

# The Cycle of Idolatry

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] We're going to read from Judges chapter 2 continuing our series in Judges so judges 2 and from verse 6 When Joshua dismissed the people the people of Israel went each to his inheritance to take possession of the land and The people serve the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who I live Joshua Who had seen all the great work that the Lord had done for Israel and And Joshua the son of none the servant of the Lord died at the age of 110 years and They buried him within the boundaries of his inheritance and Timnaf Harris in the hill country of Ephraim North of the mountain of Fgas and all that generation also were gathered to their fathers and There arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel and The people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and served the bails and They abandoned the Lord the God of the fathers who had brought them out of the land of Egypt

They went after other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were around them and bowed down to them and They provoked the Lord to anger they abandoned the Lord and served the bails and the asterisks So the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel and he gave them over to plunderers who plundered them and he Sold them into the hand of their surrounding enemies so that they could no longer withstand their enemies Whenever they marched out the hand of the Lord was against them for harm as the Lord had warned and as the Lord had sworn to them And they were in terrible distress Then the Lord raised up judges who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them Yet they did not listen to their judges for they hoared after other gods and bowed down to them They soon turned aside from the way in which their fathers had walked who had obeyed the commandments of the Lord And they did not do so Whenever the Lord raised up judges for them the Lord was with the judge and he saved them from the hand of their enemies All the days of the judge for the Lord was moved to pity By their groaning because of those who afflicted and oppressed them But whenever the judge died they turned back and were more corrupt than their fathers Going after other gods serving them and bowing down to them They did not drop any of their practices or their stubborn ways So that so the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel and he said Because this people have transgressed my covenant that I commanded their fathers and have not obeyed my voice I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations that Joshua left when he died In order to test Israel by them whether they will take care to walk in the way of the Lord as their fathers did or not So the Lord left those nations not driving them out quickly and he did not give them into the hand of Joshua Now these are the generations that the Lord left to test Israel by them That is all in Israel who had not experienced all the wars in Canaan It was only in order that the generations of the people of Israel might know war To teach war to those who had not known it before these are the nations the five lords of the philistines And all the Canaanites and the Sidionians and the Hivites who lived on Mount Lebanon from Mount Balherman As far as Lebo Hamath They were for the testing of Israel to know whether Israel would obey the commandments of the Lord Which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses So the people of Israel lived among the Canaanites the Hittites the Amorites the Perizzites the Hivites And the Jebusites and their daughters they took to themselves for wives And their own daughters they gave to their sons and they served their gods And this is God's word Good evening. It's great to be with you and to get to spend some time sharing God's word together With you from the book of Judges chapter 2. So if you have a Bible, please keep it open

On that page some page 201 of the church Bibles I'm just going to read the first five verses of chapter 2 as well It's really important to set up the the verses that we read That Lewis read for us Now the angel of the Lord went up from Gilgal to Bochum And he said I brought you up from Egypt and brought you into the land that I swore to give to your fathers I said I will never break my

covenant with you And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land You shall break down their altars But you have not obeyed my voice What is this you have done?

[ 4 : 45 ] So now I say I will not drive them out before you, but they shall become thorns in your sides And their gods shall be a snare to you As soon as the angel of the Lord spoke these words to all the people of Israel the people lifted up their voices and wept And they called the name of that place Bochum which in Hebrew means weepers people who are crying And they sacrificed there to the Lord And after that then we have the reading that we had earlier with the death of Joshua and then the Lord raising up judges Last week Tom Muir was here and he preached on chapter one of judges And if you were here, so refresh your memory if you weren't here, this is a one minute Summary of a really important part of his sermon And so he spoke about how strange the world of judges is to us It's full of really odd characters People that can be quite hard to relate to if you just step into the book if you open it for the first time

A lot of the people that the book sets up as heroes are actually When you read their stories are deeply flawed characters really strange people really odd heroes And the book has lots of people who are constantly lots of peoples who are at war with each other across their different groups It's the story of people trying to take over the land that other people already live in And where you have people converting to different religions choosing entirely different ways of life And the story is like a pendulum of extremes that never seems to settle anywhere in the middle And there's all kinds of intermarriage. There's lots of violence in the book of judges And that can make the book seem really difficult to make sense of for a lot of people in our culture If you were to pick up the Bible for the first time in your life If you'd never read it before And you open it that judges chapter one And that's really difficult because of what I was just sketching out there borrowing from tom last week But also because a lot of people in our culture Haven't read the Bible before they have very little Knowledge of it or experience of it and very little sense from the Bible itself of how the Bible is to be read How do you make sense of a book like this?

