

Judges 2:1 ¶ And an angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you.

Judges 2:2 And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this?

Judges 2:3 Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be *as thorns* in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you.

Judges 2:4 And it came to pass, when the angel of the LORD spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept.

Judges 2:5 And they called the name of that place Bochim: and they sacrificed there unto the LORD.

The LORD sent an angel from Gilgal to deliver a message to the people at Bochim. Why have I not noticed this before? The fact that the messenger is identified as “an angel of the LORD” makes me believe it is an angel from heaven, not a prophet (which is included in the Hebrew). The response of the people to his message seems to affirm that the people thought the same. In fact, I think it was probably an appearance of the preincarnate Jesus. The fact that there is no statement declaring that the message is from the LORD and the angel just begins to speak using the first person seems to provide strong evidence in support of that conclusion.

The message from the LORD (my paraphrase): I brought you out of Egypt to possess the land that I promised to your fathers—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I never break my promises. I told you not to make peace treaties with the people of the land. I told you to tear down the altars to their false gods. You did not obey me. Why not? I warned you that these people and their false gods would cause you great trouble if you did not do as I said. I do not intend to drive them out for you if you do not follow Me in faith and obedience.

The people began to weep loudly after the angel had delivered his message. They named the place Bochim, which means “weepers,” and offered a sacrifice to the LORD. Though the response of the people seemed to indicate an attitude of repentance, future actions reveal that it was more an emotional response rather than a true change of heart.

Why Bochim? It seems an odd choice, so one can't help but wonder if the tabernacle had been moved to there. One commentator noted that the Septuagint identified Bochim as Bethel.

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.

Judges 2:7 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.

Judges 2:8 And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, *being an*

hundred and ten years old.

Judges 2:9 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.

Judges 2:10 And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.

These verses seem to mirror the words in the last chapter of Joshua. It is noted that Joshua sent all the troops of Israel away to take possession of their allotted inheritances. As long as Joshua remained alive, the people served the LORD; in fact, that continued until all the elders died that outlived Joshua that had witnessed the great miracles the LORD had done on behalf of Israel. Joshua was 100 years old when he died and was buried in the land of his inheritance—Timnathheres in mount Ephraim on the north side of the hill Gaash.

Sadly, the next generation “knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel.” This should not and would not have been the case if they had followed the command of the LORD as delivered by Moses.

Deuteronomy 6:4–8 “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.”

That is a truth that all Christian parents should take to heart today. If we do not teach our children God’s word and show them by our actions how important it is to us and how we want to follow Him in faith and obedience, we cannot expect them to want to do the same.

Judges 2:11 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim:

Judges 2:12 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.

Judges 2:13 And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.

The spiritual leaders of the people that supervised the taking of the land are dead and gone and the children of Israel rebelled against the LORD. They did evil and served Baalim, the false gods of the Canaanites. Thus begins the consequences of failing to obey the LORD and drive out all the inhabitants of Canaan.

Principle: Doing evil and serving false gods go hand-in-hand.

They made the LORD angry by rejecting Him and worshipping the false gods of the people around them—specifically Baal and Ashtaroth. In my study of

prophecy, I have learned that these were the names given the false gods that originated with Nimrod and Semiramis, as did all the other false gods embraced by other cultures.

The worship of these gods appealed to the baser nature of man's flesh in the form of sexual rituals; while the worship of the LORD was structured to grow one spiritually. False religions always appeal to the flesh; true religion before the LORD always draws us to be more like Jesus.

Judges 2:14 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.

Judges 2:15 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.

The LORD was furious with the people of Israel and delivered them into the hands of their enemies. They began to suffer the curses that had been promised would be the result of breaking their covenant with the LORD.

Leviticus 26:14–17 “But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant: I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you.”

Eventually, the people became quite distressed as they experienced the consequences of their sin.

The passage in Leviticus goes on to tell us that the purpose of God's judgment was to produce repentance.

Leviticus 26:40–42 “If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; And that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land.”

Judges 2:16 Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them.

Judges 2:17 And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the

commandments of the LORD; *but* they did not so.

Judges 2:18 And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them.

Because of His covenant with Abraham, the LORD began to raise up judges to lead the people back to faith in Him and deliver them from their enemies. It became a cycle that was repeated over and over. The people would fall into sin; the LORD would raise up a judge to deliver them, and then they would fall back into sin.

Judges 2:19 And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, *that* they returned, and corrupted *themselves* more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way.

Judges 2:20 And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice;

Judges 2:21 I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died:

Judges 2:22 That through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk therein, as their fathers did keep *it*, or not.

Judges 2:23 Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua.

As with Joshua, it seems that once a judge died his influence was forgotten and the people fell into worse sin than before. They served other gods and were stubbornly determined to do things their own way in rejection of God's way. It seems to me that the mantra of the book of Judges is: "Every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes." (Judges 17:6 & 21:25)

The LORD became so angry that He determined not to drive out any more of the nations in the land that He had given Israel. His purpose was to use these nations to prove His people, to see if they would choose to follow Him as their fathers did.

Principle: Genuine faith in the LORD is proven through adversity and the fires of affliction.