

# *The Book Of* **JUDGES**

## **THE CYCLE OF ISRAEL'S DECLINE** *Judges 2:1-23*

### **The Angel Of The Lord**

*Judges 2:1-5*

#### **Confronted By God**

First of three confrontations between God and Israel

- ***Judges 2:2-5***
- ***Judges 6:7-10***
- ***Judges 10:10-15***

All serve to show that:

- Israel's failure to take the whole of Canaan
- Is due to Israel's disobedience
- Not God's unfaithfulness

First of three appearances of the angel of the Lord

- ***Judges 2*** Rebuke of Israel
- ***Judges 6*** Call of Gideon
- ***Judges 13*** Announcement of Samson's birth

#### **Identity of the Angel**

##### **A Theophany**

The appearance of this Angel of the Lord is a theophany

- A visible manifestation to man of God

The Angel of the Lord is the second person of the trinity (the Son)

- We know this person as Jesus Christ
- Although to refer to this as an appearance of Jesus Christ is inaccurate
- Jesus Christ is the identity of the second person of the godhead, after His incarnation

##### **The Incarnation**

When Jesus was conceived in Mary, the second person of the godhead took on human flesh

- Humanity was added to His deity
- Prior to His conception, the Son was 100% divine
- After His conception, the Son was 100% divine and 100% human

This is why Jesus Christ is the perfect mediator

- He can identify fully with God
- He can identify fully with man

##### **A Christophany**

Prior to His conception

- The second person of the godhead appeared as the Angel of the Lord
- This is called a theophany

After His conception

- The second person of the godhead was named Jesus
- This is the incarnation

There is a third term: A Christophany

- A visible manifestation of Jesus Christ after His ascension

- A visible manifestation of second person of the godhead in the Old Testament

## A Fourth Term

You might want to use the term a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ

- But it is important to note this not God appearing in human-form
- Just as angels may look like men, when manifested on earth, but are not human
- So as the Son, prior to His incarnation, may look like man, when manifested on earth, He is not human

## Angel Appointment

### Step In Time

The last time we encountered the Angel of the Lord in Scripture

- Was **Joshua 5**, as the, “*Commander of the Lord’s Army*”
- This was near Gilgal

So, we read in **Judges 2:1a**

*Then the Angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim...*

For Israel it has been approx. 50 years since the Lord had appeared to them

- For God it’s just a moment ago
- Israel had to walk through history to get to this place
- God steps through time to get to Bochim

### Spiritual Migration

- The angel of the Lord moves geographically to meet with Israel
- This is because Israel has moved spiritually away from the Lord

In **Joshua 5**, Israel were in a place of obedience

- They had been circumcised
- They had observed the Passover
- They were prepared to fight for the Lord

In **Judges 2**, Israel were in a place of disobedience

- They had compromised in their fighting
- They had not driven out the people of the land
- They had begun to be corrupted by the Canaanites

## Angel’s Address

### Steadfast Lord

The Angel of the Lord wastes no time in calling Israel to account

First, He states how God has not moved

- *I led you up from Egypt*
- *I...brought you to the land I swore your fathers*
- *I will never break my covenant with you*

The Lord has kept His word

- He has been faithful to His side of the covenant with Israel
- The Lord is steadfast and reliable (He is the Rock)
- Unmovable
- Dependable
- You can always count on the Lord

### Shifting Israel

Second, He states how Israel has moved

- *you shall not make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land*  
(Implying they have made covenants with the Canaanites)
- *you shall tear down their altars*  
(Implying they have allowed the Canaanite altars to remain)
- *you have not obeyed my voice*

Then comes the killer question: *"Why have you done this?"*

- There is never a good reason for disobedience

This is the same technique the Lord used in the garden of Eden

- He asks Adam a question, *"Where are you?"*

## Pathway To Restoration

**Question:** Why does the Lord ask this question?

1. To bring conviction
2. To provoke confession
3. To provide an opportunity to repent

The Lord does not send His people on a guilt trip

- We are more than able to do this ourselves
- If not us, then devil is a master at trapping us in guilt

The Lord always wants to lead us out of our sin and disobedience

- To a place of relationship
- To a place of freedom
- To a place of obedience and love

### **Luke 19:10**

*for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."*

The Lord wants His people

- In a place of obedience
- In a place of safety
- In a place of blessing

When His people are disobedient

- |  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| • They move away from safety                           | To a place of danger              |
| • They move away from blessing                         | To a place of cursing             |
| • They move away from a place of relationship and love | To a place of loneliness and hurt |