And I think that's difficult because in our culture there are a lot of people you're going to put them into two groups In group one, there are a lot of people who haven't read the Bible But assume that when they do It's going to be like opening up a mindfulness app But it's an ancient book and what you expect to find there is something that'll give you really Good vibes that'll put you at ease like a kind of pillow of affirmation That will give you an instant sense of inner peace and it's there to give you that kind of feeling Other people though assume that the Bible They might not have read it much It's a book of commands of things to do And it's a book about stories where everything that happens is affirmed by the Bible and you're meant to copy what you find literally on every page And with that assumption Well, let's say with both of these assumptions group one opens the Bible at the book of judges and it's not really like opening an A wellness app to give you those feelings And group two opens the book of judges and it's full of Of a lot of really difficult stuff to process And is this really what you want to copy and why would the Bible affirm all of these people doing all of these things?

[ 8 : 19 ] But Neither group then well If that's how you begin reading the book of judges will get very far before giving up because why is the Bible like this?

Why is there a book like this in the Bible? Judges is not Chicken soup for the soul, but it's also not 12 rules for life But of course that's not how the Bible itself works. It's not how it's to be read. It's not how we're to make sense of a book like judges So the way that kori introduced the series of sermons that you're doing just now in st. columbus and sunday nights on judges was the title The gospel according to judges Okay, and that's a great title You know if you're if that phrase rings A true every rings familiar to you You're thinking of the gospel according to Luke the gospel according to Matthew and you're thinking of these stories directly in the new Testament about Jesus, but this is the gospel in the old testament in This book that's really difficult for a lot of people to read and to get into at the beginning But it is actually in the Bible the gospel the gospel according to judges and here's What I mean by that

The Bible is one great story From Genesis to Revelation from beginning to end The Bible tells one huge overarching story But when you start to zoom in on all the different things that make up that story You see that the story is made up of tiny versions of itself repeated over and over Imagine you see a big portrait of a face And the closer you get to it you see that it's a mosaic and it's actually full of tiny pictures of the same face The Bible is like that, but it's one big story made up of repetitions of itself that start off really small And as the repetitions go on they get bigger and bigger they expand

They start to get fleshed out until God takes on human flesh And what the meaning of the story is is crystallized in the person of Jesus Christ So here's how this works the Bible begins with God in the beginning God God creates our world this universe. He creates human beings And their starting point is this perfect relationship with him And with themselves and with one another and with their universe But then those humans rebel And they ruin the relationship with God with themselves with one another with their world And then immediately we have the story that gets repeated over and over being told for the first time in a promise from God to that first woman Eve That one day one of her offspring will come one of her descendants And he will undo Everything that they have put out of joints everything that they have undone in God's world So this offspring will come And that's the this this tiny bear promise that they get but that is the story that's going to be repeated throughout the Bible Expanding and expanding as the story gets retold And it gets retold in The book of judges it gets retold in the exodus it gets retold in the 40 years in the wilderness

It gets retold in the the temple it gets retold in the sacrifices It gets retold in the prophets until one day the story is told definitively because that promised offspring comes And that is Jesus who enters the story As God who becomes human who takes a human nature the word is made flesh and eve's offspring Is actually her creator The author who writes himself into the story Now here's what to give you one mental image to think about this. Okay, that'll take us into judges And it's from a theologian who lived in the second century. He was from north Africa. His name was tertulian And he was a pagan roman who became a christian and if you've never heard of him I'm confident that you all regularly use words that he invented like old testament new testament Trinity so he was that guy. He was a wordsmith And one of um one of his most helpful creative terms in talking about the old testament and what I was just saying about how it's one story being repeated over and over is [12:51] That the old testament is full of what he called rehearsals of the gospel Okay, so the gospel gets rehearsed over and over and over until it all happens for real The old testament is full of rehearsals of the incarnation of jesus. It's full of rehearsals of the ultimate story In all the ways that that story gets retold over and over and over And the mind blowing thing that tertulian said about these rehearsals is who directs the rehearsal It's actually jesus himself He's the one who coordinates them. He's the one who orchestrates them and he does that the rehearsals are there for our benefits They're there to prepare the world for what's going to happen when jesus entered definitively So when we're talking about the gospel according to judges What we're looking to see really is what kind of a rehearsal Of his entrance into the world is jesus orchestrating In that world as strange as that world seems to us and for those people

