

## Judges Chapter 02 Commentary

**1 And an angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you.**

Israel is called together to Bochim to hear a message from God, which is presented by the angel of the Lord. God reminds Israel how he brought them from Egypt to where they are today.

Did you notice the wording? "***I made you to go up out of Egypt,***" This is pictorial of the new birth, in this age of salvation by grace. You were not the cause of your birth in nature, and you cannot cause your spiritual new birth, which is required by God to be in the eternal kingdom, by your own choice.

Followed by: "***and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers;***" When you are born again by the Holy Spirit power, you automatically become a part of the family of God, which is the embodiment of the church on earth in time. However, we must remember; being born-again and becoming a child of God, does not make you a disciple of Christ. You must make the choice to be a follower and student of Jesus. This choice is something you do, joining the church and being baptized, because of the new birth that has already happened by the Holy Ghost power.

Followed by: "***I will never break my covenant with you.***" This points out the eternal work of salvation by grace, which was fulfilled in the finished work of Jesus. Praise the Lord; we cannot mess up our eternal life. What Jesus finished; we cannot mess up. What we can change, in this life, is the choice to fulfill the covenant, which we make with God, when we commit to discipleship in Christ, and join the visible church body, and walk in the ordinance of baptism. We often make a total mess of our Christian lives by failing to walk in faithfulness to God.

**2 And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this?**

God tells Israel; he has not broken his covenant with Israel, but Israel, through disobedience, has broken the covenant, and thereby made the covenant invalid. God ask them why they have done this. I commanded you to destroy all the inhabitants of the land of promise, and to destroy their idols. You have not followed my commandment; therefore, you have broken my covenant with you. God asks them; "***why have ye done this?***"

I ask you, and me, these questions:

- Have you removed all traces of idolatry from your Christian life? Remember, idolatry is anything you choose to serve ahead of God, putting God in second place.
- Have you made a league with people of the world, maybe, through your job, a club you join, or some other circumstance, which is not in accordance with God's word and will? If we have; we are in the same position as Israel. We cannot be in union with the devil during the week, and then serve God on Sunday. That is living in hypocrisy.

**3 ¶ Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you. 4 And it came to pass, when the angel of the**

**LORD spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept. 5 And they called the name of that place Bochim: and they sacrificed there unto the LORD.**

God tells Israel: you have broken the covenant you made with me, which covenant said; I would deliver the enemies of the land of promise into your hands for destruction, if you would follow me wholly and do not turn to idolatry. Wherefore, I will now fulfill the penalty clause of our covenant, which I told you, up front, I would do if you failed to keep the covenant. The penalty clause is I will not deliver your enemies to you; I will give you into their hand, and I will cause the plaques of the land to be upon you, and your children, if you fail to fulfill your promise to me.

When Israel hears the condemnation "***I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you.***" Hearing that God is withdrawing his blessing from them, Israel begins to weep and mourn. Wherefore, they named that place Bochim, which means *to weep, to bemoan, to bewail, or to make lamentation*. They follow this by offering sacrifice to God, hoping to appease God of his wrath.

When we fail to wholly follow Christ, and we hear the gospel preached, it should bring us to repentance, prayer, and supplication, to God, begging for forgiveness of our sins.

**6 And when Joshua had let the people go, the children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land. 7 And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel. 8 ¶ And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, *being* an hundred and ten years old. 9 And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathheres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash. 10 And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.**

These verses are inserted here, from Joshua chapter 24, as a reminder of what happened prior to this present scene, before Joshua, and those of his generation, died. Those who had promised to serve the Lord, only. These verses affirm; Joshua, and those of his generation who kept the covenant of God, have all died. This gives us a timeline to the present circumstance. Scholars put Joshua's age when he went in to spy the land of promise the first time at 38-40. They have traveled 40 years in the wilderness, so he is 78-80 when Israel enters the land of promise. Joshua is 110 years old when he dies, so Israel has been in the land of promise about 30 years now. Long enough for all the older generation to die and the younger generation to assume all the offices of leadership.

This new generation, who did not make a covenant with God, is ruling themselves, doing that which is right in their own eyes. This new generation has not experienced the miraculous saving power of God, or the awful wrath of God's judgment. God means nothing to them in a personal way, even though, we are sure they have heard of all that God has done for Israel.

In today's vernacular, this new generation is living under the guise of the new morality, which is the devil blinding the mind of men to the truth of God. That is what it was then, and it is still the same today, men doing that which is right in their own eyes. There is a reason God left us the bible, the testimony of Jesus and the Truth. The bible sets the standard for morality for all people, not just God's chosen people. Remember, this earth and all that is in it is God's own creation, which gives him

ownership. God has leased the earth to the people, and he has many unfaithful renters, who are not living up to the lease agreement.

