

Judges 2

Verse 1 - 5

Now the angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim. And he said, “I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land which I have sworn to your fathers; and I said, ‘I will never break My covenant with you, ² and as for you, you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.’ But you have not obeyed Me; what is this you have done? ³ Therefore I also said, ‘I will not drive them out before you; but they will become *as thorns* in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you.’” ⁴ When the angel of the Lord spoke these words to all the sons of Israel, the people lifted up their voices and wept. ⁵ So they named that place Bochim; and there they sacrificed to the Lord.

Now the angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim

The expression, angel of the Lord, was used in the O.T. to refer to God when he appeared to men.

This phrase is used about sixty times in the O.T.

Gilgal usually referred to the camp site of Israel, wherever they were stationed.

In the last chapter of the Book of Joshua, they had brought the Tabernacle from Shiloh up to Shechem for the farewell message of Joshua. Then he sent the 12 tribes home and we can assume the Tabernacle was taken back to Shiloh (its permanent location).

But then in Judges 1 we had a period of war and it seems the Tabernacle had been taken to Gilgal (wherever Israel was camping at the time). Then Israel camped at a place they named Bochim which means “weepers”.

You shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land ... You shall break down their altars ...

God had kept his part of the covenant but Israel had failed to keep their part.

Instead of killing the Canaanites they had enslaved them or lived in peace with them.

But you have not obeyed Me; what is this you have done?

The Angel of the Lord reminded the people of their sin concerning this matter.

Their silence was an admission of guilt.

³ Therefore I also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; but they will become as thorns in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you.

This was God's punishment for their disobedience.

God had given them the land as He had promised but because they failed to keep their part of the covenant He would no longer drive the Canaanites out.

This of course would lead to Israel accepting their life style (worshipping false gods) and eventually lead to much sorrow.

The people lifted up their voices and wept. ⁵ So they named that place Bochim; and there they sacrificed to the Lord.

The people knew they had not obeyed the Lord which caused grief in their hearts and they responded by offering sacrifices for their sin.

Verse 6 - 10

⁶ When Joshua had dismissed the people, the sons of Israel went each to his inheritance to possess the land. ⁷ The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of the Lord which He had done for Israel. ⁸ Then Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of one hundred and ten. ⁹ And they buried him in the territory of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash. ¹⁰ All that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel.

Verses 6 thru 9 are almost a direct quote of Joshua 24:28 – 31.

So why did the writer tell us some events that that happened after the death of Joshua and then go back to the time when Joshua was still alive.

It seems that the writer wanted to give us a picture of Israel between the generation that entered Canaan and faithfully followed the Lord and this new generation that is totally corrupt.

This group of people continued the battle against the people of Canaan but they were not as faithful as the previous generation. They did not kill all of the Canaanites they went to war against but instead either enslaved them or decided to live amongst them. However, they were not nearly as corrupt or evil as the generation that arose and did not know the Lord or His deeds.

It's perfectly natural to talk about different generations but there is never a perfect distinction or break between any two generations because people are being born every day of every year during that time. This "middle" group of people did not fit into either the very faithful or the very corrupt generation.

¹⁰ All that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel.

There was a clear distinction between the two generations.

The faithful generation knew the Lord and understood that God was the One who made their victories possible (by many miracles).

The evil generation didn't know God and didn't know what God had done for Israel in the past (the history of His divine intervention).

One might be tempted to think that the evil generation didn't believe because they had not seen any miracles.

But this is not what our Lord said in Luke 16: 27 – 31.

²⁷ And he said, 'Then I request of you, father, that you send him to my father's house—²⁸ for I have five brothers—in order that he may warn them, so that they will not come to this place of torment as well.'²⁹ But Abraham *said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.'³⁰ But he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!'³¹ But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'"

There is a close association between knowing God's word (what He has done thru history) and believing in Him.

Verse 11 - 15

¹¹ Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals, ¹² and they forsook the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from *among* the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed themselves down to them; thus they provoked the Lord to anger. ¹³ So they forsook the Lord and served Baal and the Ashtaroth. ¹⁴ The anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and He gave them into the hands of plunderers who plundered them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies around *them*, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. ¹⁵ Wherever they went, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil, as the Lord had spoken and as the Lord had sworn to them, so that they were severely distressed.

