



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

JUDGES 2:16-23

LESSON: A BACKSLIDING PEOPLE—October 15, 2023

INTRODUCTION:

Here in **Chapter 1 of Judges**, the book starts with the words 'after the death of Joshua', and in a very real sense, goes on to describe what happens when the Joshua type of faith has died.

After the death of Joshua, there was still land to be taken from the Canaanites. The nation of Israel went to receive instructions from the Lord. God was with Judah and Simeon and they defeated the city of Bezek and took its king, Adoni-bezek. He was made to suffer the same torture he had inflicted on others (70 kings)—he also suffered the loss of his thumbs and big toes (1:1-6). According to God's instructions for conquering the Promised Land, he should have been killed. Judah had conquered Jerusalem and massacred its people, setting the city on fire (1:8). Jerusalem in the period of the judges was occupied by the Jebusites.

The tribe of Judah, under the leadership of Caleb, conquered Hebron, which became the early Judean capital. Caleb promised to give his daughter Achsah to be the wife of the man who would take the city of Kirjath-sepher—city of books or scribes (known now as Debir,) (1:9-13).

¹Judah was able to conquer the major cities and mountainous region of Philistia, but the people in the valleys proved too formidable because of their iron chariots (1:16-19). Although Judah initially took Jerusalem (Jdgs.1:8), it evidently regained its freedom (v21) and remained under Jebusite control until the time of David (2 Sam.5:6-9). Ephraim and Manasseh were able to capture Bethel (1:22-26), an important city in patriarchal history (Gen.28:10-19). The conquest of Canaan was a long-term endeavor which started under Joshua's leadership. In the time of David, portions of the land remained under enemy control.

Six tribes failed to conquer their land. Manasseh, Ephraim, Zebulun, Asher, and Naphtali were unable to conquer important Canaanite cities; even when they grew stronger, they didn't drive out the Canaanites, but put them into forced labor instead (1:27-36). If the enemy is allowed to remain in one inch, they will ultimately make a slave out of the "Believer." The situation had become so bad in Israel that the Tribe of Dan could not even live in the valley or plant crops therein; they were virtual prisoners in their own land. Dan would later choose to relocate rather than fight to claim its land (Jdgs.18:1-31).

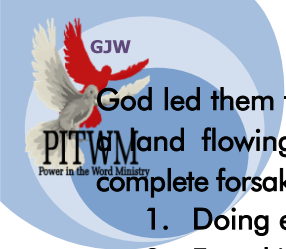
Israel's Apostasy

2:11 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim:— Extending from verse 10 "*And*" is a continuation about the generation that knew not God. This generation of Israelites abandoned the faith of their parents, and began worshipping the gods of their neighbors. Many things can tempt us to abandon what we know is right. The desire to be accepted by our neighbors can pressure us into behavior that is unacceptable to God. They forsook God; His worship; neglected His tabernacle, and did evil in the sight of the Lord serving Baalim.

2:12 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. God was the one that brought them out of the land of Egypt.

¹ <http://www.sundayschoolservice.org/files/Bible/JUDGES.pdf>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>





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God led them through the wilderness, and provided for them there, and brought them into the Land of Canaan, and flowing with milk and honey; but all these mercies were forgotten by them. Their apostasy—their complete forsaking and falling away from God provoked God to anger. Four things that provoked God to anger:

1. Doing evil (2:11).
2. Forsaking Him (2:12-13).
3. Following other gods (2:11-13).
4. Bowing down to other gods (2:12).

2:13 And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtoreth. Two images they served: Baal and Ashtoreth. ²What was the attraction of "Baal" worship? Baal was the god over the weather and nature for the Canaanites; he was essentially the agricultural god. In an agricultural society, people served Baal because they wanted good weather for abundant crops and flocks; the bottom line with Baal - personal wealth. What was the attraction of "Ashtoreth" worship? Ashtoreth was the Canaanite goddess of love, sex, and fertility; she was usually "worshipped" by having sex with a "priestess" who was a prostitute. The bottom line with Ashtoreth was sex, love, and romance. You will forsake that that you're not close to, to get to something temporary. They were not close to the Lord anymore.

GOD'S ANGER AND HIS LOVE

2:14 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. From verse 12 to verse 14, the Lord's anger grew "hot!" Nothing is more provoking to God than idolatry. Since idolatry was regarded as a breach of covenant with the God of Israel, His anger was expressed against them by allowing them to be delivered into the hands of "spoilers" (invaders who plundered them; band of raiders). They could no longer stand before their enemies. After being plundered, God allowed them to be "sold" (to fall into the power of; to be surrendered or given over to; as to sell a daughter in marriage or slavery) into the hands of the enemy.

2:15 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. God kept the pressure on them, for their wickedness which kept them distressed. Their neglect of the covenant which bound them to the Lord also bound them together and caused them to present a divided front to their enemy invaders. No matter where they went, the battle went against them because the Lord's hand was against them.