## The Cycle Of Discipline

### Thorny Issue

#### **Judges 2:3**

*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.'*

The language used by the Angel of the Lord is designed to evoke a recollection of the fall in Eden

- Just as Adam's disobedience will result in a curse
- Having to wrestles with thorns and thistles
- So Israel's disobedience will result in a curse
- Having to wrestle with thorns in their sides

### Curses

The word 'curse' might appear a strong word

- But it is what Israel signed up for
- When they made a covenant with the Lord

The tribes of Israel were split in two camps

- |                                   |   |                                    |
|-----------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| • One half stood on Mount Gerizim | - | Pronounced blessings for obedience |
| • One half stood on Mount Ebal    | - | Pronounced curses for disobedience |

- The curses would come in five progressive cycles of discipline
- The blessings would come on one instant outpouring

### **Psalms 103:8**

*The LORD is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.*

## The First Cycle

### **Leviticus 26:14-17**

- Rise in sickness
- Raiding parties will steal crops (loss of income)
- Defeat in battle (loss of personal freedom)

## Israel's Sorrow

### Weepers

The response of the people to the words of the Angel of the Lord is given:

### **Judges 2:4-5**

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

There is genuine anguish and sorrow at the word of the Angel of the Lord

- Bochim means, 'weepers'
- You can be in genuine anguish and weep real tears
- But not be repentant

You can mourn your situation

- Have remorse for the what your actions have brought on you
- But be unchanged

### **2 Corinthians 7:10**

*For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.*

If this is godly sorrow, it is fleeting, because Israel returns to its sin

- If this is worldly sorrow, then the sacrifices are given to appease God not to please God
- They're not so much interested in relationship
- More so in avoiding trouble

## Child Weepers

Children can be like this

- They can be disobedient
- Then they are corrected
- Told the consequences and disciplined

This is followed with tears and doing the right thing

- But it's not because of a change of heart
- The tears are because they got caught and because they were smacked
- The right conduct is to appease mummy and daddy

The Lord is constantly looking at the heart

- For a humility, a purity, a desire to know Him

When He brings correction / discipline

- It is designed to bring a person, a people or a nation into distress (godly sorrow)
- That distress should lead to repentance
- Repentance leads to relationship

# The Death of Joshua

*Judges 2:6-9*

## No Appointed Successor

- When Moses died he left a successor, namely Joshua
- When Joshua died he left no successor

In the situation of a local church fellowship

- When it comes time for a pastor to step down, move on or he dies
- The sign of a good pastor is that he has prepared a successor
- A shepherd should not leave the sheep without a new shepherd

**Question:** Does this mean that Joshua was not a good a leader?

**Answer:** No

Joshua was not a shepherd – he was a general, a military leader, tasked by God:

1. To lead the children of Israel into the promised land
2. To subdue the people and take possession of the land
3. To distribute the land between the tribes

He was faithful in all that God commanded him

- He was not directed by the Lord to appoint a successor
- Moses was directed by the Lord to appoint a successor

## God Is Israel's Leader

**Question:** Why did the Lord not appoint a successor?

**Answer:** The Lord wanted Israel to look to Him directly, not a national leader

The danger we are all inclined toward is to look to a man and not to God

**Question:** Why do people pour out adulation to popstars and film stars?

**Question:** Why is the cinema filled with superheroes?

**Question:** Why is the world looking for a political figure to get us out of the social, moral and financial mess we're in?

**Answer:** Because we all have a tendency to look toward men and not God!

The Lord left Israel without a national leader, so they would look to Him

- Not to a man or their own human strength

# The Unfaithfulness of Israel

**Judges 2:10-23**

## Another Generation

The death of Joshua was previously recorded in **Joshua 24:29-31**

It is mentioned again here in light of Israel's relationship with the Lord

- Throughout the life of Joshua, Israel served the Lord
- Throughout the life the elders who experienced the conquest of Canaan, Israel served the Lord
- Then came another generation, Israel failed to serve the Lord

**Question:** Why did this generation fail to serve the Lord?

## Answer 1

### No Personal Relationship

We are told, in **Judges 2:10**, *"another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel"*

This is not because their parents

- Did not teach them about the Lord
- Did not instruct them in the law of Moses
- Did not tell them about the Exodus, the Red Sea or the victories in Canaan

It's because they *"did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done"*

Hebrew Transliteration: *yāda'* (ya-dehr)

### Genesis 4:1

*And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived*

Adam knew his wife in a personal, intimate way that no other person knew

- Israel failed to have that unique, personal, intimate knowledge of God
- They may have continued to offer sacrifices at Shiloh
- They may have continued observing the feasts
- But it became religion based on tradition
- Not worship based on relationship

