

Failure To Sanctify The Lord As God.

Judges 2.

Sunday evening, December 19, 2010.

Whereas Judges 1 chronicles Israel's failure to dispossess the Canaanites and to fully take the land into possession, Judges two chronicles Israel's failure to stay true to the Lord her God, and to live in covenant with Him. Several snapshots in the life of the nation are given in this chapter.

I The encounter with the Angel of the Lord. Vs. 1-6

- A. This Angel, or messenger, of the Lord appears to be none less than the Lord Jesus Christ who is The Messenger of the Covenant, and who appears in pre-incarnate form at various times in Old Covenant times. He had appeared to Joshua as "the Commander of the Lord's army" in Joshua 5:13-15. He also had accompanied Israel throughout her wilderness wanderings 1 Corinthians 10:4, Exodus 23:20-23.
- B. That it is indeed an appearance of the Lord himself may be seen from the fact that He speaks to the in the first person. He does not bring a message from the Lord, rather he speaks as the Lord. "I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers, and I said, I will never break my covenant with you." Vs. 1.
- C. The Angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal. Gilgal is significant as it constituted the base camp of Israel where she had entered the land having crossed the Jordan River. It is as though the Angel traces Israel's steps from here, weighs their actions, and finds them wanting.
We do not know where Bochim is. It is the place where the Angel met with Israel's representatives. Bochim means weeping, and it may have been in the countryside. Bochim is not the name of a known town.
- D. The Angel announces the consequences of their actions: The very people who's lives they spared and to whom they extended kindness would become thorns in their side, and the gods who's altars they tolerated in their midst would become snares to them.
- E. Israel's response is a hopeful one. A revival seems to be within reach, but the fire that was kindled here was soon to die out as the nation would sink deeper into the guilt of idolatry and covenant breaking.
How did this happen? The next two snapshots explain.

II. A look back. Vs. 7-10.

These verses take us back to Joshua's final meeting with Israel and the renewal of the covenant he presided over. It is recorded in the final chapter of Joshua's book, ch.24. They show us Israel's faithfulness to the Lord all the days of Joshua and the elders who outlived him. Then a new generation took over; a generation which did not know the Lord or the work He had done for Israel, which leads us to the next snapshot.

III. Apostasy and its consequences. Vs 11-15.

- A. This new generation committed two evils:

1. They forsook the Lord God of their fathers.
 2. They followed and served the gods of the people all around them.
- B. This development shows us the nature of mankind. Man is a worshipper. If he does not worship and serve the true God, he will worship and serve the gods of those around him, “everybody is doing it,” or he will worship and serve gods of his own making.
- C. The terms “Baal,” (Baalim) and “Ashtoreth” are mentioned in the plural. Baal means lord, and there were many such lords over different towns and districts. Ashtoreth were the female companions of the Baalim (plural for Baal). They were the goddesses of sensual love and fertility. Their worship involved Israel in grossly immoral practices.
- D. In consequence the Lord delivered them into the hands of their enemies, and in everything they did the hand of the Lord was against them for calamity. They were greatly distressed.

IV. Wrath, and yet mercy. Vs. 16-19.

- A. These verses reveal the heart of God; how He was moved with compassion and mercy because of Israel’s groaning under the oppression. It shows how He longed to deliver them and bring them relief by way of judges He gave them.
- B. These verses also show how Israel, notwithstanding her oppression, did not humble themselves nor did they seek the Lord, and every successive generation was more corrupt than the previous one.
They did not learn from their sufferings, but they hardened their hearts.

V. Summary Vs. 20-23.

In Deuteronomy 7:22 we are told that the Lord was going to give the land gradually to Israel, and that He was not going to drive out the Canaanite nations all at once, so as to let Israel grow into the land and so that the land would not be overtaken by wild beasts. Here we are given additional insight into this matter.

- A. God would use the presence of the Canaanite nations in the land to tests Israel’s loyalty to Him over time; over several generations.
- B. God would use the presence of these Canaanite nations to chastise Israel if they forsook the Lord and His covenant.

Lessons for us.

1. Becoming a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ involves an emptying and a forsaking of the things which we in the course of nature find in our land (life). It is the counterpart of the emptying the Lord Jesus did to become our savior. He gave up the things that kept Him from us; we give up the things that keep us from walking with Him. Luke 14:26,27.
2. In regeneration the Lord gives us certain miraculous victories (like Jericho) over the Canaanites, but He leaves others behind to test our loyalty over time, and to humble us.
3. When we become neglectful to round up the Canaanites in our life, and we stop bringing them for execution to the cross of Christ, then God uses those same Canaanites we have spared, and even made friends with, to become thorns and snares in our lives, piercing us through with many sorrows.