

# A Godless Generation

*Book of Judges*

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Let's look together in Judges 2 and I'm going to read for us from verse 6 down to verse 15 and speak with you about the rising of a godless generation. It says in Judges 2,

6 And when Joshua had let the people go, the children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land. 7 And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel. 8 And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old. 9 And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathheres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash. 10 And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers [here it is]: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. 11 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: 12 And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. 13 And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth. 14 And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. 15 Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed.

So what a transition we find here from the time of Joshua and the elders of Israel where it says there that so long as they lived that the LORD was with them and they served the LORD, but then as you read in verse 10, "there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD."

I believe there is, perhaps, an assumption that once a true Gospel witness has been established in any particular time or place that it is forever. This is the way that we tend to

think, "If I'm laying a good foundation, then the LORD will continue to bless and build upon that foundation for generations to come," and yet as we look at history, but also as we read the Scriptures, we find that that is not so. There are generations just as Ecclesiastes says, there's a time to be born and a time to die, there is a time to plant and there is a time to reap, but many times just like we are in anything in life that God ordains, we kind of dig in our heels because we don't like change, "I like it just the way it is," and that's the way I feel about this congregation, that's what I feel about how the LORD has raised up a witness here in Shreveport. I kind of like the way it feels when the LORD is pleased to gather people together and causes them to rejoice in the preaching of the Gospel, but that being said, we have to beware and certainly we have a number of examples in Scripture.

Look, for example, in Galatians 1:6 and when it says over here that so long as Joshua lived and the elders that outlived Joshua lived, that the people served the LORD, we don't want to imagine by that that everybody in that nation was the LORD's. We know that from Scripture, they weren't, but there was a witness. The LORD had preserved himself a Faithful witness that stood for the Truth and yet there were always tares among them, just like we find in the New Testament, where there is the wheat, there are tares among the wheat; there are tares where the wheat grows and those tares left to grow would soon overrun just like any garden you might have. You can sow a good seed in the garden but if you don't weed it, if you don't cultivate it, given time those weeds will overrun the good seed and certainly here in Galatians 1, Paul had been used of the LORD to preach in this particular area, Galatia, it's not a city, it's a whole region there in Asia Minor, and yet after he had been through and preached there, he says in verse 6, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel." The implication as you read the book is they had let in certain Judaizers with a mixed message. That's how it begins. None of this just happens overnight. When it says another generation that knew not the LORD, we're talking about a process of time and if you sit and calculate it, a generation could be anywhere from 20 to 40 years and as one dies off, the next is in, and we know this, we know this from raising our own children. If you don't in each generation continue to lay down the truth or to insist upon right and wrong, each generation will tend to go further. Given an inch, they'll take a mile. This is just the way the fallen nature is.

So Paul says, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel," but then he very clearly states in verse 7, "Which is not another," there is only one Gospel, "but there be some that trouble you," and here it is, "and would pervert the gospel of Christ." There is always an element of truth in error. If it were completely error, people would say, "That whole thing is a lie." It's like rat poison, 99% of it is rice so you look at it and think, "Well, that's pretty good." That's what attracts the rat but it's that 1% of arsenic that is put in there and mixed in it, imperceptible, not perceived, that kills the rat. So the Scriptures warn us against leaven, they warn us against erosion of the Truth. Here the word is used meaning 'to pervert the Gospel of Christ.' It's to take what is clearly revealed and to turn it on its head to make it something other, and that's really what the word 'another' signifies. Verse 6, when it says "unto another

Gospel," it's not talking about a Gospel here and a Gospel there but to transform it into something of a different nature, you see.

Look in 1 John 2:18-19, this was even while these apostles were yet alive and what I'm relating it back to in Judges 2 is even though it says that while Joshua was alive and while those elders were alive, that the people served the LORD, yet even as here with these apostles still alive, the undergirding of this apostasy was already there, already existing. We know that. Here in 1 John chapter 2 and verse 18, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." This is so characteristic of our religious generation, so many prophetic conferences are being held looking for who the antichrist is and so much is being speculated, and yet these very ones that organize these conferences don't realize that the very message that they're proclaiming is antichrist because it is a free-will, man-exalting mixture, they talk about Grace but they make it conditioned upon something man does. Nothing could be more antichrist and this is the sense here that John is saying, "even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." So no matter when we read this next generation, it still can be said even now are there many antichrists.

