

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to the book of Judges 2

We are going to continue in our introduction to the Book of Judges –

Because that is exactly what chapter 1 and chapter 2 are – they are the introduction to the Book of Judges – because they both set the stage for the need of these individuals that God was going to use to bring deliverance to His people.

We really don't see the appearance of the Judges – until next week.

Now, last week in chapter one, we looked more at what was happening behind the scenes physically –

Joshua is dead; it was time for the tribes to go into the land that was set apart for them and take full possession of it – and eliminate and of the “ites” that remained.

So, we saw tribes like Judah – who did just that

And as we looked at the other tribes, it seemed the further we got toward the end of the chapter – there was more compromise.

Some of them were content on what they already had – to them, it felt like it was too much work to get rid of the Canaanites – so they let them stay.

And by the times we got to the tribe of Dan, they didn't even get to enjoy their land because the "ites" had forced them to settle up in the mountains.

All because of compromise.

So, as chapter one was focused on the physical – on the possession of the land,

Chapter two is focused on the "spiritual"

Chapter 1 was man's perspective of what was going on while chapter two is God's perspective of what was going on.

So what we are going to see this evening is how the Children of Israel lost sight of God and ignored His word.

Let's pray...

[Jdg 2:1-23 NKJV] 1 Then the Angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said: "I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers; and I said, 'I will never break My covenant with you.

So here at the beginning of the chapter – we see an appearance of the Angel of the Lord.

This is another instance in the Old Testament where we see that Jesus makes an appearance.

How do we know it is Jesus???

We know it is Jesus because of the words that He speaks.

He is speaking in the first person –

“I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers”

‘I will never break My covenant with you.’”

Michael or any other angel could not have made these statements.

This is a Christophany

Remember, Jesus is eternal -

Not only does Jesus appear here in chapter 2, we will also see Him make an appearance in chapter 6 and chapter 13.

And here, notice that He first reminds them of His past faithfulness and love to them.

He delivered them from Egypt’s bondage; He gave them an abundant land of promise;

He gave them a covenant that He would never break.

God keeps His promises.

Amen

Even though the Children of Israel were unfaithful

Even though we saw in our study last week that they didn't possess everything God intended them to possess – God promised that He would **never** forsake His part of the covenant.

By the way, never, means never – so God still has not broken His covenant with His people.

Sometimes you hear bad doctrine that God is done with the Jews – that is not so.

2 'And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.' But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this?

So here we see the consequences of compromise.

The tribes moved into their land – and instead of being faithful to what God had called them to do, they allowed the Canaanites to live among them.

They forced them to pay tribute – we saw that in our study last week. They were paying taxes. They were entering into a covenant with them.

So what happened is as they would go collect the tribute, they began to see how they worshipped their pagan gods, Baal and Asherah

The gods of pleasure and prosperity.

When the Israelites witnessed these rites, they were seduced & began to attend these ceremonies themselves, eventually importing the practice back to their own cities & homes

The same thing happens today, to those who strike a compromise with sin.

Though they may be able to keep it hidden at first, thinking they can draw comfort from it just every now and then, it will only be a matter of time before, it will grow and eventually take over if it isn't defeated & expelled.

Ask a drug addict, an alcoholic, a sex addict who lost everything – because they felt that they could control it.

God told Israel to wipe out the Canaanites because if they didn't, the Canaanites would be their undoing – and as we will see, that is exactly what happens.

Notice also how Jesus asked the question, "Why have you done this?"

Did Jesus not know the reason why? He knew.

However, He wanted them to know what they had done.

3 "Therefore I also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be [thorns] in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you.' "

Turn to Exodus 23

I want to show you God's promise to the Children of Israel when He brought them out of Egypt.

[Exo 23:27-30 NKJV] 27 "I will send My fear before you, I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come, and will make all your enemies turn [their] backs to you. 28 "And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before you. 29 "I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you. 30 "Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased, and you inherit the land.

So we see that God was doing the heavy lifting all along.

He just wanted the Children of Israel to take those steps of faith. To put their trust in Him –

But because they failed to that –

He rebukes them - if they will not wholeheartedly follow Him & make no compromise with the enemy, then He will not give them victory.

Here's the point church –

- When the Children of Israel prevailed against the Canaanites, it was evidence of God's blessing because of their whole-hearted devotion to Him.

· When the Children of Israel were not able to defeat the Canaanites, it was evidence of a lack of blessing because of her divided affection for God/compromise.

Church, there is always consequences when we fail to obey what God has called us to do.

Sometimes we see the immediate consequences and sometimes we see the consequences come later on in our lives.

4 So it was, when the Angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voices and wept. 5 Then they called the name of that place **Bochim; and they sacrificed there to the LORD.**

So two things I want to point out here.

The place where this happened is called Bochim.

The word Bochim means “weeping” which is fitting – because here we see the consequences of neglecting to address the sin in our lives.

It always leads to the place of sorrow

So the Children of Israel are sorry!!!!

They are lifting up their voices, they are crying and they make sacrifices to the Lord

But the question is – are they only sorry that they got caught or does their sorrow lead to repentance? Because that is what God wants – a sorrow that results in a change of life.

Growing up, when I used to watch COPS on Saturday nights – the majority of the people who were arrested, were sorry they got caught – but it doesn't mean that they changed their life (repented)

In Genesis, when Esau found out he lost his blessing – he lifted up his voice and cried like a little baby– but the scriptures never say he repented.

He wept –

The same word that is used here in Hebrew – is the same word that we find in the Greek in the New Testament (Matt 27:3) regarding Judas – when Jesus was condemned – he brought the money back to the religious rulers because he was sorry – not repentant.