This is a stark reminder to us today: the new birth must take place in a sinner's life; we must experience the miraculous working of God's Holy Spirit; before we can believe or have faith. This helps us understand, if one has not been born-again, they cannot understand or believe, because they are still enveloped in the darkness of sin, which separates the saved and the unsaved. As these children, of those who saw the miracles of God, have not seen God's miraculous power of salvation cannot believe, neither can those who are not born-again. All Israel had heard of the mighty works of God, but they did not believe. Today, many people hear the preaching of the gospel, but they do not believe.

This pattern of turning to, and from, God will continue in the lives of Israel, as we go forward in scripture. The pattern, of God delivering his people when they turn to him and serve him faithfully, will continue. The pattern, of God giving his people over to their enemies when they fall away, will also continue. We can certainly make self-application of these principles to our own lives, as we walk in discipleship to Christ.

**11 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: 12 ¶ And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that *were* round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. 13 And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth. 14 And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. 15 Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed.**

We see that what God told Israel is true, not only for Israel, but for us today also. Just apply the covenant promises of God to Israel; to protect in obedience, and to destroy in disobedience; to ourselves, after making your covenant promise to be a disciple of Christ Jesus and walking in baptism. If we turn away from our promise; God's wrath will be kindled, and we lose the benefit of God's protection. Our enemies will be thorns in our sides, and we will become their captives.

As this happened in Israel over time, so it is with us. A little sin, committed without immediate admonition or retribution, leads to more sins, until we are no longer living the covenant life. We may still be in church membership, but we are now living hypocritical lives, having broken our covenant vow to Christ Jesus. God, in his wrath for our disobedience, will allow us to be overcome with the evils of this life, giving us over into the hand of the devil and his minions for punishment here in time.

Dear God, our heavenly Father, please keep us in true faithfulness to you and our Saviour and Lord, Christ Jesus. We pray in the name of Jesus, Amen!

**16 Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. 17 ¶ And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, *but* they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; but they did not so. 18 And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand**

of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them. 19 ¶ And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, *that* they returned, and corrupted *themselves* more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way.

God, in his infinite mercy and grace, being grieved at the distress of Israel, his chosen people, because of their afflictions by their enemies, raises up judges to rule over Israel and bring them respite from their enemies. As soon as the leader, chosen by God to deliver them, is dead, they immediately begin to turn from God. They continue this pattern under each judge that God sends them for their deliverance.

Do you see a comparable pattern that your own life follows? Do you see; when you are faithful to Christ in following the commandments of God; you are lifted above sinfulness, and you live in the miraculous abundance of the grace of God. However, as you take little steps away, and begin to forget God in your abundance, we see the same pattern of God's wrath and vengeance upon us. Yet, when God sends us sore trials and afflictions; we may cry out to God for mercy and turn back to his service.

**20 And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice; 21 I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died: 22 ¶ That through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk therein, as their fathers did keep *it*, or not. 23 Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua.**

I point out again, if all of Israel had entered the land of promise, under the leadership of Joshua, God would have driven these nations of people out. Why? Because they would have needed all the land of promise, to have enough space for the twelve tribes to inhabit. When God stopped raising up the kings, of the land of promise, and overthrowing them before Joshua and Israel, there was enough land conquered for the nine and one-half tribes to occupy.

We do not know exactly how long it took Israel, from the last recorded battle of Joshua until the present time, to turn from God, but at most, it did not take long for Israel to turn away from God to idolatry. When Joshua died, they had been there 30 years. It only took 40 years in the wilderness for the generation that rejected God's commandment, to enter in, to die out completely. So, applying this standard, 40 years from the time they entered until that generation died out.

This gives us an idea of why, they were not delivered into the hand of Joshua. God is dealing with Israel's disobedience in another 40-year cycle. Now, these tribes that did enter are left to fight to gain possession, and maintain possession, of their designated properties. God, as he had told them in the covenant they made with God, has left these kings and nations in place to be a thorn in their sides.

We see in this the prophetic picture; when we are born-again by the Holy Spirit power, our old sin nature is not removed from our bodies. That sin nature remains in our flesh, just like God left the former inhabitants of the land of promise to be thorns to Israel. It is because of this inherit sin nature, that we can never be fully free from sin, nor fully inhabit the land of promise, the church on earth. We

do look forward to the time when we will inhabit the eternal land of promise, the place Jesus has gone to prepare for us in eternity.

This demonstrates the difference in time and eternal salvation. In time, we still have the inherit sin nature. In eternity, our fleshly bodies are changed to immortal and incorruptible bodies, which have no sin in them. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

This chapter is like a prelude to the following chapters of Judges, giving us an overview, of the things we shall see happening, as we go forward in our scripture study. In the next chapter we will begin meeting the judges and learn the circumstances of their service to God and Israel.