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Judges 2

(2020)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Judges 2

Topics.

- The Angel of the LORD will no longer drive the Canaanites out.
- Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua.
- A generation arose after Joshua who did not know the LORD.
- Israel served the Baals, so the LORD was against them for harm.
- The LORD raised up judges, who saved Israel from their enemies.
- Whenever the Judge died, Israel turned to other gods.
- The LORD will no longer drive out any nation that Joshua had left.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF JUDGES

The Israelites forgot the LORD, and worshipped false gods, so the LORD removed His protection and blessings from them, which resulted in them being oppressed by their enemies and crying to the LORD for deliverance. In answer to their prayer the LORD raised up twelve Judges to deliver them, but not Judges as we think of Judges today or preachers of righteousness, but rather military leaders and fighters, that led Israel to triumph over their enemies and delivered them from their wicked behaviour. Most suppose that Samuel (considered by some to be the last Judge) wrote some parts of the book, while other parts were written at a later time by someone of his generation or a later generation. The primary purpose of the Judges is best articulated in the following words, "The LORD raised up Judges, who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them. (Judges 2:16). For an overview of the entire book see the title:

- Overview of the Book of Judges (at the beginning of the index).

THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER

Firstly, lists the places that the tribes of Judah and Othniel Caleb's brother, and the tribes of Judah and Simeon together and the house of Joseph captured. Secondly it lists the places that the tribes of Manasseh, Ephraim, Zebulun, Asher and Naphtali could not drive the inhabitants out of and lastly it states, that the house of Joseph forced the Amorites to labour for them and pay taxes.

INTRODUCTION TO THIS CHAPTER

This chapter begins by recounting Israel's past history; it covers the Exodus and all the time of Joshua up to his death (v9). Then the chapter begins a new era for Israel, telling the story of a new generation in the land of Canaan.

JUDGES 2:1-3

- **Judges 2:1-3:** "Now the angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bochim. And he said, "I brought you up from Egypt and brought you into the land that I swore to give to your fathers. I said, 'I will never break my covenant with you, ² and you shall make no

covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall break down their altars.' But you have not obeyed my voice. What is this you have done? ³ So now I say, I will not drive them out before you, but they shall become thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare to you."

The meaning of the word angel: from Strong's Concordance; the English word angel in the Old Testament is from the Hebrew word mal'ak. In the New Testament the English word angel is from the Greek word aggelos. The word mal'ak in the Old Testament and the word aggelos in the New Testament have sometimes been translated to the English word messenger or messengers while at other times mal'ak and aggelos are translated angel or angels.

Malak: means to dispatch as a deputy, a messenger, an ambassador or a representative it can apply to and angel of God, a king, a prophet, a priest or teacher. The same word is used for the supernatural angels of God and for human messengers, which means it can apply to God's supernatural angels or human men who are sent as messengers.

Aggelos: means a messenger or envoy sent from God to bring tidings. Aggelos is used all of the time in the New Testament for the supernatural angels of God (except for Luke chapter twenty) but it is also used for human men (i.e., pastors, ministers and such like), which means, aggelos can apply to God's supernatural angels or human messengers. From Genesis to Revelation there is:

- An angel of the LORD and of God.
- Angels that do the work of God.
- Angels that appear as humans.
- In the book of Revelation, Jesus has an angel.
- Human men who are called angels.

2

NOTE: concerning angels it is interesting to notice the following two things:

1. Angels are sent to individuals whereas prophets are sent to nations.
2. When angels are sent to individuals, they speak in the first person, whereas when they speak to prophets, they begin their words with, "Thus saith the LORD."
3. The angel in (Judges 2:1) appears to multitudes, which is the only time in Scripture that an angel, speaks or preaches to multitudes.

OVERVIEW: The Angel of the LORD was sent to guard Israel, drive out the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and the Jebusites and to bring Israel safety into the place that God had prepared. Israel was to obey the voice of this angel and not rebel against him or God would blot them out. (Exod. 14:19) (Exod. 23:20-23) (Exod. 33:2)

For further information on angels and the Angel of the LORD see the title:

- Angels, (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal: (v1) ancient Gilgal is mentioned 39 times, as the place where the Israelites first camped immediately after crossing the Jordan River. It was located on the eastern border of Jericho.

- The people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they encamped at Gilgal on the east border of Jericho. (Josh. 4:19).

