateful for is when I see they've got good friends, because they seem to go in good paths when they have good friends.

Hank Smith: 03:44 So we hope everybody listening, takes this seriously. Again, you don't have to be judgmental. So often we make this about, 'well, you're judging my friend'. 'You're judging my boyfriend'. 'You're judging my girlfriend'. That's not what this is about. This is you saying, what is the best situation for me in which I can live the gospel? Didn't you say, John, you love what Elder Hales ...

John Bytheway: 04:03 Oh yeah.

Hank Smith: 04:04 Used to say about a friend.

John Bytheway: 04:06 Yeah. Elder Robert D Hales. So this is going back. He was actually, I love this because he was a fighter pilot. Because I love airplanes. And the talk that he gave was called Return with Honor, because that was the motto for his squadron, I guess.

But in that talk, he just gave the best definition of a friend. I think I've ever heard. "A friend is someone who makes it easier to live the gospel of Jesus Christ". And I think he went on 'a friend will never ask you to choose between his way and God's way', it was some really great advice. A friend makes it easier. Hank, you're a friend because you never ask me to do things that would take me in bad paths. So we're friends because you make it easier for me to live the gospel by being around you. And that's a great definition for friendship.

Hank Smith: 04:52 Excellent. Absolutely excellent. So take a look, everyone listening, take a serious look, John and I are going to do it too. We're going to take a serious look at, at the influences in our lives. How influencing are we? How influenced are we? And see if we need to make a change there because we don't want to end up on the road to tragedy like Sampson does. It's a very sad story where if he just makes some changes early on, it could end up wonderfully. So it can be a wonderful lesson for us. If we want to end up in good places, we got to make some good decisions early on. John, I had a good talk with one of my sons the other day and I was getting a little bit nervous about some of the video games he was playing. It felt like they were getting a little edgy.

Hank Smith: 05:33 He and I had a good chat about it. I kind of left it at that. And I got a text from him later and he said, "Hey Dad, I think I'm going to delete all the scary and weird games. They just don't bring a good feeling into my life. I'm going to start playing more cheerful games that bring a brighter feeling into my life". He says "It might be hard, but I really think that's what I need to do. I've prayed about it. It's what needs to be done". Just a great little moment as a dad where you're going, that's wise right there. And as a parent, I wanted to come down and say, 'this is ending, this is over, you're not going to do this anymore', but I felt like let's trust the Lord. The Lord will talk to him, right? The Lord will guide him. So just to shout out to my boy for making a good decision on his influences

John Bytheway: 06:17 And Hank, I love what you said just then just, we're going to look at our influences, because it's not just people. It could be. You heard President Nelson talk about social media. Is social media a friend? Is the internet a friend? Are the movies I choose a friend? Are they making it easier for me to live the gospel? And so looking at all the influences, not just people, that's a great way to put it.

Hank Smith: 06:39 Awesome. Well, we hope you'll join us next week for followHIM Favorites. Come join us on our full podcast. It's called

followHIM. We are interviewing Dr. Dana Pike and we're going through the Book of Judges this week. I think you'll love it. Come on over and join us. And make sure to join us next week for another followHIM Favorites.