So it's to say even with Israel, when that next generation arose, the seed was already there, the fomenting was already there even as we read, they served Baalim, they served his doctrine which was basically, what? Doing something for a reward. That's basically what Baalim was all about. You know, you judge people's motives and we don't know the heart, but there are three reasons why natural men will attend congregations, even one such as ours where the Gospel is preached. Some out of guilt, guilt-driven. They come running like when I pulled up here a couple of weeks ago and there's a girl sitting with her back to the door here, I couldn't get by her, guilt-ridden and she said, crying, "I need you to pray with me." So as she talked out the situation, I could see that it was guilt that brought her to this door and yet when I told her we'd be meeting here within an hour and invited her to come back to hear the Gospel that she desperately needed to hear, she never came back. She went her way. But there are some that will continue to come guilt-ridden. I remember that dear lady in a nursing home a number of years ago, she would continue to come to the services there at the nursing home and yet it was over something that she had done many, many years prior but couldn't get over it so she kept coming back trying to rid herself of that guilt. That's one reason.

Another is because they seek men's company, men's favor. It's a social environment. How many people would prefer to come even here and sit on a Sunday morning rather than sit in a dark room back at their apartment or house? So it's an outlet. They come and they come to be seen of men, even as we read in the book of Jude, people do things to appear right before men and so they come.

The third reason why people come is somehow wanting a reward from God, "If I do this, then God's going to do this." Maybe it's not guilt but they're driven by reward, "If I can just witness to some people, then the LORD will bless me, or like you hear some people

say, "Well, I've done my good deed for the day," as if that's the one thing required, at least one good deed a day and somehow God will bless.

But none of those are reasons why we come, we come as needy sinners, those that the LORD has taught and I'm thinking of the Joshuas, I'm thinking of the Calebs among the children of Israel, that it's clear the Testimony of God was that they were the LORD's and what they did by His grace, they sought His glory and they knew their need and they continued to cry unto Him and look to Him. That's the wheat among the tares but let's don't kid ourselves, even as it says here, there are many among us. Sometimes we talk about 'out there' but the tares are among us and here he says in 1 John 2:19, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." We're surprised when we see somebody that completely leaves the Gospel and goes another way, we're surprised by it, we think, "How could that happen?" But here it's saying that they never were of us.

This past week, I received a private message because of something that I had posted on Facebook about someone else's son who had made a profession when they were younger and he had gone off to Afghanistan and when he came back, he came back complete agnostic, God-hater, just the complete opposite of what they thought, and this person was questioning, "How do you know whether one of your children is the LORD's or not?" They were agonizing over this complete rejection of everything they'd been raised and I simply had posted, "Well, one of two things. One, they never were the LORD's and the LORD is just showing and manifesting that they were rebels all along; that it was just nothing but a profession. Or, two, they might be the LORD's, if the LORD has redeemed them, they certainly are, and in that redemption, that's their salvation and in His time He'll draw them back like the prodigal son." That's really the only two options that there are but we can't judge by the outward. We can't draw conclusions by the outward other than to know that when you do see somebody go that way and they die in that unbelief, they never were the LORD's. It's not that they were saved and then they were lost, they were never the LORD's. They were simply among us for a while. So we see this even with Israel.

There are a lot of other verses that we could look at but 1 Corinthians 10 is one more and then I want to get back to draw some lessons from our portion in Judges. Look here in 1 Corinthians 10 and it says there in verse 5, "But with many of them," speaking of Israel, "God was not well pleased." Now this is parallel to what we've read over here in Judges 2:14 where it says, "the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel," and verse 15, "Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil," okay? So it's talking about these professors who were in reality idolaters living among the true Israel, those who were truly the LORD's, and that's what verse 5 relates to. But here it was even before getting into the land, "they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them." So you see the lusting after evil "things" is in italics, is related to idolatry, false worship. That's what it is. "Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink,

and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ." Now how do you tempt Christ but to take the things of Christ and make them a common thing, trample under foot the blood of Christ is the way the writer to the Hebrews put it; pervert the Gospel of Christ; add to it or take from it; anything that detracts from the singular exclusive glory of the LORD Jesus Christ is to tempt Christ.