Two major events that took place at Gilgal:

1. When Israel had finished passing over the Jordan River, one man from each of the twelve tribes carried a stone from the dried-out river bed where the priests carrying the ark of the LORD feet stood and with the stones built an altar in Gilgal where they camped on their very first night in the Promised Land. This altar was to be or a memorial sign forever, so when their children asked, "What do those stones mean?" They could tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, when they passed over the Jordan river and entered the Promised Land. (Joshua 4:1-10).
2. On the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, while camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, the Israelites celebrated the Passover. (Josh. 5:9-10) The very day after the Passover, they ate some of the produce of the land and the manna immediately stopped.
 - And the manna ceased the day after they ate of the produce of the land. And there was no longer manna for the people of Israel, but they ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year. (Josh. 5:12).

Because the angel of the LORD appeared to Joshua at Gilgal on the border of Jericho (Josh. 4:19) as a man with his drawn sword in his hand who said, "he was the commander of the army of the LORD." (Joshua 5:13-15), it is supposed by many that this is the same angel that is now appearing to Israel here in Judges chapter one, for the following reason:

- The fact he appears coming from Gilgal, signifies that he was the angel that brought them to Gilgal, which was the first place where they camped in Canaan, and where they built an altar of twelve stones, and from where the angel went out with Joshua and the armies of Israel to battle and gave them great success.

But this time he is not coming to promise them success, but to ask why his orders had not been carried out, and to rebuke them for their ingratitude to God, and for not driving out the Canaanites because of their fearful and faint-heartedness and announce that his conquering power would be withdrawn and that defeats were about to follow and not victory, because they had not obeyed his voice as they agreed to at the beginning.

The LORD'S promises: recorded in His covenant with Israel were dependent upon their fulfilment of the conditions in the covenant they agreed to.

NOTE: it is interesting to notice that there are no other instances in Scripture where an angel appears to, or preaches to, multitudes as he seems to do here in (Judges 2:1).

Bochim (also spelled Bokim): (v1) means weepers, it is situated west of the River Jordan. Bochim was not the name of the place before, the angel told them, "He would no longer drive the Canaanites out before them," (v3), but was given to the place afterward, because of the lamentations of the children of Israel.

I will never break my covenant: (v1) the covenant embraced both blessings (Deut. 28:1-14) and curses (Deut. 28:15-68). If it was broken, it would never be God that broke it, for He would never dishonour or break His promise, rather Israel, by their blatant and repeated sins and idolatry broke it which means they brought the curses of it upon themselves and by doing so forfeited all claim to the benefits.

God promised to abundantly bless them if they obeyed His commands, and bring them to ruin if they didn't, which means to keep His covenant and promise He must bring them to ruin as the covenant Israel agreed to said He would if they sinned against Him and turned to idolatries and pagan gods, which they did.

You shall make no covenant: (v2) one of the conditions written in the covenant that Israel entered into with God was to make no covenants with the inhabitants of the land of Canaan as the following verses state:

- When the LORD your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction. You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them. (Deut. 7:2).
- You shall surely destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree.³ You shall tear down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and burn their Asherim with fire. You shall chop down the carved images of their gods and destroy their name out of that place. (Deut. 12:2-3).
- I will set your border from the Red Sea to the Sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the Euphrates, for I will give the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you shall drive them out before you.³² You shall make no covenant with them and their gods.³³ They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against me; for if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you.” (Exod. 23:31-33).
- Take care, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you go, lest it become a snare in your midst.¹³ You shall tear down their altars and break their pillars and cut down their Asherim. (Exodus 34:12-13).

Rather than obey God, Israel did the exact opposite:

- They did not devote the Canaanites to destruction or drive them out, but instead forced them to labour for them and pay taxes.
- They made alliances and covenants with various inhabitants of the land.
- They tolerated their altars and allowed them to offer sacrifices to their idols and to continue with their religious practices and customs.

They shall be as thorns in your sides: because Israel would take their women for wives, and the Canaanites that remained in the land would constantly trouble them and lead them away from the Lord their God, to worship idols and pagan gods.

What is this you have done? (v2) meaning, “why have you transgressed against the commandment of God?” God is not seeking an answer here for Himself, for He already knows their hearts and their works. The question is asked, with the intention of those being asked it, looking into their own hearts and asking themselves, the same question, in the hope they would:

- See their own foolishness and the wickedness of their heart and their actions
- See their total lack of gratitude for all that God had done for them.
- Be pricked in their conscience and come to repentance.

