

### **The Changed Relationship of God and Israel**

When we left last week, we saw that Israel had left their enemies in the land. Israel had broken the covenant that God had instituted to protect them from the Canaanites' idolatrous influence. Israel thought they could successfully co-exist with their enemies. However, they couldn't and neither can we!

This week we will study Judges 2:1-3:6 where we will see God coming to Israel to instate the curses of the Mosaic Covenant. Israel's heart had become so hardened that, without God changing His relationship with them, Israel would not have been able to find their way back to Him. Therefore, God, who was bound by covenant to Israel, was again the initiator. God would allow Israel to fully experience all the consequences of their disobedience so they would then understand the loving parameters of God's law.

Read Judges, chapter 2.

*Note:* The timing of this section of Scripture is tricky. We will call those who left Egypt and then died during the 40 years of wandering in the desert - generation one. Only Joshua and Caleb outlived that generation to enter the Promised Land. Joshua then led the elders of the second generation in taking control of the Promised Land. Generation two had a period of peace as they resided in each of their tribes' allotments. Just before his death, Joshua again called this second generation to continue to remove their enemies from the land. After Joshua's death, this second generation again engaged the enemies in each tribe's allotment but ultimately decided to just co-exist with them (Judges 1). During the time that generation two co-existed with their enemies, generation three grew up watching their apathetic parents intermingle with the Canaanites. Eventually generation two died. Judges 2:1-5 depicts the confrontation between God and the third generation that is now free of their parents' influence and, thus, making their own choices.

Why the confrontation? The author of Judges explains why in Judges 2:6-13. He begins the second introduction (2:6-3:6) by jumping back in time to show how the second and third generations each handled this period of co-existence that occurred just prior to the confrontation in 2:1-5. In this lesson, we will study how this third generation abandoned God so that God now must change His relationship with them, according to the specifications of the covenant. Judges 2:11-19 explains how the relationship with this third generation changed, whereas 2:20-3:6 shows what God intended to teach Israel through this change.

Stop and Pray - God, this is a difficult passage. Help me to understand it. Help me to grasp Your love for Your lost children that moves You to reach out to those who have forgotten You.

1. Have you ever tangled with a thorn bush or a mousetrap? Relate your experience to the group.

Read Judges 1:1-2:5. Reread 2:1-5. Refer to last week's lesson for your marked text. Notice to what lengths God will go to communicate with His lost children. God collectively used the timing, the location of the confrontation, the messenger, and the message to make an impact on Israel.

2. The timing: The people being confronted here were the third generation.
  - a. According to Judges 2:1-5, why was God initiating communication with Israel?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. What had occurred during the period of co-existence with the Canaanites to cause this confrontation? You may find Judges 1:1-2:5, Joshua 23:6-13, Exodus 23:32-33, and Deuteronomy 32:15-18 helpful.

*Study tip:* When God specifically preserves a name of a place or person in Scripture, He usually has a reason. Looking up the Hebrew meaning of the name or researching what happened at that particular place in history can be very enlightening.

3. The location: ...from Gilgal to Bochim.
  - a. Joshua 5:9 tells us that the naming of Gilgal (a Hebrew word that can mean “circle (of stones)” or “rolling” from the word *galal*, “to roll”) comes from God’s statement to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.” Look up the word “reproach” in a dictionary.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. What else had occurred at Gilgal that would support the meaning of the name? See Joshua 4:19-24; 5:2-12.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - c. What would Gilgal have represented in the mind of an Israelite?

4. The messenger: Who is the “Angel of the Lord”? Is it an angel or something more? Support your answer from Judges 2:1-5 and any other Scriptures that come to mind, including Judges 6:11-24.
  
5. The message:
  - a. What do you think is the tone of the angel’s message in Judges 2:1-3? Explain your thinking.
  
  - b. Because the third generation had broken the covenant and forgotten God, what consequence was going to be instated?
  
  - c. Think carefully of the very descriptive wording used by the Lord to describe the consequences. What would it be like to live with these consequences?
  
  - d. Why would God do this? How is this loving and good for Israel?
  
6. The people’s response:
  - a. What was the third generation’s response to God’s indictment?

*Note:* Bochim means “weeping” in Hebrew.

- b. Where were the sacrifices supposed to be made (Deuteronomy 12:1-8; Joshua 18:1, 8)?

- c. Was their response enough to satisfy God? Why or why not? Support your answer from Judges 2 and Deuteronomy 30:2-3.

*Heart Check:* How about you? Are you living in Gilgal (the place of right relationship and victory with God) or Bochim (the place of weeping over your disobedience)? Why do you think this?

The Second Introduction - Read Judges 2:6-3:6, included in this lesson, and mark it according to the instructions. Mark it as a whole even though we will study 2:20-3:6 in more detail next week.