And of course he was doing that in a world that was unimaginably different to our own And the ancient world was a really violent place Resources were scarce People lived with all kinds of precarity They did not know how to imagine religion as a sort of private choice that you have Within your own life in your next door neighbor might make completely different private choices and you can all just live in that live That wasn't the world that they knew how to imagine And so in all of those fronts think about it like this If people from the time of the book of judges could read a book that was set in our culture in edinbrun 2024 It would be as unimaginably weird to them as their world seems to us And actually they would be deeply suspicious of you Because of the kind of diversity that you live with the kind of live and let live attitude That would make no sense because their world was so much more about the group than the individual and our culture is the inverse So they would they would actually find us really suspicious

They would wonder how can you trust these people? What do they live for beyond themselves? This kind of hyper individualized society and they would really struggle to imagine us just like we struggle to imagine them But that is the world that these people were born into In history and God was pursuing them in that world Jesus was rehearsing the gospel in their world for them So how does he do that in judges too?

So I've got two points The first is that God is faithful And the people are not we are not and the second is the kind of judge Who saves us of what is the truth We are not and the second is the kind of judge who saves us so God is faithful and we're not Now the reason I read verses one to five there Is that they give us this key idea that help us unlock the whole of the book of judges This idea that God is faithful to his people the people are not faithful to him But the way that God deals with that is that he gives them a leader Who is a good leader and who mediates between them and him?

So the backstory to this to the book of judges is Joshua and the story of the exodus from Egypt So Joshua If you don't know the story He was Moses assistant and Moses was the guy who led the Israelites out of Egypt where they'd been slaves for hundreds of years, but after Moses dies Joshua then led leads the Israelites to the promised land, but when they get there Joshua makes this dramatic speech so it's on the page just before this literally in the church Bible Joshua makes a dramatic speech when they're just about at the promised land When he tells them that the peoples who already live in this land worship lots of different gods And those gods define their lives and as you enter this land, you must choose whom you will serve Okay, and so maybe you know this line from the Bible as for me in my house We will serve the Lord. This is where that gets said the original place where that gets said So they're about to enter this promised land full of all of these Peoples who worship all of these other gods and the question that Joshua gives them as they're just about to cross into that promised land is

[ 17 : 13 ] Whom will you serve? Who will you make ultimate in your life? Will it be the Lord the one true God? Or will it be Bale or Maloch or Ashtara?

Will you focus your life on God or on these idols? Now you may be thinking when you hear this Well, you know, that's nice ancient history of the Bronze Age in Canaan But I don't know anyone who has a shrine of Maloch or of Bale or an Asherapole in their house For me, this is really detached and it's meaningless. I don't know anyone who worships these gods See, this is this is totally irrelevant But think about this Do you know who the New Testament calls the true and greater Joshua?

It's Jesus right same name even Yeshua and the Lord saves Jesus said exactly the same thing in fact a bigger better thing than Joshua said when they're about to cross into the promised land and he says Who will you serve? Will it be the Lord or will it be Maloch or Bale?

Well, Jesus said you cannot serve God and money Choose who you'll serve Maybe nobody you know worships Maloch or Bale Do you know people who believe that money makes the world go round?

I do So Joshua's question is contextualized It's how you address the specific ways that idols are packaged and presented If you live in Bronze Age Canaan For us the same idols are still there. They're just packaged differently and they were we're more subtle than they were They called their idols gods. Maybe we don't but we treat them like that So Joshua's question is still the same question for us We although we can package it differently choose whom you will serve So that's the backstory they're about to enter the promised land He tells them this choose whom you will serve and the people say We will serve the Lord Because as boldly as that and we will be faithful to him And Joshua tells them No, you won't You will fail And your hearts will wander you'll go astray And at the very beginning of Joshua of judges too, that's what Joshua tells them

[ 19 : 36 ] Okay, so it's a recap of what you have at the end of Joshua He God tells them I have been faithful to you, but you have not been faithful to me and in response they weep They they break down in tears and I'll talk a little bit later on about why they do that and why there's good news for people in that situation So God tells them he's faithful to them and they're not faithful to him. So what does it mean to say that God is faithful here?