JUDGES 2:4-6

- **Judges 2:4-5:** As soon as the angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the people of Israel, the people lifted up their voices and wept.⁵ And they called the name of that place Bochim. And they sacrificed there to the LORD.⁶ When Joshua dismissed the people, the people of Israel went each to his inheritance to take possession of the land.

The people lifted up their voices and wept: (v4) some probably from a true sense of their sins, while others from an apprehension of their approaching defeats and misery. When Israel trusted God and obeyed the sound that was heard amongst them was that of singing and praise, but when they disobeyed the sound of praise turned to the sound of weeping.

They sacrificed there: (v5) it is pleasing for God to see His people weeping for their sins; but no matter how sorrowful the tears, and how sincere the prayers, only the Passover Lamb can atone for our sin, which

is the reason they offer sacrifices for the atonement of their sins and the breaking of the covenant, by which they had forced the hand of the LORD to bring the curses recorded in the covenant upon them, so that they would come to repentance and regain God's compassion, mercy and favour.

Bochim (also spelled Bokim): (v5) means weepers, it is situated west of the River Jordan. Bochim was not the name of the place before, the angel told them, "He would no longer drive the Canaanites out before them," (v3), but was given to the place afterward, because of the lamentations of the children of Israel.

JUDGES 2:7-9

- **Judges 2:7-9:** And 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 work that the LORD had done for Israel. ⁸ And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of 110 years. ⁹ And they buried him within the boundaries of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of the mountain of Gaash.

These verses are almost verbally identical with (Josh. 24:28-31). If it is right that the Angel of the LORD here is the same Angel that appeared to Israel at their first camp at Gilgal when they first entered Canaan, they may be repeated here to give us insights into the reasons the Angel of the LORD gave such a strong and severe rebuke.

Joshua died at 110 years: (v8) at the time Caleb went in to spy out the land of Canaan he was forty years old.

- I (Caleb) was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land, and I brought him word again as it was in my heart. (Joshua 14:7).

5

After spying out the land they spent forty years in the wilderness, which means that Caleb would have been eighty years old when they crossed the River Jordan and entered the Promised Land, because of this it is generally supposed that Joshua was around the same age as Caleb. Should this be correct it means Joshua was about eighty when he set foot on the land of Canaan, and therefore spent thirty-years leading Israel, before he died at one hundred and ten years old.

Great work that the LORD had done for Israel: (v7) following are some of the great works of the LORD:

- The mighty works of God in Egypt and the Red Sea.
- Their enemies destroyed by hail-stones.
- The crossing of the Jordan River.
- The falling down of the walls of Jericho.
- The sun standing still at the word of Joshua.
- The overthrow of the Canaanite nations.

The elders who outlived Joshua: (v7) if Joshua was about eighty when he entered Canaan, and thirty years brings us to the close of his life at one hundred and ten. The elders would embrace all the men who were old enough to take part in the wars and conquest of Canaan which was from the age of twenty to seventy, which means that a period of around fifty years could be assigned from the time Israel entered Canaan to the death of the elders (i.e., 20 years after the death of Joshua). One of the reasons Israel's national character and faith stood high amongst those who first entered the land of Canaan, would have been because they

retained a vivid recollection of all the miracles and judgments that they had witnessed in Egypt, at the Red sea, in the wilderness, at the river Jordan, and in the land of Canaan. But when the new generation arose who had only heard of these things, they readily yielded to the corrupting influences of the idolatry that surrounded them.

In the border of his inheritance: (v9) the borders of Joshua's inheritance are recorded in the following verses:

- When they had finished distributing the several territories of the land as inheritances, the people of Israel gave an inheritance among them to Joshua the son of Nun. ⁵⁰ By command of the LORD they gave him the city that he asked, Timnath-serah (translated Timnath-heres in Josh. 2:9) in the hill country of Ephraim. And he rebuilt the city and settled in it. (Josh. 19:49-50).

Timnath-heres/Timnath-serah was a rugged and barren district in Mount Ephraim on the north side of the hill Gaash.