LESSON: I. GOD'S PLAN JUDGES 2:16-17

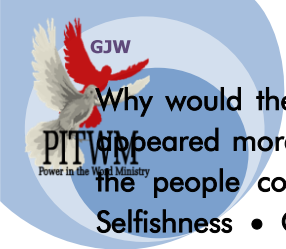
2:16 Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. However, the Lord chose and raised up judges that were sent to help and deliver Israel out of the hand of their enemies who plundered them. God will always send the right people to turn us from our destructive ways. He sent judges to deliver these same Israelites out of the hands of their enemies that invaded them with power.

2:17 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. God's compassion by sending the judges was dismissed by the Israelites. The people still would not adhere. God went out on a limb for them, and they wouldn't even listen to the judges He had sent.

The Word says "**they went a whoring**"; *they disrespected and dishonored God; went astray; loving other gods; prostituted themselves to other gods; bowing down before them and committing spiritual adultery and infidelity.*

² http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=2&contentID=7530&commInfo=31&topic=Judges&ar=Jdg_2_13
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>





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Why would the people of Israel turn so quickly from their faith in God? Simply put, the Canaanite religion appeared more attractive, and offered more short-range benefits. One of its most attractive features was that the people could remain selfish and yet fulfill their religious requirements. • Sex outside of marriage • Selfishness • Oppression of the helpless. These were not only allowed, but were encouraged as forms of worship by the other gods. They could do almost anything they wished and still be obeying at least one of the many Canaanite gods. The apostasy into Baal worship also tended to decentralize the strength of the nation.

But we have to realize that **Faith** is in the "**One True God.**" The essence of sin is selfishness. The essence of faith in God is selflessness. The Israelites broke their faith with Jehovah; left the path of their ancestors; and abandoned the path of obedience Their deliverance was short lived. They did not follow their fathers' example.

II. GOD'S PATIENCE JUDGES 2:18-19

2:18 Then 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. These judges were empowered by God, in that God was with them to lead the Israelites against their oppressors. ...**for it repented the Lord** does not mean that God changed His mind about the need for allowing the oppression, but rather that He felt "sorrow" or "grief" or "compassion" for their agony (for their pain and anguish). In other words, the author is merely indicating that God was not pleased, but it was necessary lest they continued in greater sinfulness. Since God's covenant with Israel was conceived of in the terms of a marriage, spiritual adultery was all the more serious. It was like an attempt on the part of Israel to break her vows to Yahweh, her spiritual husband. Without proper spiritual leadership, the church would go into a downward spiral which would lead to apostasy. Although God appoints a man over a congregation, our main leader should be God!

2:19 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. The cycle continues: judges are raised up and the Israelites repent, and because of their cry of sorrow, God delivered them, as long as that judge lived. But when the judge died, the people turned, and they behaved worse than their ancestors. We tend to follow the same cycle—remaining loyal to God as long as we are near those who are devoted to Him, but when we are on our own, the pressure to be drawn away from God increases.

III. GOD'S ANGER JUDGES 2:20-23

2:20 And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He said, Because that these people had transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and had not hearkened unto my voice. Israel had not obeyed the Lord, and He was very angry with them. They had even transgressed; disobeyed God's Covenant; God's agreement which He had made with their fathers before them.

2:21 I henceforth will not drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died. And these other nations that were still in the land remained when Joshua died, but God says He will not force them out.

2:22 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. Well, God had decided to use those nations that were left in the land to test Israel's people. So, now God will see whether they will obey Him as their ancestors obeyed, or they will not.

2:23 Therefore the lord left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered them out of the hand of Joshua. The Lord had allowed these nations to remain. He didn't even force them out hastily,





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nor allow Joshua to defeat them.

SUMMARY:

16 The Lord chose and raised up judges that were sent to help and deliver Israel out of the hand of their enemies who plundered them. 17 God went out on a limb for them, and they wouldn't even listen to the judges He had sent. They went a whoring! The Israelites broke their faith with Jehovah; left the path of their ancestors; and abandoned the path of obedience (**2:16-17**).

18 These judges were empowered by God, in that God was with them to lead the Israelites against their oppressors. God's repentance is not like our repentance, but He felt "*sorrow*" or "*grief*" or "*compassion*" for their agony (for their pain and anguish). 19 The cycle continues: judges are raised up and the Israelites repent, and because of their cry of sorrow, God delivered them, as long as that judge lived. But when the judge died, the people turned, and they behaved worse than their ancestors (**2:18-19**).

20 Israel had not obeyed the Lord, and He was very angry with them. They had even transgressed; disobeyed God's Covenant; God's agreement which He had made with their fathers before them. 21 And these other nations that were still in the land remained when Joshua died, but God says He will not force them out. 22 Well, God had decided to use those nations that were left in the land to test Israel's people. So, now God will see whether they will obey Him as their ancestors obeyed, or they will not. 23 The Lord had allowed these nations to remain. He didn't even force them out hastily, nor allow Joshua to defeat them (**2:20-23**).