A Christian is not someone who

- Goes to church
- Celebrates Christmas and Easter
- Partakes of communion
- Claps their hands as they sing the songs
- Or prays
- (Although that should be part of their life)

A Christian is someone who

- Has a unique and personal and intimate knowledge of God

## Answer 2

### They Gave Canaan A Foothold

They allowed the Canaanites to remain in the land

- They allowed their altars
- They allowed their pagan worship
- This was a temptation and snare

## Our Children

You may be of the generation of Joshua

You may be of the generation of the elders

We have another generation following us – our children

The two best things you can do to help your children is

1. Preach them the gospel and endeavour to lead them to Christ
2. Do not let Canaan get a foothold
  - Guard them from the world
  - Guard what they watch on television
  - Guard what they do on the internet
  - Guard their computers, their phones
  - Guard their friendship groups

### **1 John 5:21**

*Little children, keep yourselves from idols.*

## Another Heart

### What's In The Heart?

When a person has a personal relationship with the Lord

- It will always become evident in their conduct

When a person does not have a personal relationship with the Lord

- That too, will become evident in their conduct

### Illustration

Visiting Abby at Portsmouth

### **Judges 2:11-13**

Israel's heart was for Baal and Ashtoreth

### Three Steps To Heathen

**Question:** How could Israel's heart turn so quickly from worshipping the Lord?

- Who had delivered them from Egypt?
- Who sustained them through the wilderness?
- Brought them into the promised land?

### Doubt

Israel was nation of shepherds and herdsmen

- Canaan was a nation of farmers

When Israel came into Canaan

- These experienced Canaanite farmers attributed the fertility of the land to Baal

So the question arose:

- Could the God of the wilderness bring fertility in the Promised Land?
- Or did they need to honour Baal as well?

Thus, an intense battle for the hearts and minds of Israel began

### Doorway

Worship of Baal and Ashtoreth

- Involved animal sacrifices
- Ritual sex (the procreative act somehow stimulating the gods to bring fertility in the farmland)
- It did not involve the rejection of the Worship of Jehovah

To the generation that did not know the Lord

- There was doorway into maintaining the traditions of the past
- But also embracing Baalism too

### Drawing

Israel operated on an agricultural economy

- A good harvest, meant a good standard of living
- A good harvest, meant a good economy and lots of money
- A good harvest was secured by ritual sex

## Sex, Money & The High Life

You have a young generation

- Having been brought up on Mosaic Law and a strict sex life, money given to the Lord, chaste lifestyle
- Being lured away from by the promise of sex, money and the high life

Temporary pleasures of this world were more appealing

- Than eternal rewards of a righteous life

### **James 1:14-15**

*But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown, brings forth death.*

The devil employs exactly the same tactics today

- He will tempt you with sex, money and the high life

### **Proverbs 4:23**

*Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.*

The devil will tempt your children with sex, money and the high life

- Guard their lives

We need to pray for young ones

- They will be drawn by the same things we are drawn by
- But the opportunities and the ease with which these temptations can be met has increased tremendously
- With the advent of the internet, satellite TV, promiscuity, rise in drugs

## Seasons of Sin

Sin is enjoyable

- No doubt it leads to death (when it is full grown)
- Before it is full grown, it is enjoyable

**Question:** Did you know sin goes through seasons?

### **Hebrews 11:24-25**

*By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;*

<b>Spring</b>	When temptation comes, the allure of sin begins, it's sweet tantalising. You can hear the sirens, you can't see the rocks
<b>Summer</b>	When sin is in full motion, you are in deep and exploiting it to the max
<b>Autumn</b>	When the after affects are being experienced, and the consequences are being felt
<b>Winter</b>	When sin has left you and death has gripped you

## The Cycles Of Oppression & Deliverance

**Question:** What was the Lord to do with a people like this?

## Discipline

### **Judges 2:14-15**

This is the first cycle of discipline

- Raiding parties from neighbouring nations would come into a tribal territory
- They would take the crops Israel had spent the whole year cultivating
- Israel would lose in battle, where before, under the Lord, they had only ever known victory
- Instead of the Canaan paying tribute to them
- They would pay tribute to the Canaanites
- And this would continue until, *"they were greatly distressed"*

## The Judges

### **Judges 2:16**

**Question:** Why Judges – what is a Judge?

**Answer:** Deliverer/Saviour, Leader



Regional leader

- A tribal leader
- Anointed by God

Raised up for a twofold purpose

1. External Purpose - To deliver from outside threat (To act in military affairs)
2. Internal Purpose - To judge and govern on internal affairs (To act in civil affairs)

Usual pattern of establishment

- Serve as a military leader, against a foreign occupation
- Serve as a civil leader, in matters of a civil and religious nature

## Return To Sin

### **Judges 2:17-19**

You would then hope, that

- Having been in great distress
- Having cried out to the Lord
- He raising up a Judge to deliver the people
- Common sense would prevail and people would remain faithful to the Lord

But people are stupid...