ISRAEL'S FAITHFULNESS

JUDGES 2:10-13

- **Judges 2:10-13:** And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD or the work that he had done for Israel. ¹¹ And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals. ¹² And they abandoned the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them. And they provoked the LORD to anger. ¹³ They abandoned the LORD and served the Baals and the Ashtaroth.

Gathered to their fathers: (v10) similar language is used in the following verses.

6

- Therefore, behold, I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace, and your eyes shall not see all the disaster that I will bring upon this place.” And they brought back word to the king. (2 Kings 22:20).
- As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. (Genesis 15:15).
- Otherwise it will come to pass, when my lord the king sleeps with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon will be counted offenders. (1 Kings 1:21).
- For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption, (Acts 13:36).

The expression, “gathered to their fathers,” carries the idea that they are resting in peace awaiting the resurrection. In the New Testament Christians who have died, are referred to as sleeping in Christ, because their death is only temporary.

- Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. ²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. (1 Cor. 15:18-22).

Who did not know the LORD: (v10) they proceed from evil to evil, like those spoken of in the following verses:

- They bend their tongue like a bow; falsehood and not truth has grown strong in the land; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they do not know me, declares the LORD. (Jeremiah 9:3).
- They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work. (Titus 1:16).

The statement, “who did not know the LORD,” carries the following two ideas:

1. They had not seen or experience God’s miraculous works that He had done for Israel prior to Joshua’s death. It would be enormously difficult to witness these mighty works of God, without them engraving a strong lasting impression in the mind and heart, which would naturally influence and encourage those who had witnessed such wonders to continue in the service of God and prompt them to keep others in obedience to Him.
2. They had turned from the Lord their God to idols and pagan gods.

All that generation were gathered to their fathers: (v10), meaning they were dead and buried, referring to the main body of the generation, for not all would be dead, for some who came out of Egypt and entered the land of Canaan would have outlived Joshua. Consider the following:

- When Israel left Egypt, mothers carried babies on their hips and families would have had small children.
- We know Caleb was 40 when he spied out the land of Canaan (Joshua 14:7)
- we know that Joshua died at 110 (Josh. 2:8).
- Now supposing Joshua was around the same age as Caleb, it means he would have been about 80 when he crossed the Jordan River and entered the land Canaan, which means he would have spent 30 years in Canaan.

Putting it all together: a 5-year-old child that left Egypt during the Exodus would be $5+40+30 = 75$ at the time of Joshua’s death, which means some may have lived 25+ years after his death.

7

They abandoned the LORD, the God of their fathers: (v12) they abandoned the LORD, turned to pagan gods and served and bowed down before the Baals and Ashtaroth. How true are the following words the LORD spoke to Moses:

- The LORD said to Moses, “Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers. Then this people will rise and whore after the foreign gods among them in the land that they are entering, and they will forsake me and break my covenant that I have made with them.¹⁷ Then my anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide my face from them, and they will be devoured. And many evils and troubles will come upon them, so that they will say in that day, ‘Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?’ (Deut. 31:16-17).

Two of Israel’s greatest transgression of the Covenant were:

1. Worshipping idols and pagan gods as they did in the very beginning:
 - And he (Aaron) received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf. And they said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!”⁵ When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, “Tomorrow shall be a feast to the LORD. (Exodus 32:4-5).
2. Taking pagan religious symbols and idolatrous icons and idols of the surrounding nations and worshipping Israel’s God before them, similar to the calf-worship of the ten northern tribes, which was originally set up as an adoration to God, and to stand before and worship God, (no doubt an attempt to copy a form of cherubim symbols), but naturally lapsed into actual Baal-worship.

They provoked the Lord to anger: (v12), this is a common and repeated expression concerning sins of idolatry, especially in the books of Deuteronomy, Kings and Jeremiah.

- **Judges 2:14-15:** So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers, who plundered them. And he sold them into the hand of their surrounding enemies, so that they could no longer withstand their enemies.¹⁵ Whenever they marched out, the hand of the LORD was against them for harm, as the LORD had warned, and as the LORD had sworn to them. And they were in terrible distress.

The anger of the LORD was kindled: (v14), this is an extremely sad statement concerning God's chosen people. Ponder the hurt of God's heart for a moment, this is the nation that God said:

- Was his son who he called out of Egypt and he loved them when they were a child (Hosea 11:1).
- He gave birth to and carried them from the womb even to their old age. (Isaiah 46:3-4).
- Is his allotted heritage (Deut. 32:9) and the apple of his eye (Deut. 32:10).
- Is, a people holy to him (Deut. 7:6) and his treasured possession (Deut. 14:2).