The word "tempt" there means "to try," it's to put it under trial. Christ is not on trial and I can imagine in a courtroom some defendant starting to take the judge's word and pervert what the judge is saying, how long do you think the judge would tolerate it? I can imagine the gavel coming down immediately and the judge saying, "You are in contempt of this court for taking my words and perverting them that way." Well, if that's true on a human level, how much greater to tempt Christ and put Christ on trial and to say that his blood is not effectual? That's what men do when they say that Christ died for sinners who end up in hell anyway. That's putting Christ on trial. That would be like dragging Christ in the courtroom and saying he didn't get the job done. God forbid.

"As some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition," and again, that's always going to be in the present tense. I don't care if the next generation rises and reads this Scripture, it's going to be there for that generation, "these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." This is how I began. Let's don't imagine that this is just a word of instruction out there to these other congregations. Here we are, Shreveport Grace Church, let this Word be brought home even to our hearts, any of us hearing this right now, that we take heed lest thinking we stand, we fall.

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able." Notice the context of this verse. It's in the context of being drawn away to false worship. I hear it quoted all the time about, "Well, you've got to bear up because it's a tough trial." No, this has to do with daily being bombarded. I don't care whether it's on the radio, it could be a song you listen to and your emotions get the best of you and then you come back and stop and think, "Whoa, wait a minute. That's not a very good song, listening to the words," lest the heart be drawn away in that sense.

But it says here essentially God keeps His own, "but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." That right there shows that this matter of standing for the Gospel, standing for Christ in our generation is not easy, but it says that you might be able to bear it, bear up under it, not be moved off the Gospel. That's why verse 14 says, "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry." Whatever that idolatry is. But again, let's not imagine that it's out here, we carry the idolatry around in our heart and truly when the LORD causes you to see it's in here, the lusting of the flesh after the

works of the flesh, after even some self-glory, for any reason, that the LORD grant us to cry unto Him for repentance because it's a real enemy.

That's why Paul says, "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say." My dad always used to say that, "One word to the wise is sufficient." When he'd say that, that usually meant he wasn't going to repeat himself and if I tested him, that's what came back, a word to the wise is sufficient and such it is for us.

So come back here to Judges 2 and let me see if I can pull three particular thoughts for us to look at in this portion. How does a Godless generation come about? We know the danger but what is its progression? Well, the very first thought that the LORD gave me in studying this portion is this, that without a shepherd the sheep scatter and how we need the Shepherd. Joshua was a great type of the LORD Jesus Christ but he was a man and when he was removed, that's where we see the transition.

It says here in verse 7, "And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua." I think about the church, as goes the leadership, so goes the congregation. What is allowed in the leadership will be multiplied manifold in the congregation and so here as long as Joshua stood and these elders that the LORD had raised up to direct them in the things of the LORD, and notice, though, clearly in verse 7, this is an important thing here, "who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel." There is a seeing that the LORD gives to His people that they might serve Him. Eyes to see. Ears to hear. But look at the contrast over in verse 10, then, where "there arose another generation after them," notice, "which knew not the LORD." How does one know the LORD except for the LORD give them eyes to see?

But that's where it begins and, dear friends, this is where I come back to even our congregation. We can't sit on our laurels and imagine that just because the LORD keeps the doors open and the lights on, as goes the witness, in other words, as the LORD is over time if He's pleased to remove those as they die off, those that He's given eyes to see, it might be a generation of children and others that are raised up under but unless the LORD gives them eyes to see, it's going the way of all flesh. So that's why we pray that as different ones come into this congregation and come and sit and listen, we're thankful for those he brings out way but we pray that the LORD give eyes to see, we pray that they be caused to see, first of all, their lost estate but seeing that lost estate, to see the Savior, see the Redeemer, otherwise there's no knowing the LORD and the result will always be then a generation of apostates because of being lost, because of not knowing the LORD.

So that's the first point, without a shepherd the sheep scatter. If you look at a couple of verses, Isaiah 13, and some of this is so plain that it really doesn't require a lot of explanation other than just hear the word doing the speaking. But notice in Isaiah 13:14. The LORD says in verse 13, "Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger. And it shall be as the chased roe," and notice, "and as a sheep that no man taketh

up: they shall every man turn to his own people, and flee every one into his own land." Well, as a sheep that no man taketh up, that's a sheep without a shepherd.

