

Judges 2:1-13

Introduction – The people thought that their compromises were justified and pragmatic victories. They were in the land and they were settling down. They didn't believe God. They didn't remember His mighty works and His jealous words.

Yahweh's Judgment (2:1-5) – The Angel of the Lord comes to declare God's (His) judgment. The Angel was specifically charged to bring judgment upon sinful Israel (Ex 23:20-23). The charges reflect that this Angel is the Lord Himself and most probably a preincarnate visitation of the second Person of the Trinity. This was the Angel who had been with them at Gilgal (Josh 5), where the next generation had been circumcised into the covenant. Now, at Bochim, they will weep over their covenant breaking.

"I led you up from Egypt..." – The Angel had brought them out of Egypt. Not only was He the Angel of the Lord, but Lord of the angels as well (Josh 5:13-14). Iron chariots and resisting enemies were no match for Him.

"I brought you to the land..." – God had promised to bring the people into the Promised Land, and had made good on His promise. Certainly, He would have made good on His promise to finish the work He had begun.

"I said, 'I will never break..." – God was ready to make good on His word. So, where was the breach?

"But you have not obeyed my voice..." (v2) – They had made covenants with the Canaanites, openly defying the Lord's command (Ex 23:32). It also appears that they did not tear down the idols, even in cities where they had some control (Judges 1:33), again disobeying the Lord (Ex 34:13).

Punishment Fits the Crime (v3) – Those who give themselves to idols are given over to idols to their destruction. In rejecting Jehovah, they find themselves given over to the idols with which they compromised, only to find these worldly pleasures deep thorns in their sides.

A Land of Weeping (vv4-5) – There is a blessed mourning that produces comfort (Matt 5:4), although it is unclear if that is what occurs at this place. On the one hand, evidence of true repentance is found – they offer up sacrifices (acknowledging their sin and need for an atonement). Unfortunately, if there was true repentance, it did not get passed on to the next generation.

Generational Succession and Covenant Faithfulness (vv6-10) – From 2:6 to 3:6 we have a 'second introduction' of sorts. This is another beginning to the book and picks up from the end of the book of Joshua to then focus on the next generation and then the future generations, emphasizing the spiral of compromise-apostasy-slavery-deliverance that defines the period of Judges in the history of Old Covenant.

Joshua's Faithfulness and Influence (vv6-9) – He is buried in a place called "Portion of the Sun" (in Josh 24:30 it was also called, "Portion of Abundance". One of his faithful and great works during the conquest was when God made the sun stand still during the great battle at Gilgal (Josh 10). Joshua's work was certainly one of great abundance and blessing. Even after his death, it could be said of the elders of the generation that served with him that they served the Lord. The faithfulness of just one man can have a great impact upon a family, or a nation.

Another Generation (v10) – In stark contrast to the generation in verse 7, these did not know the Lord, nor the work which He had done. The basic failure of Israel was that they did not pass on to their children the stories of the Lord nor the loyalty He required. Faithfulness only lasts as long as one generation unless that faithfulness is passed on to your children.

Knowing God (Deut 6:4-9) – God had given Israel this very important command – love God. Living that command out required teaching the children that whatever is done with the hands and whatever is thought by the mind must be in submission to the Word of God. Living loyally before God requires applying His Word in our family life (doorposts) and in the life of the community, the city, and the nation (gates).

Knowing About God (Deut 6:20-25) – The Lord had established feasts and festivals for the purpose of reminding the people of God's mighty works of salvation. Why? First, because we are a forgetful people and second, because our children need to learn of God's mighty works. We have even greater stories to tell – the fullness of the gospel has been revealed to us. The failure of the church is too often connected to this one simple fact – the next generation does not know the Lord, nor the mighty works of the Lord.

The Failure of the Next Generations (vv11-13) – The consequences of this disobedience were devastating.

In the Sight of God (vv11-12) – They thought God wasn't there, or wasn't watching, or didn't care about some aspect of their life or obedience. The Word was not on their hands and upon their foreheads.

Serving Baal and the Ashtoreths (v13) – One author describes Baalism as 'secular humanism of the ancient world'. Baal and Ashtoreth were the male and female counterparts of the essence of the power of Nature. These two powers interacted (mythologically had intercourse) and the fruit of their union was creation. Religious orgies in the temples were to result in stimulating Baal and Ashtoreth to once again 'copulate' and bring forth better crops in the land. But Baal was a hard taskmaster as Psalm 106:34-42

describes.

This Generation, the Next Generation - We must know God. We must know the mighty works of God. We must proclaim those mighty works. We must learn what it is to be in the world but not of the world. We must teach our children the same, believing the promises of Almighty God through Jesus Christ.

Stories - Do you know the stories of God's mighty acts? Do you revel in them? Do you sing them to your children? Are the stories of the failures of God's people in the past before your eyes so that they are strong warnings to you and your children (1 Cor 10:11)? Do you sing these with your children?

Faithfulness - In pagan religions, men try to find out how to manipulate 'the gods'. In Christ, we trust and we rest in a God who is exhaustively sovereign and has brought salvation by grace through faith alone.

Provoking the Lord - We and our children must learn that business and politics, economics and education, science and sex, history and harvests, art and afflictions, music and marriage - all of life belongs to Him. He is a jealous God. We may not attempt to work in any of these areas without acknowledging, obeying and thanking Him in it.

New Covenant - The new covenant is a covenant of better promises, with a different end in mind. When it was brought to full bloom at the death and resurrection of Christ, triumphing over all principalities and powers. We have been brought out of bondage and placed over a land as well. Let us not fool ourselves though. There are no 'neutral' areas in our lives. We are at war with unbelief. But the battle belongs to the Lord of Armies, the Lord of the angels.

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