He wants to be their God exclusively um, he wants to be the one whose standards of goodness and truth and beauty Order their lives and his commitment to them is exclusive. He is saying in effect. I want to be your God I want to be loyal to you. I created you I want I want to redeem you. I want to hear you. I want to answer your prayers I want to be the one who gives your life its dignity and um, it's Its purpose and I want you to know that and live within it So that's God's side of this But the people God says have not been faithful to him. So what does that mean? So in verse In verse two There are two things that God says he doesn't want them to do and they do both of these things One is to make covenants with pagans and the other is to take part in their religions To illustrate just how weird our world would be to them. Just like their world is so strange to us imagine You're about to sign a contract. I don't know you're a student and you're about to rent your flat for the coming year and Your landlord is a hindu and you both sign the contract and your landlord says at the end of it To make this contract valid. We are both going to make an offering to Vishnu In scotland you would think what like I don't need to do that to sign a contract that seems odd and an overreach I imagine you like you're about to Sell something you're about to sell your bike to someone And you say okay just before the money changes hands. I'd like it if we could both recite the apostles creed And the person's probably gonna say what?

Why do we need to do that to have a contract? But their world was completely different So to make covenants It's not just kind of let's ignore one another's differences and sign a piece of paper together. It's let's Let's make oaths to gods. It's a really religious thing And god doesn't want them to do that to other gods And the reason that god doesn't want that okay, here's one way you can think about this that Living your life under one god Who relates to you by grace Is completely different as a life to living under thousands of different gods Who all want you to do things to keep them happy and you've got to appease every single one of them Those are two completely different ways to live utterly different If you become a canaanite Polytheist it means that every day you've got to spend your life trying to serve a thousand different masters

You have this huge list of gods as long as your arm If you want to get pregnant, there's a fertility god you've got to keep happy for your harvest There's another god for the fruit that grows in your garden. There's a god There's a whole list of different gods for every part of your physical health And do you want success in war? Do you want the sun to rise tomorrow?

[ 23 : 14 ] And do you want good fortune? Do you want victory over the gods of the other peoples? And if you're a pagan canaanite And everything goes wrong in your life, you know, if it seems like the bottom has completely fallen out of it You had a nuclear option The ultimate sacrifice to get the gods on your side Which was that you go to the god malloch and you offer your children Who'd be burned to death As a sacrifice to him. So that's what you would do in ancient Canaan particularly of all the crops failed Because there's nothing above that that you could say that you could use to say to malloch I need you. I am my life is over without you. I am nothing without you And there's nothing more costly than I can give than the children that I've sacrificed to you And what you see across the Old Testament is that god hates that that this is a thing where god that god calls out It's what he means in judges too when he says at the very beginning

You might think it's just signing a contract to buy a fields You might think it's just you know marrying off one of your sons or one of your daughters But these gods are a snare to you. You give this an inch and it will take a mile You think you're just staying in the shallow end of the pool, but before you know it You're in the deep end You think that it's just lip service to these gods that you don't really believe in But actually before you know it the it's it's really heavy commitments and the lip service is to the god you say you believe in today So choose whom you will serve That's the message as they enter the promised land And that's what you see as the chapter goes on they go from the shallow end to the deep end really quickly But before that happens in chapter 2 so verses 6 down to 10 There is a there's a while where things go reasonably well for the Israelites So they still have their good leader at this point. They have Joshua And he stands in their place before god and he mediates between god and them But after Joshua dies, there's still a generation who remember him And who remember what it was like to have someone who mediates between them and god They remember what it was like to have this savior figure But after that generation passes away things change Dramatically and very quickly so look at verse 10 And all that generation were gathered to their fathers and there arose another generation after them who did not know the lord Or the work that he had done for Israel Now if you are An attentive reader If you know lots of biblical stories And you join the dots between them if you hear echoes of stories in other stories from the bible There's something that's ringing here for you in the background Something sad and something ironic in this line that there arose another generation who did not know And the reason for that is that the story of Joshua Which is the story that is just ending in this verse Is actually the very end of the story of the Exodus

Because the Exodus is the Exodus from Egypt to the promise of the Bible Because the Exodus is the Exodus from Egypt to the promised land It's the story that where if you go right back to the start of that story It takes you to Exodus chapter one where the Israelites are living peacefully in Egypt and flourishing And this is before they become slaves And they live under the protection of a good leader Joseph But then what happens?