So they forsook the Lord and served Baal and the Ashtaroth.

Both of these false gods were deities of the fertility cult.

1. Baal was also called the Lord of Rain and Dew, the two forms of moisture that were indispensable for fertile soil in Canaan.

2. Ashtoreth (that's singular; Ashtaroth is plural) is the Hebrew name of a female fertility goddess, which was worshipped from Egypt to Mesopotamia.

This meant the people were breaking the 1st and most important commandment.

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”

Verse 12 says,

They forsook the Lord, the God of their fathers

Followed other gods from *among* the gods of the peoples

Bowed themselves down to them

They provoked the Lord to anger.

Does God get angry? He sure does, but His is righteous anger.

God has also been sorry and grieved.

See Genesis 6:5-8

⁵ Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of mankind was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually. ⁶ So the Lord was sorry that He had made mankind on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. ⁷ Then the Lord said, “I will wipe out mankind whom I have created from the face of the land; mankind, and animals as well, and crawling things, and the birds of the sky. For I am sorry that I have made them.” ⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

God had put himself thru a lot of sorrow, grief, and anger in dealing with mankind.

Should our experience be any different?

The anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and He gave them into the hands of plunderers who plundered them.

The Israelites had two choices – Blessings or Curses

They chose the wrong one.

Verse 16 - 23

¹⁶ Then the Lord raised up judges who delivered them from the hands of those who plundered them. ¹⁷ Yet they did not listen to their judges, for they played the harlot after other gods and bowed themselves down to them. They turned aside quickly from the way in which their fathers had walked in obeying the commandments of the Lord; they did not do as *their fathers*. ¹⁸ When the Lord raised up judges for them, the Lord was with the judge and delivered them from 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 and afflicted them. ¹⁹ But it came about when the judge died, that they would turn back and act more corruptly than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them and bow down to them; they did not abandon their practices or their stubborn ways. ²⁰ So the anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and He said, “Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers and has not listened to My voice, ²¹ I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died, ²² in order to test Israel by them, whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk in it as their fathers did, or not.” ²³ So the Lord allowed those nations to remain, not driving them out quickly; and He did not give them into the hand of Joshua.

16 Then the Lord raised up judges who delivered them from the hands of those who plundered them.

The period of the judges (those listed in the book of Judges) covers a period of about 300 years.

See chart 205

Chapter	Event/Leader	Time	Oppressed	Peace	As leader
1	Taking Canaan	1375			
2	A new generation	1375 - 1350			
3	Othniel	1350 - 1302	8	40	
3	Ehud	1302 - 1204	18	80	
3	Shamgar				
4 - 5	Deborah	1204 - 1144	20	40	
6 - 8	Gideon	1191 - 1144	7	40	
9	Abimelek	1144 - 1141			3
10	Tola	1141 - 1118			23
10	Jair	1118 - 1096			22
10 - 12	Jephthah	1118 - 1094	18		6
12	Ibzan	1094 - 1087			7
12	Elon	1087 - 1078			10
12	Abdon	1077 - 1070			8
13 - 16	Samson	1118 - 1078	40		20

18 When the Lord raised up judges for them, the Lord was with the judge and delivered them from 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 and afflicted them.

God would raise up a judge to deliver Israel from their enemy because God had pity on them.

19 But it came about when the judge died, that they would turn back and act more corruptly than their fathers.

But as soon as that judge died Israel would return to their wicked ways and get even worse than they were before the Judge delivered them.

²¹ I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died, ²² in order to test Israel by them, whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk in it as their fathers did, or not.”

In verses 11 thru 23 we see a pattern than will continue throughout the book of Judges.

1. Israel will forsake the Lord.
2. God would give them into the hands of their enemy.
3. God would raise up a leader to deliver them.
4. When the leader died Israel would become turn back and become even worse than they were before the judge had come.
5. Repeat for 300 years.

This is actually a fair description of mankind from Creation until Christ comes again.