

THE CHANGE IN ISRAEL'S GOVERNMENT AND THEIR DISOBEDIENCE

[BIBLE TEXT](#) : Judges 2:1-23; Numbers 33:50-53; Joshua 23:11-13

LESSON 188 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Know ye not that the friendship of the world s enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4).

[BIBLE TEXT in King James Version](#)

Judges 2:1-23

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

[BIBLE REFERENCES:](#)

I Instructions, Warnings, and Disobedience

- 1 The instructions to drive out the inhabitants of Canaan are given through Moses, Numbers 33:50-53
- 2 Warnings are issued by Joshua, Joshua 23:11-13
- 3 Israel's disobedience is rebuked by the angel of the Lord, Judge^s 2:1-5

II The Obedience of Joshua's Generation

- 1 The land is possessed, Judges 2:6
- 2 The people serve the Lord, Judges 2:7
- 3 Joshua dies, Judges 2:8, 9

III The Falling Away of the Succeeding Generations

- 1 They know not the Lord, Judges 2:10
- 2 They follow other gods, Judges 2:11-13
- 3 God's judgments are meted out to them, Judges 2:14, 15

IV Introduction to the Period of the Judges

- 1 The Lord raises up judges, Judges 2:16-19
- 2 God is angry because of Israel's repeated disobedience, Judges 2:20-23

[NOTES:](#)

On the grassy plains of Moab across the Jordan River from Jericho, Moses rehearsed the words of the Lord to the people of Israel. It was near the end of Moses' leadership. He was 120 years old, but his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. His voice was clear and plain and the instructions were very definite as they came to the ears of the people: "When ye are passed over Jordan into the land of Canaan; then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places: and ye shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land" (Numbers 33:51-53).

Purity

The people who inhabited the Land of Canaan before Israel were very wicked. Canaan was a beautiful land, a land that God loved, God wanted it for His people, but He wanted it cleaned up. His people were not to mingle with the ungodly or take on their idolatrous ways. The Children of Israel were to be a holy nation. God wanted their land to be kept pure; their livestock was not to be mixed with other breeds, neither were their fields to be sown with mingled seed. God loves purity. Sin and righteousness do not mix. If you are going to live godly you must get rid of all sin.

Drive out the inhabitants; destroy their idolatrous pictures and molten images; and pluck down their high places. There is no room for sin in a holy land. It is not to be petted, pampered, nor tampered with. Pluck it down; drive it out; destroy it! Sin is a serious thing. One sin—and the fall; one disobedience — and Paradise is lost. God had great things planned for Israel. They were to be a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. Through them all the

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.

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.

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

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.

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

nations of the earth were to come to the knowledge of the true God. But they fell short of God's plan for them. They compromised with sin, and failed to drive out the inhabitants of the land. The warnings of Joshua came true: "They shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes" (Joshua 23:13).

Lack of Instruction

After the death of Joshua and those who knew him and were inspired by his leadership, there arose another generation which knew not the Lord. Could it be that the parents were not faithful in instructing their children in the law of God? Had they forgotten so soon the commandment: "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" (Deuteronomy 6:6, 7) ? Some parents today are negligent in reading the Word of God to their children, and are failing God in this manner. They have a glorious opportunity to sow the seeds of truth in the hearts of those who are under their influence, but are failing to do so.

No Gratitude

God was faithful to this generation that knew Him not. He sent His angel — or it may be that this was the Lord Jesus Christ in person. We believe that Jesus appeared unto Joshua as "captain of the host of the LORD." The messenger from Heaven spoke in the first person and in a very definite and authoritative manner. "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. 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?"

"Why. have ye done this?" Gratitude alone should have impelled them to obey God. The Lord had rescued them from slavery, dried up the Red Sea, fed them on manna for forty years in the wilderness, fought their battles for them, and had given them this good land. Appreciation for the mercy of God should move people to serve God today. God's love in giving His own Son as a ransom for us should cause us to walk in humility before Him all the days of our life. Let us consider ourselves as having been held prisoners, condemned to death. The Father gave his own Son to be a ransom for us. The Son was slain and we were set free. Do we not owe a debt of gratitude to both the Father and Son?

Examples

They owed a great debt of gratitude, and their very life depended on doing the will of God. "For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life" (Deuteronomy 32:47). Not only was this fact impressed upon them by much repetition in the Law, but numerous examples in their history bore it out. Look at the example of Achan and the defeat at Ai. What about the 14,700 who died in the plague at the rebellion of Korah? or those who died when the Lord sent fiery serpents among them? Their lives depended on obedience, but they disobeyed. No wonder the angel of the Lord asked, "Why have ye done this?"

Drifting

Though Israel wept tears and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord, their hearts soon turned away again to the things of the world. It seemed so easy for them to weaken! A Christian life today means buckling on the armor and fighting the fight of faith. Carelessness

them that oppressed them and vexed them.

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.

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;

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

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.

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

Numbers 33:50-53

⁵⁰ And the LORD spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan *near* Jericho, saying,

⁵¹ Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are passed over Jordan into the land of Canaan;

⁵² Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places:

⁵³ And ye shall dispossess *the inhabitants* of the land, and dwell therein: for I have given you the land to possess it.

Joshua 23:11-13

¹¹ Take good heed therefore unto

and indifference soon lead to the forsaking of the Lord and the serving of the gods of this world. Business and pleasure can be allowed to crowd out the love of God.

Judges

"Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them" (Judges 2:16). This verse and the rest of the chapter seem to be a summary of the history of the Israelites during the period of the judges from Othniel to Samuel. These judges included Gideon, Samson, Jephthah, and Samuel, with others of whom God said: "Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens" (Hebrews 11:33, 34).

The story of the Israelites during the time of the judges is one of repeated failure, but the great mercy of God is shown in that when they groaned by reason of oppression the Lord raised up judges and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judges. Israel proved that "the LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy" (Psalm 103:8).

QUESTIONS

- 1 Where was Gilgal? What happened there?
- 2 Why were the inhabitants of Canaan to be driven out?
- 3 What was the indictment against Israel?
- 4 What was the penalty imposed upon them by the angel?
- 5 What was the effect of Joshua's life upon Israel?
- 6 How old was Joshua when he died?
- 7 Compare the warning given in Joshua 23:11-13 with the message of the angel.
- 8 How does this warning compare with the instructions given by Moses in Numbers 33:50-53?
- 9 Name some of the Judges of Israel.
- 10 Why did not God deliver the Canaanite nations entirely into the hands of Joshua?

yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God.

¹² Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, *even* these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you:

¹³ Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out *any of* these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you.