Joseph dies And there arises another generation a new Pharaoh who did not know Joseph And just like that everything changes for them and they end up in slavery And things take this dramatic turn for the worst And that happens in the is in Egypt because they end up as slaves in Egypt, but in judges actually it's even worse Because they're in what's meant to be the promised land They're not in Egypt And it's not the Pharaoh the new Pharaoh this pagan king who thinks he's a god who doesn't know the Lord It's actually the Israelites themselves who don't know the Lord So there's an echo that goes right back to the start of the book of Exodus here And the effect that this is meant to

have on you when you read it if you know the backstory Is you're meant to ask Okay, they left Egypt physically but in their hearts

[ 27 : 56 ] Um, are they still slaves? So they're not physically there, but they they don't know how to be free And then what comes after this versus 11 down to 16 is really terrible So they go from the shallow end to the deep end in one plunge They abandon the Lord and they're not even subtle about it Like they're not trying to say well, you know, it's just lip service and we still were really loyal to the Lord They give up on him entirely and they convert to these other religions. They follow other gods So verse 13 Reduces it to two things that lure them in And they went after other gods from among the gods of the peoples who are around them and bowed down to them They abandoned the Lord and served the baals and the ash to Roth So they gave up on the Lord in pursuit of two other things The gods that they're that these cultures around them offered them And the two things were power and sex And that's what the baals and the ash to Roth represents the baals are a group of gods

If you're a pagan canaanite, these are like the the ideal form of masculinity or the baals They're they're male gods and the baals lust after this ideal form of sexualized femininity the ash to Roth um Well, Astarte was her name this goddess of fertility this object of male desire So the Israelites gave up on following the Lord because they become transfixed with how their culture mediates to them masculinity and femininity power and sex desire Of course our culture has its own many many different ways of mediating those things to us as well So there's at this point there's another echo of something in the Exodus story Which is that because they've done this God sells them into the hands of their enemies Sells them into slavery

And what's really shocking about this again is if you think about this And you've got the story of the exodus behind it The very beginning of the story of the exodus like the backstory to the exodus is well, how did Joseph end up in Egypt?

He was sold into slavery by his brothers So there's this other it's a sad echo And the Israelites are now slaves again. It's like the exodus from slavery in Egypt never happened So the way that judges to begins the book of judges is that it's like we're back at the very beginning of the book of exodus It's like there's a there's a meme that goes around of a shepherd Who's trying to pull a sheep The sheep's head is stuck in this ditch So love you've seen it and the moment he pulls it out the sheep springs off and jumps and then Head straight back in the same ditch Okay, that's the kind of effect that you're meant to have when you read judges one and two if you've read exodus as it comes before They've gone straight back into the same ditch and it's like the exodus Well, the question you're meant to have is was the exodus for nothing Can god save his people at all?

And at this point, you know, if you're reading judges back in ancient israel Maybe another thing that you're thinking of is again the page before this in the church bibles What joshua said to the people after he said choose whom you will serve and they say we will serve the lord and joshua says No, you won't Do you know what just do you remember what joshua said to them after that?

[ 31 : 31 ] You will fail him and because he is a holy and jealous god. He will not forgive your sins so there's something Something true about god that joshua grasped in that moment, which is that god is a holy and a jealous god But there's something about god that joshua didn't grasp which is that god is also a gracious god So he tells them you're going to fail and god will not forgive you and that is why they wept That's why they called the place bohem the weepers because at this point You know, they're that sheep that has jumped straight back into the same ditch and it is over joshua himself told us if we get this wrong once then there's no way back We were already in the last chance saloon so they cry And that's what makes the plot twist at the very end of verse 15 and the start of 16 so amazing Because and this is also an echo of exodus

They were in terrible distress then the lord raised up judges who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them at this point So it's like in exodus You know, they're they're groaning in slavery in egypt and god hears their groans and then god sends them someone to save them So judges too is a rehearsal of the gospel in exactly the same way that the book of exodus is a rehearsal of the gospel It's the story of god coming to save people who could not save themselves a story of god liberating people from slavery of god Turning mere existence into the abundance of life So that was point one point two is going to be a lot shorter really the point two is the conclusion the judge who saves us When you hear the word judge in our culture, you probably think of you know, someone who sits in a court and You know who hears cases A judge in the old testament is not like that Think instead