*Note:* Remember, Judges 2:6-9 corresponds to Joshua 24:29-31, flashes back in history, and links the books of Joshua and Judges. It is no longer talking about those indicted by God in Judges 2:1-5, but is now talking about their parents (second generation). Judges 2:10-13 again returns to describing the third generation.

This second generation, who lived under Joshua's leadership, is described in 2:7 as serving the Lord all their days because they knew God and the great works the Lord had done for Israel as Israel's covenant partner. In the battles under Joshua, the older generation of Israelites had seen many a great work of God on their behalf that had grown their faith in God. They had personally experienced God's protection, provision, and promise-keeping. Although they dabbled in idolatry, they quickly returned to God when confronted by Joshua (Joshua 24:23).

7. Reread Judges 2:10. Regardless of their strong faith, what affect did the second generation's apathy, concerning the enemy in chapter 1, have on their children (generation three) according to this section of Scripture? From the context, what does this description mean? ("*know*" - to know experientially)
8. No matter what your relationship is to the younger generation, what can you do today to influence them to know the Lord and also the works of the Lord as a covenant-keeping God?

9. This ignorance on the part of the younger generation led to doing “evil in the eyes of the Lord”.
  - a. How does Judges 2:11-12 describe this evil that provoked God to anger? Look for four phrases the author of Judges uses to describe the reason God will change His relationship with Israel.
  - b. How does God’s complaint against Israel in 2:12-13 correspond with God’s ultimate standard for our relationship with Him? See Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Deuteronomy 10:12-13; Joel 2:12-13; Micah 6:6-8; Matthew 22:37-40; I John 5:3.
  
10. Does this same pattern occur today? Let’s think about it.
  - a. In our society we have seen the forsaking of God. In your opinion, how has this led to the following of false gods?
  - b. What might you expect the consequences to be? Why?
  
11. The cycle: Because Israel’s heart for God has been destroyed to the point that on their own they will not want to find their way back to God (“forgot God,” Judges 3:7), God is going to introduce a cycle that will help Israel find Him again. Once again, write out the stages of this cycle that is foretold in Judges 2:13-19, including a short description of each stage. (Refer back to lesson 1, question 6.)

*Study Tip* - This is the ideal cycle. We will see this cycle repeated several times in the lives of the judges in chapters 3-6. When all elements of this cycle were present in the story, Israel spiritually returned to God through the judge’s work. However, in each successive cycle part of this ideal cycle is missing. Therefore, the saving is not as complete. Remember this cycle as you read about each judge to evaluate how effective each judge is in saving Israel.

12. Because Israel had violated the covenant, what was God now going to leave in the land? See Judges 2:20-3:6.

Final Thoughts: It's a sorry state that Israel has gotten themselves into, isn't it? If God is with you, who can be against you? But, if God is against you, who can stand? God intended victory. Israel had put themselves in a place of weeping. God wants us to live always in Gilgal in radical dependence on Him! But so many of us live in Bochim, having split our allegiance and forgotten how God really wants us to live.

Is your heart fully in allegiance to God or does your heart belong to other things? Do you serve, follow, worship, and bow down to your goals and agendas regardless of what God has specifically asked of you in His Word? God wants our whole heart. If we will not give it to Him, He will allow us to see what it is like to live without Him with the purpose of bringing our hearts back to Himself.

Pray - Father, I desire that my allegiance be only to You. Show me where it is not and help me return wholeheartedly to You.

Kyna Ritchie (original 2002; revised 2013)

## **Lesson 6 — The People’s Perspective vs. The Root Problem — Judges 2:6-3:6**

Examine your text. Refer to last week’s text to answer the first half of this week’s questions and then, when instructed, mark this section of text.

Mark your text. Put a circle around all conditional words (e.g. but, so that, therefore, as). Put a red box around all references to the covenant. Put a box around time words (e.g. then, after, when). Underline all references to the following, including all pronouns or allusions to:

- God in red
- an enemy in black
- the judge in green
- an enemy’s gods with a black jagged line
- Israel in blue, making a distinction between the older generation and the younger generation

### **Judges 2:6-3:6 — The Root Problem**

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. 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. 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.

### Chapter 3

1 Now these are the nations which the LORD left, to test Israel by them (that is, all who had not experienced any of the wars of Canaan; 2 only in order that the generations of the sons of Israel might be taught war, those who had not experienced it formerly). 3 These nations are: the five lords of the Philistines and all the Canaanites and the Sidonians and the Hivites who lived in Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal-hermon as far as Lebo-hamath. 4 They were for testing Israel, to find out if they would obey the commandments of the LORD, which He had commanded their fathers through Moses. 5 The sons of Israel lived among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; 6 and they took their daughters for themselves as wives, and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods.

(Judges 2:6-3:6, NASB95)