Notice here in Judges 2, that wrath doesn't necessarily have to be fire from heaven. Here it's just simply, as it says there, the anger of the LORD in Judges 2:14, "was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them." You think about John 10 where the LORD said that all that came before Him were thieves and robbers. All He has to do is turn a congregation over to a hireling, it can be something as simple as that, and that hireling lead them down another path and thereby they be spoiled, "he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies." There it speaks of, I've heard and seen this happen, "He doesn't preach the Gospel but he's such a good speaker. You feel so good when you leave there. It just lifts your spirit and we need a change anyway, that other preacher, all he did was preach Christ, Christ, Christ but now we've got somebody that loves young people, he goes around and visits," all of this stuff that people start flocking after. Unbeknownst to them, they've been delivered over to their own reprobate mind. I pray God deliver us from that.

So that's the first thing I see. Secondly, here in verses 10 through 13 and there's a natural breakdown in these here, but where it says that there arose another generation after them which knew not the LORD, here's the thought that the LORD brought to mind and that is, without a vision people perish, where there is not a clear revelation of Christ. There can be a clear declaration of Christ but there has to be a revelation of Christ. Just like it says in the book of Hebrews, these had the Gospel preached unto them every day. There were still in the land emblems of the Gospel. There was a tabernacle. There was the priesthood. All of these things were established and they are visibly to be seen as pictures of Christ and yet they perished without the revelation of Christ. It's like people can take this Word and read it and read it every day looking for some lift in their spirit, but unless there is that revelation of Christ, as Paul said, "when it pleased God to reveal Christ in me," that's what made the difference and without it, people perish.

Look in Proverbs 29:18. That's why it says here it's progressive in Judges 2 from 10 down to verse 13. They knew not the LORD nor the works which He had done for Israel. When a person's eyes are blind to the work of Christ in what He has done for His people, they'll go after anything. They'll pursue anything that that flesh seeks after. Here in Proverbs 29:18, that is what is expressed here. It says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he." You say, "How do you keep the law?" Well, that law was given. The word "keep" there means "to hold it in high regard." And we understand why the law was given, it was to reveal the holy character of God; it was to show us our own sinfulness in light of that holiness; but it's also to show how Christ fulfilled it.

So that's what it is to keep the law. Happy is that man who is given eyes to see that but notice it's on the heels of, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." That's what happens. That word 'vision' literally refers to a revelation of God through His Word. That's what it is. You say, "How come our society is just going the way it is?" Well, where

there is no vision, people perish. Where God is not pleased to grant a revelation of His Son, the LORD Jesus Christ, in the heart of the sinner, that sinner is lost. They might be morally upstanding people but they're lost. They perish because there is no vision.

Notice as an example in 1 Samuel 3. This was in Eli's time. This is specifically stated in 1 Samuel 3. Notice it says, "And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli." Now when it says a child, don't think of the little 13, 14, 15 year old. These were young men who ministered unto the LORD before Eli, but notice, "And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision." When it says precious it means it was rare. There's an example and the same thing could be said in our generation, the revelation of Christ. You say, "Why are there so few that know and love the LORD and believe on Him and worship Him as He so taught us?" Well, where there is no vision people perish and that's what this whole chapter is about where the LORD spoke unto Eli but through Samuel that night.

It says there in verse 2, "And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see; And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep; That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I." And this is repeated and finally Eli tells him in verse 9, "Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee," you see, this was a rare vision, "that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth." Any of us that the LORD has ever taught, we can remember how the Word was opened to our own hearts and minds and the desire once we saw that it was the LORD, "Speak, LORD, Thy servant heareth."

"So Samuel went and lay down in his place. And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth. And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle." Well, what He was going to do was have the ark of the covenant removed that the enemy would come in and take it away.

"In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not." Isn't that what we looked at already? As goes the leadership, as goes the head, so goes the congregation and certainly without a clear revelation of Christ. Our desire every time we come together ought to be that, "LORD, speak to me and open Your Word once again to my heart and draw it once again unto Your Son."

The third and final point that I would bring out here in our study here in Judges 2 is that without the LORD's purging, because that's really what this is about, there is a purging that takes place, we would never distinguish the wheat from the tares. It's the LORD that makes this known. Many times you stop and start thinking, looking around thinking, "I wonder who is the wheat and who is the tare," but in reality Judas, I'm thinking of Judas Iscariot, even though the LORD said, "One of you is a child of perdition," it probably never rang in his mind and heart what that meant even though all the while his heart was



bent on betraying our LORD Jesus Christ. There was nothing where he ever pulled one of the other disciples aside even on all their campaigns and going up and preaching and said, "Psst, do you know what? The day is going to come when I'm going to betray Christ."