And that He called to be a testimony to His name before all other nations and instead of abundantly prospering and favouring them, He instead is forced to give them over to plunderers that looted their houses, carried them away captive and brought to ruin all their enterprises. The Canaanites that dwelt amongst them, became barbs in their eyes and thorns in their sides as the LORD said they would be.

- But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then those of them whom you let remain shall be as barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall trouble you in the land where you dwell. (Numbers 33:50-56).
- So now I say, I will not drive them out before you, but they shall become thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare to you." (Judges 2:3).

But all these calamities were designed as chastisements, to bring them to repentance for their gross sin and their sinful faith in false gods.

THE LORD RAISES UP JUDGES

JUDGES 2:16-17

- **Judges 2:16-17:** Then the LORD raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them.¹⁷ Yet they did not listen to their judges, for they whored after other gods and bowed down to them. They soon turned aside from the way in which their fathers had walked, who had obeyed the commandments of the LORD, and they did not do so.

The statement, "The LORD raised up Judges," is the key-note to this book, and the first introduction of the term Judge, which gives its name to the book. These Judges were raised up by the following means:

- By inward inspiration of their minds and hearts.
- By the inward, irresistible impulse of God's Spirit when they witnessed the depressed and sorrowful state of their fellow Israelites.
- By the people submitting to their leadership, because they perceive them as men of integrity, and of strong faith and extraordinary courage.

They were called:

- To exercise and delegate God's power and laws on His and His people's behalf.

- To govern the Commonwealth of Israel by God's laws.
- To protect, save and deliver God's people from their enemies and from oppressors and maintain their freedoms.
- To restore Israel's true religion.

They were men and women (Deborah the prophetess was a Judge):

- Who were stirred up to achieve Israel's deliverance.
- Whose authority only covered a specific region that they were raised up to protect.
- Who were without religious pomp, garments or payments and rewards attached to their office.
- Who were upholders of the law, defenders of Israel's faith, punishers of all crimes, especially idolatry and religious pagan practises.

They would not hearken to them: even though the LORD was with the Judge (v18) and those who were called to be Judges retained their integrity and faith their godly influence only lasted as long as the Judge lived, for soon after their death the people whored after other gods and bowed down to them.

JUDGES 2:18

- **Judges 2:18:** Whenever the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge, and he saved them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. For the LORD was moved to pity (for it repented the LORD in KJV): by their groaning because of those who afflicted and oppressed them.

9

The words, the LORD was moved to pity (for it repented the LORD in KJV) (v18) mean the LORD was moved with compassion, or was grieved, "because of their great suffering and deep sorrow, and that He changed His course and dealings with them and instead of judgments, He set mercy upon them.

JUDGES 2:19-23

- **Judges 2:19-23:** But whenever the judge died, they turned back and were more corrupt than their fathers, going after other gods, serving them and bowing down to them. They did not drop any of their practices (they ceased not from their own doings in KJV) or their stubborn ways. ²⁰ So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he said, "Because this people have transgressed my covenant that I commanded their fathers and have not obeyed my voice, ²¹ I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations that Joshua left when he died, ²² in order to test Israel by them, whether they will take care to walk in the way of the LORD as their fathers did, or not." ²³ So the LORD left those nations, not driving them out quickly, and he did not give them into the hand of Joshua.

Whenever the Judge died, they did not drop any of their practices (they ceased not from their own doings in KJV) (v19), they are referred to as their own doings in KJV, because the wickedness they practised was satisfying, acceptable and familiar to their own natures and they were accustomed to them. It is true that the nature of all mankind is universally corrupted, but that does not mean such sinful practices should control our behaviour, for we are all created with free choice, which means it is in our power to choose good or bad, life or death.

More than their fathers did: (v19), this could mean either of the following two things:

- More than each generation during the era of the Judges, which would mean that each time a Judge died, the following generation fell into greater wickedness even further than the one before it.
- More than the generations that had gone before them, which means that at this time in history, each generation in every age successively grew worse than the previous generation before them.

Their stubborn way: (v19), called stubborn, because even though they reformed and showed outward repentance during the life of the Judge, soon after he died, they repeatedly returned to exalting and delighting in other gods and serving them and increased their sacrifices and acts of devotion to them more than those who had gone before them.