Decisive warrior savior Okay, category of person that we don't really have in our culture. It's another thing that makes the book of judges odd to us So one of the things that you'll see through judges is that the people are just a mess throughout They don't really make progress at all They never get back on track with following god Obediently they're they're like the sheep that jumps into the ditch every single time more deeply than they did before And as a spoiler alert, you haven't read the whole of the book of judges. The last line of the book is Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. So the people are just like obstinately They run away from god every time and god runs after them every time And he keeps on being gracious over and over and he raises up judge after judge after judge to save them And the judges are another part of the weirdness of this book. They are a ragtag Bunch of saviours say the least the best known probably samson The strong man who has really obvious evident character flaws. Okay, put it like that. You'll be I guess you'll be hearing about him later

We also have a judge like Gideon who's samson's opposite. He's not naturally brave or courageous You have women and you have another Judge who has a really complicated backstory. He's a prostitute son saves the people But then he makes this rash vow that he then ends up killing his daughter over The judges are a really odd group Very ordinary people who each save israel and they're able to do that chapter 2 says because the lord was with them They are unlikely heroes Really unlikely saviours And one of the repeated things that you see in judges is that they save the people of israel with unlikely weapons So Gideon's army uses jars and trumpets Shamgar uses an oxgoat Jail uses a tent peg Samson has a donkey's jaw bone So judges is like this case study of the most unlikely saviours whose weapons are the most unlikely weapons And throughout them God uses these people to just rescue his people So how is that a rehearsal of the gospel of Jesus Christ?

[ 35 : 50 ] Well think about it like this Who would the most surprising The least likely savior of the world be?

A baby? More unlikely still a baby born to a virgin A baby born in poverty Born in a stable Someone who grows up in a cultural backwater Someone whose job is carpenter Someone who gave that up even and then had no place to lay his head And then he had to go to the hospital And he had to go to the hospital Someone who gave that up even and then had no place to lay his head So voluntarily homeless and itinerant Someone whose own family did not believe in him First Someone who taught values that the people around him thought were utterly bizarre like turn the other cheek Love your enemies Someone who ended up being executed by the Romans nailed to a cross Dying the death of a slave A common criminal Someone who lost his last earthly possessions as he hanged there held by nails

When soldiers used dice to gamble over his last piece of clothing A barbarian A nobody whose body was lifeless body was sealed in a tomb One of the things that um the god God says about himself in the Old Testament in Sam 75 is that he is the judge Same Hebrew word as judges and judges And in Sam 75 it's about a world full of unrighteous people And there God says that he is the judge Whatever it meant for samson jail Gideon off neil All of these other people Whatever it meant for them to be judges to be saviors However, unlikely that seemed of them God was the definitive version of that He said he was the judge But did it ever Does it ever occur to you When you look at Jesus Christ

That you are looking at The judge That you're looking at the unlikeliest The most unimaginable of saviors That you're looking at someone who fulfills The whole of the book of judges By he doesn't just fulfill it by being a man whom God was with Like off neil or Gideon or samson He fulfills it by being Immanuel by being God with us By being the god man by being the The word who is in flesh That the most surprising way for God to keep the promise he made to eve At the very beginning of that biblical story That the promise that one of her offspring would undo the fall That God himself did that by taking a human nature That God did that by becoming one of eve's own descendants And that he joined divinity

And humanity in one person forever So that we can know that he will never let us go That we have this judge who is with us forever That's good news That is the gospel And that helps us I think It's here in the word of God to help us understand The gospel was rehearsed for these people in their world To prepare the world for the Jesus whom we know By name And for that reason we're really privileged to live When we do in history Not because we're superior to those people in their strange worlds Our people in thousands of years from now If the world is still here we'll look back on us and

find us utterly bizarre In many ways And yet we have this privilege of living on this side of the cross This side of the fulfillment of all of those rehearsals Let's pray Lord our God We praise you for your gospel We thank you for your son Jesus Christ

[ 40 : 10 ] Who's come into our world Who has become our savior Who defies all of our expectations And yet in him You had planned to bring time together In all of its fullness to reveal yourself to us In him So Lord help us to grow in faith and love and hope Because of the gospel The gospel shown to us, rehearsed for us also in the book of Judges But we praise you that we don't just know of rehearsals But you've placed us in a time to know that The one who orchestrated that rehearsal has come into our world We praise you in his name Amen