I think sometimes we think that he had this all in his mind to begin with. There was a calling of Judas just like the others, of drawing him in and identifying with him and none of them, none of those disciples perceived that it was he. So from the standpoint of how movies try to portray him as being a dark figure and dark circles under his eyes and long hair and rough looking, none of that. He was there right up until the LORD Himself exposed him and told him, "What thou doest, go do quickly." The LORD knew but the rest didn't. It had to be brought to pass.

That's what I see here in Judges 2:14-15. When the anger of the LORD is revealed, and it is, it is revealed against all of His true enemies, but the key here is, in His time, and so I've noted three things here that we even see in the New Testament. In the LORD's time, He purges the vineyard. In the LORD's time, He separates the tares and the wheat. And in the LORD's time, He sends the fiery trials to burn up the chaff so that it is clear that that which remains is the wheat. The rest will go the way of all flesh.

Look in Matthew 13, just a couple of verses here because, again, it's so clear it hardly requires explanation. This is the parable about the Kingdom. In verse 24 it says, "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat," not out there somewhere but among the wheat, "and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also." Now you know as well as I do when you first start a plant growing, it's sometimes difficult to distinguish between wheat and tares because there's life in both, there is apparent life in both.

"So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest." Now who is LORD of the harvest? That's Christ. So this is difficult for us. We have to beware of the tares among us and yet we're not to try to judge who is a tare and who is a wheat but rather looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith. Let every man examine himself whether he be in the Faith. This is the command that we have.

Don't you know that Joshua and Caleb all those years that they lived and suffered the consequences of all of that unbelief, yet I don't read anywhere where they ever pointed the finger at anybody else. The Spirit of God never convinces you of someone else's sin. The Spirit of God will always make you aware of your own sin and your own need. Prone to wander, LORD, I feel it. Prone to leave the one I love and that's where, regardless of what's going on around us, I believe that's the sense here, let both grow until the harvest. I think some people get a false comfort in pointing out the errors of others in a

condescending way to cover what they know is not right in themselves. They can blow a lot of smoke and there's a lot of smoke being blown in religion.

"Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." I know this, the LORD is always going to take care of His own. It might dwindle down to a few but the LORD is always going to care for those that He has chosen in His grace and Christ has redeemed. We don't have to worry about Him. He's the Great Shepherd. Even when they wander, guess what? He takes them on His shoulder and brings them back to the fold. That's the LORD's work to do, not mine, not yours, and you'll see a lot of coming and going but the whole point here is that it not affect where we stand, where you stand, where I stand as far as how the LORD has taught us.

Look in 1 Corinthians 3 and then we'll be done. 1 Corinthians 3. A lot of times we think that this fiery trial is at the end of time but here in 1 Corinthians 3 beginning in verse 10, Paul says, "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon." It's talking about preaching and teaching the Gospel. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones," that is, those that when he talks about gold, silver and precious stones, it's talking about those in whose hearts that Word has been revealed and the Truth set forth and established, drawn to Christ. You cannot destroy gold, silver and precious stone. That's how those are described that are the LORD's that He's chosen in His grace and mercy and Christ has redeemed. But also look at, "wood, hay, stubble." I can't be accountable for how people profess to believe the message of the Gospel that I preach. They might sit there for a long time saying, "Amen! Preach it, brother! Bring it on!"

"Every man's work shall be made manifest," notice, "for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire." This is not talking about the final judgment fire, but it says, "the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." When does it try? Now. In time. Just like with the Judges, that generation that was raised up that knew not the LORD, it finally became manifest what they were all along, you see?

And it says, "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned," how is it burned? Well, it's when the LORD gives them over to their own reprobate mind and any profession that you thought they had goes up in smoke. It's burned in the heat of the day. It could be thorns that rise up and choke it out. It could be the sun rising, persecution, opposition. It could be promotion. I heard one preacher say he'd seen more people promoted out of the Gospel than he had seen turn from the Gospel by way of persecution. That can happen. Given the right time and opportunity, it's manifest what was there all along.

But it says, "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." That's talking about the preacher. It's not easy to watch but

nonetheless, it's a reminder that salvation is of the LORD. It's not of the preacher, it's of the LORD. It's as the LORD is pleased to reveal Christ in our hearts.

There's a lot more there but we'll leave that for now and I pray the LORD will certainly bless that to our hearing.