That through them I may prove Israel: (v22) in all God's punishments there is always an element of mercy mingled with the judgment, as we see from the following verses:

- I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the wild beasts multiply against you.³⁰ Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased and possess the land. (Exod. 23:29-30).
- The LORD your God will clear away these nations before you little by little. You may not make an end of them at once, lest the wild beasts grow too numerous for you. (Deut. 7:22).
- Now these are the nations that the LORD left, to test Israel by them, that is, all in Israel who had not experienced all the wars in Canaan.² It was only in order that the generations of the people of Israel might know war, to teach war to those who had not known it before. (Judges 3:1-2).

Here we see two points of view:

1. **The first:** Israel's non-extermination of the Canaanites at first led them into temptation and idolatry and brought upon them punishments, yet out of Israel's evils, God brought forth good, little by little the nation increased in sufficient numbers, so that they were able to successfully farm the land, keep down the wild beasts, and were also being trained in skills for war, while the Canaanites were being driven out "little by little."
2. **The second:** real spiritual growth was going on during this period of suffering, lawlessness and chaos. Israel's wickedness was partly prevented by the faithful life of those truly devoted to God. From generation to generation, they learned through struggle to defend their land and their religion and prepared a sacred sanctuary for future generations that their national religion would continue. During both the good and bad eras of Israel's history the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15-16) and God's truths were taking root.

In the same way that the Canaanites that remained in the land, tested what individuals and which tribes were truly faithful toward God and who was not, likewise, the world, with all its sinful pleasures and temptations acts in the same way for Christians, the only difference is that we are not called to drive them out, but rather to separate ourselves from their sinful practices.

- You shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the LORD your God is testing you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. (Deut. 13:3).
- Now these are the nations that the LORD left, to test Israel by them, that is, all in Israel who had not experienced all the wars in Canaan. (Judges 3:1).

It is a principle of God that He will never force us to do anything, but rather justly leaves those who cherish and indulge their corrupt appetites and passions to themselves, under the power of their own sins, for they will eventually bring upon them sorrow and ruin. God always remains true, He proved Himself true to the promises He made to Israel, for He remained true to both His blessings and His threatening's, for He is bound to do what He has covenanted to do.

The LORD was with the Judges who He raised up, and so they became saviours to Israel, but Israel was not thoroughly reformed, for they were infatuated with the idols of surrounding nations and so persistently (some would say pigheadedly) repeatedly returned to their own wicked ways. It is interesting to notice, that God's punishment upon Israel was in accordance to their wickedness, in that they served the gods of the nation's surrounding them and God made them serve the worldly powerful princes of the nation's round about them. God spared the Canaanites, and in this way, brought punishment upon them, it could be said, Israel was beaten with their own rod of disobedience.

Israel's constant backsliding, evidences the following principal of faith, that those who have forsaken the good ways of God, which they had once known and professed, commonly grow indifferent toward Him and deeper in sin. The Scriptures clearly highlight how deceitful and desperately wicked our hearts are, but many are not willing to believe it, until, after flirting with sinful temptations and embracing them they find by sad experience it to be true.

The importance of strong leaders: the first generation which had lived through some great era's when they had a strong godly leader and God's hand and favour was upon them retained memories of His power. But when that leader fell, it was like switching of a powerful electric magnet, and all that it held together falls to the ground inactive and lifeless, which shines a brilliant spotlight upon the importance of raising up strong godly leaders, that can step into a vacant spot when needed.

Sadly, the events spoken of in the book of Judges are in accord with the general tendencies of our old fallen nature, in that as long as some strong and godly personality leads a nation or a church, that nation and that church will in almost all cases remain true to their early passion, faith and zeal.

Two lessons Israel's history teaches us:

1. **Firstly:** that we are always in danger of being hindered, no matter how well we may be running the race, if we do not keep our first vision of God's greatness as Creator of all things and source of all life, and of Christ's love and grace that delivered us from death and saved us to eternal life as our highest love, we like Israel could stumble at anytime.
2. **Secondly:** if the Lord Jesus Christ is not residing in the highest place of our mind and the deepest place of our heart, and is not made King over our lives and over our choices, and if we have little interest in doing what is right in the eyes of God, we like Israel of Old will always be in danger of being hindered in our faith and our walk with the Lord.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.
