

Day 240 - MONDAY: August 28th

Judges 2

Judges 2:1-23 NKJV

Then the Angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said: "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. And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.' But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this? 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.' " So it was, when the Angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voices and wept. Then they called the name of that place Bochim; and they sacrificed there to the LORD. And when Joshua had dismissed the people, the children of Israel went each to his own inheritance to possess the land. So the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD which He had done for Israel. Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died when he was one hundred and ten years old. And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Heres, in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash. When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel. Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals; and they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger. They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they

could no longer stand before their enemies. Wherever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for calamity, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed. Nevertheless, the LORD raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them. Yet they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot with other gods, and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the LORD; they did not do so. And when the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them out of 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 them and harassed them. And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way. Then the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and He said, "Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers, and has not heeded My voice, I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died, so that through them I may test Israel, whether they will keep the ways of the LORD, to walk in them as their fathers kept them, or not." Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them out immediately; nor did He deliver them into the hand of Joshua.

Daily Deep Dive:

Today's UCG reading plan states: "The halfhearted efforts of the Israelite tribes in dealing with the inhabitants of Canaan as God had instructed resulted in God's refusal to drive out the remaining Canaanites. Instead, those Canaanites would be a continual source of misery and frustration for Israel. Yet when God told Israel that He would not drive out what Israel was only too willing to live with, all Israel could do was weep and sacrifice. They were unable to bring themselves to repentance. They were unable to rise up with one voice, confess their

sin, and rededicate themselves to the prompt fulfilling of God's command if He would grant them forgiveness.

This lamentable condition was the result of missing components in Israel's character and government—components that are vital to any enterprise. The first component is strong, fearless, visionary leadership. Without leaders who are willing to lead, willing to set forth a vision and fearless in its pursuit, the people involved in the enterprise will limp along, wandering from pillar to post, never accomplishing any great thing. For Israel, the generation that went in to the Land of Promise under Joshua was a generation that had such leaders. Men like Joshua and Caleb, and the elders of Israel, though making occasional mistakes, were not afraid to lead. The vision was clearly laid out for them and they pursued it fearlessly, despite occasional errors.

But after Joshua and his generation died, the leaders who filled their offices were not cut from the same cloth. These men, and the people they led, "did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel" (Judges 2:10). Now certainly they did know about God. They had been keeping His feasts, observing His Sabbaths, sacrificing at His tabernacle, and certainly they had heard the stories of the Exodus under Moses and the conquest begun under Joshua. These men, however, did not "know" the Lord nor His works in the sense of having personally experienced them.

These are the second and third necessary components to right character—a personal knowing of God and a sharp remembrance of His works. The second generation knew of God, but they did not personally know God; they had become lax in their spiritual condition. They knew of the

Exodus, but they did not lay to heart the lessons of it. They knew of the conquest, but they had largely grown up during one of those tranquil periods in which God intended that Israel dwell in the land already conquered and build their strength for the next period of conquest.

A personal knowing of God, a remembrance of His works and strong, visionary and fearless leadership act as internal and external restraints on the carnal nature's desire to let down, compromise and just make do. When any one of those three elements is missing, the people are loosed of restraint and end up living comfortably with sin. Israel's second generation lacked those qualities, and as a result they did not pursue their God-given inheritance with vigor, but preferred to make do with what they had, to compromise and live with a certain amount of sin.

By not studying the Old Testament, people can slip into the same errors without realizing their predicament. Indeed, ancient Israel is supposed to be an example for us (see 1 Corinthians 10:1-9). As Christians we cannot afford to make the same mistakes. Each of us must come to personally know God, to have real and daily experience of Him. Each of us must develop a sharp memory for what God has done for Israel, for the Church and for us in our private lives. Leaders must lead. Do not be timid or fearful. A light yoke is laid upon each of us, therefore let us all work the harder that we may partake of a very bountiful harvest.” [END]

Verse 1 – While some claim that this was some prophet from Gilgal, it’s more likely the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ. We have already seen that “angel” in the Hebrew simply means “messenger” and can be used for human or spirit messengers as well as the Word (the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ). Notice that here there is no “thus says the Lord” to indicate that

this messenger is bringing a message from God, but instead speaks in the first-person as the one who brought them out of Egypt and made a covenant with them. So why might He be said to come up from Gilgal? It was at or near Gilgal when the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ met with Joshua (compare Joshua 5:13) and this seems to be the last place He met with them, so it appears they are referring to the last place they saw Him as where He was coming from. It was at Gilgal that the Israelites made a solemn dedication of themselves to God after entering the promise land (compare Joshua 4:1-9).

Verse 5 – “Bochim” means “weeping” (BDB).

Verse 11 – Adam Clarke’s commentary states: “The word בעלים baalim signifies lords. Their false gods they considered supernatural rulers or governors, each having his peculiar district and office; but when they wished to express a particular בעל baal, they generally added some particular epithet, as Baal-zephon, Baal-peor, Baal-zehub, Baal-shamayim, etc., as Calmet has well observed. The two former were adored by the Moabites; Baal-zebub by the Ekronites. Baal-berith was honored at Shechem; and Baal-shamayim, the lord or ruler of the heavens, was adored among the Phoenicians, Syrians, Chaldeans, etc. And whenever the word baal is used without an epithet, this is the god that is intended; and probably, among all these people, it meant the sun.”
[END]

Verse 13 – Adam Clarke’s commentary states: “In a general way, probably, Baal and Ashtaroth mean the sun and moon; but in many cases Ashtaroth seems to have been the same among the Canaanites as Venus was among the Greeks and Romans, and to have been worshipped with the same obscene rites.” [END]

Verse 17 – Even when God raised up a leader for the people who redirected them to obey God and stop their false worship, the people didn’t want to listen to the wise counsel.

Verse 23 – God could have driven out these nations in spite of the failings of Israel, but He choose to use these nations as tools in His hands for the purpose of seeing whether Israel would obey and choose Him or choose to serve false gods. Where does God allow tests in our lives to see whether we will follow Him or choose our own path?