### **Proverbs 26:11**

*As a dog returns to his own vomit, so a fool repeats his folly.*

- People return to their sin, like a dog returns to his vomit
- We are all fools, repeating our folly, although we know better

## Cycle Of Sin

So there would a cycle of behaviour

- Relationship - Israel served the Lord
- Disobedience - Israel forsakes the Lord (serves Baal)
- Discipline - Israel is oppressed
- Distress - Israel cries out to the Lord
- Deliverer - Israel is delivered by a Judge that the Lord has raised up

## Book Structure

**Judges 1-2** Summary Of The Incomplete Conquest (Repeating Joshua)

**Judges 3-16** Cycles of Oppression and Deliverance Under the Judges

1. Mesopotamians (Othniel)
2. Moabites (Ehud)
3. Philistines (Shamgar)
4. Canaanites (Deborah & Barak)
5. Midianites (Gideon, Abimelech, Tola & Jair)
6. Ammonites (Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon)
7. Philistines (Samson)

**Judges 17-21** Appendices

1. Migration of Dan
2. Civil War Against Benjamin
3. **Ruth 1-4**

## Increase In Sin

### **Judges 2:19**

*they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers*

Israel went round this cycle of sin seven times

- With each successive cycle
- Whenever Israel re-entered into disobedience and sin
- It was worse than the time before

Despite repeated deliverance there was an inexorable decline in Israel

- Each Judge that God raised up was less righteous than the last
- Corruption descended into civil war
- And the nation was in danger of imploding

***Judges 2:20-23***

God's anger burned against Israel and their sin

***Psalm 90:11***

*Who knows the power of Your anger?*

God began to distance Himself from His people

- Instead of calling them, "My nation"
- He calls them, "this nation"

The Lord has fought for Israel to drive out the Canaanites

- Now Israel wanted the Canaanite nations around
- So the Lord gave them, over to their desires

He allowed Israel

- To leave His presence
- To leave His safety
- To leave His love
- Knowing it would end in bondage, pain and death

If you set your heart on sin

God may allow it

But it will be at the expense of

- His presence
- His safety
- His love

## Appendix

### The Five Cycles Of Discipline

#### The First Cycle

##### **Leviticus 26:14-17**

- Rise in sickness
- Raiding parties will steal crops (loss of income)
- Defeat in battle (loss of personal freedom)

#### The Second Cycle

##### **Leviticus 26:18-20**

- First cycle multiplied by a factor of seven
- The earth will not bring forth crops (Economic depression)

#### The Third Cycle

##### **Leviticus 26:21-22**

- Further intensification of the second cycle by a factor of seven
- Fall victim of wild animals
- Claiming the lives of children and livestock (bird flu, covid 19, mad cow)

#### The Forth Cycle

##### **Leviticus 26:23-26**

- Further intensification of the third cycle by a factor of seven
- War – both national and civil
- Cities under siege
- Food supplies cut off

#### The Fifth Cycle

##### **Leviticus 26:27-39**

- Further intensification of the fourth cycle by a factor of seven
- Cannablism
- Desolation of cities and religious sites
- People will be killed, carried into captivity, dispersed among the nations

### Book Facts

#### Position In Scripture

- Seventh book of the Christian Bible
- Second of the historical books of the Old Testament

#### Place In History

- Between the death of Joshua and the first King of Israel, Saul (approx. 350 years)
- 1380BC to 1043BC
- Queen Nerftiti of Egypt
- King Tutankhamun of Egypt
- Bhagavad Gita (Hindu Text written)
- Shang (Yin) Dynasty in China
- Trojan Wars (Achilles, etc.)

#### Authorship

- Author: Unknown (late tradition says Samuel)
- Date: 1000BC, during early reign of King David

**Clue 1** Includes the death of Samson (1051BC)

**Clue 2** The 4x phrase, *"In those days there was no king in Israel"* indicating a monarchy

**Clue 3** Jerusalem was under Jebusite control at the time of writing, i.e. prior to David's capture