The same is true for the people in Bochim.

6 And when Joshua had dismissed the people, the children of Israel went each to his own inheritance to possess the land. 7 So the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD which He had done for Israel. 8 Now

Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died [when he was] one hundred and ten years old. 9 And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Heres, in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash. 10 When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel.

So we see here that the Children of Israel were faithful to God while Joshua was leading them.

After he died, the Children of Israel continued to remain faithful under Joshua's immediate successors.

However, when these individuals died – there arose a new generation that was clueless to what God had done and they also didn't have a personal relationship with the Lord.

Why?

Whose to blame?

The parents!

They had embraced the blessing of the land God gave them but weren't diligent with their calling as parents to pass on their faith to their kids.

Israel was so blessed by God that they forgot their kids.

- They stopped going to Shiloh – where the tabernacle was.
- They stopped attending the feasts that they were required to attend.

Turn your bibles with me to Exodus 12 – we are going to look at one of the feasts that the parents failed to pass on to the children –

[Exo 12:24-27 NKJV] 24 "And you shall observe this thing as an ordinance for you and your sons forever. 25 "It will come to pass when you come to the land which the LORD will give you, just as He promised, that you shall keep this service. 26 "And it shall be, when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?' 27 "that you shall say, 'It [is] the Passover sacrifice of the LORD, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households.' " So the people bowed their heads and worshiped.

God created the feasts as a teaching moment – not only so the people would remember His faithfulness – but so that they would teach their children and their children's children.

He purposely built into children the desire to ask questions –

“Mom/Dad – Why are we celebrating Passover? Why do we have to kill the lamb?”

And in the same way, He purposely instructed parents that they needed to respond to those questions and talk about the Lord.

This generation failed to do this -

And the consequences were that God became unimportant to the new generation.

However, there were plenty of Canaanites around who were willing to share their religious ways with the children of Israel.

11 Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals; 12 and they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from [among] the gods of the people who [were] all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger. 13 They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths.

So here, the author of Judges tells us that the Children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord.

Notice that Baal is plural in verse 11 – and that is because each region had its own version of Baal.

Baal Peor, Num. 25:3

Baal Gad, Josh. 11:17

Baal-Berith, Jud. 9:4

Baal-Zebub, 2 Kings 1:2

So it shows us that the Children Of Israel embraced the worship of Baal.

Now, the name Baal was the word for lord or husband

It's fitting that the word is a synonym for both (lord and husband) because God likens idolatry to spiritual adultery.

When Israel worshipped Baal, she not only committed idolatry, she was committing spiritual adultery by forsaking her covenant with Yahweh to attach herself to another lover.

So instead of bringing sacrifices to God – they would bring sacrifices to Baal and ask Baal for blessings.

They did the same thing with the worship of Ashtaroth – she was female deity of the pagan world –

People would bring sacrifices to Baal's altar while they would go have sex with a ritual prostitute priestess next to one of the standing stones to appease Ashtaroth.

This is what it meant to “serve” Baal & the Ashtoreths.

14 And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of

their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. 15 Wherever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for calamity, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed.

God warned Israel back in Deuteronomy that if they went after other gods, He would bring difficult times on the people to help cause them to turn back to Him.

So what is happening here – the Children of Israel have become a slave to sin.

God had delivered them out of slavery when they were in Egypt – and because they compromised and chose to ignore God's word, they are once again enslaved.

But notice the Lord's compassion and grace here -

16 Nevertheless, the LORD raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them.

The judges were these individuals that God would use to bring the nation back to the Lord, and then deliver them from their enemies.

These judges weren't "kings" because God was the king of Israel.

17 Yet they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot with other gods, and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the LORD; they did not do so.

18 And when the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them out of 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 oppressed them and harassed them. 19 And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way.

Once the people had known a season of trouble, they would cry out for help & God would send a deliverer.

After a judge had brought relief from oppression, the people quickly returned to the errors that had led to their oppression and trouble –

They never learned from their mistakes -

And this went on for a period of 400 years – it was like a never ending rollercoaster.

The people would rebel against God, bringing a period of oppression, followed by them crying out to the Lord, God would raise up one of these judges, the people would be delivered and after the judge was dead – just like they did after Joshua's death – they would start the cycle again.

20 Then the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and He said, "Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers, and

has not heeded My voice, 21 "I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died, 22 "so that through them I may test Israel, whether they will keep the ways of the LORD, to walk in them as their fathers kept [them], or not." 23 Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them out immediately; nor did He deliver them into the hand of Joshua.

Here at the end of chapter 2, we see something of God's foresight.

He knew that the tribes would, for the next three – four hundred years, repeat a cycle of rebellion, retribution, repentance, and rest.

He knew that after He delivered them, each time they'd go right back into rebellion.

So the Lord left the "ites" in the land for the purpose of testing them.

He was testing them to see just how serious they were at following Him.

Church -

Sometimes God will use difficult times, things that make us uneasy, as ways of testing us as well.

Think of some of the trials we face in our lives – many of them are a result of our own bad decisions.

Many of the difficulties we face are as a result of our own disobedience.

Yet, God will use those very difficulties and problems in order to test us, to prove to us, and to show us where we stand.

Think how much easier things would have been if they just heeded God's word from the moment they entered the Promised Land.

Had they not compromised

Had they not played the harlot and embraced the gods of the Canaanites.

They would have enjoyed the blessings that God had in store for them.

Church,

We are to learn from their examples -

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

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