

# THE CHANGE IN ISRAEL'S GOVERNMENT AND THEIR DISOBEDIENCE

[BIBLE TEXT](#): Judges 2:1-23; Numbers 33:50-53; Joshua 23:11-13

LESSON 188 Junior Course

**MEMORY VERSE:** "Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God" (Joshua 23:11).

## [BIBLE TEXT in King James Version](#)

### Judges 2:1-23

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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?

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> And they called the name of that place Bochim: and they sacrificed there unto the LORD.

<sup>6</sup> And when Joshua had let the people go, the children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land.

<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, *being* an hundred and ten years old.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> And the children of Israel did evil in

## [BIBLE REFERENCES:](#)

### [NOTES:](#)

#### Conquering Canaan

While Joshua was living, the Children of Israel began to carry out God's plan to conquer the people of Canaan. They destroyed idols and spared not the idolaters, as God had commanded, lest they would be tempted from the true and living God to serve other gods.

The tribes of Judah and Simeon made an agreement to help each other in the fight. They worked together and were successful in slaying their enemies. The other tribes did not combine forces against the enemy. Most of them did not continue to be obedient unto the command of God which told them to drive out the enemy. They permitted the Canaanites to dwell in the land with them. Even when Israel was strong, the enemies were allowed to remain in the land. Instead of obeying God, the Children of Israel forced the Canaanites to pay tribute (like a tax) to them — in place of utterly driving out the people.

#### Warning

Many years before, Moses told them that the Canaanites would give them trouble if they were allowed to remain in the land. "But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell" (Numbers 33:55).

Just before Joshua died, he again warned the Children of Israel concerning the Canaanites. He said that if they continued to live in the land they would be traps and snares to the Israelites until the Children of Israel would perish from the good land that God had given them (**Joshua 23:13** <sup>13</sup> Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out *any* of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you.).

#### To Love the Lord

Joshua told the Children of Israel also how important it was for them to love the Lord. When one loves the Lord with all his heart, he is not apt to be caught in the trap and snare of the enemy. When a person does not love the Lord, he will attach his affection on any false god — and perish.

The advice — to love the Lord — that Joshua gave the Children of Israel is good for us today. We, too, need to take heed, to watch and guard, that we love the Lord. The Children of Israel were successful so long as they loved God. The time came when they ceased to love the Lord. Next, they began to love false gods and serve them. One cannot love God and the world at the same time. In I John 2:15 we are told to "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

Whom a person loves, he will obey and serve. That is one reason it is necessary for us to love the Lord with all our heart, with all our

the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim:

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.

<sup>14</sup> 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.

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them.

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> 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.

<sup>20</sup> 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;

<sup>21</sup> I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations

mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength.

### Without a Leader

As long as Joshua lived, the Children of Israel served the Lord. For some time after the death of Joshua, they had no leader. When another generation arose, they did not continue to serve God. They must have forsaken the worship of the Lord, for the children knew nothing about it. It is possible that they were so busy in the conquests that they did not take time to teach the children. In forsaking God, the children "knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel." May we never be guilty of failing to tell what God has done for us. Even children can tell those about them of the Lord. Many times when children take care of their brothers and sisters or their neighbor friends, the younger ones can be taught about the Lord and about the Bible. Then they will not be like the generation of Israelites who did not know about God and His wonderful works to them.

### A Message

When the Children of Israel were disobedient to the command of the Lord, to the advice of Moses the lawgiver, and to the words of their dying leader Joshua, God sent an angel from Gilgal with a message to Israel. They were reminded of God's mercy to them in bringing their fathers out of the slavery and toil of Egypt into the rest and plenty of the Promised Land. They were told that they had promised to obey — to break down the altars of false gods and drive out the Canaanites. But they had disobeyed.

The angel of the Lord said, "Why have ye done this?" The Children of Israel made no reply. Some people today think they have an answer for everything, especially concerning sin in their lives. They often try to make an excuse for it. When the time comes that they must stand before God in judgment, they will have no comment to make. They will be speechless like the man in the parable who had no excuse when he tried to go to a wedding without having the wedding garment (**Matthew 22:12** <sup>12</sup> And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.). See Lesson 148.

### Punishment

The angel of the Lord told the Children of Israel that the Canaanites would be as thorns in their sides and the, false gods would be snares. Then the Children of Israel wept. No doubt they were ashamed. Perhaps they even admitted that they had disobeyed and that sin was in their lives. Although they wept and sacrificed unto the Lord, we do not read that they repented. Nor do we read that they destroyed the idols that were in the land.

It is possible for a person to admit that there is sin in his life, yet not repent. He may weep because of his sins, and make sacrifices to God; but unless that person is willing to turn his back on his sins and get rid of each one, he does not truly repent. The Prophet Isaiah said: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:7).

Yes, the Children of Israel wept and sacrificed unto the Lord — then they did evil in His sight and turned to other gods. In doing that, they committed two evils: first, they forsook the true and living God; and secondly, they turned to false gods. The Children of Israel no longer loved the Lord. They transferred their love, their worship, and their service to idols — Baal and Ashtaroth.

which Joshua left when he died:

<sup>22</sup> 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.

<sup>23</sup> Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua.

### Numbers 33:50-53

<sup>50</sup> And the LORD spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan *near* Jericho, saying,

<sup>51</sup> Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are passed over Jordan into the land of Canaan;

<sup>52</sup> Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places:

<sup>53</sup> And ye shall dispossess *the inhabitants* of the land, and dwell therein: for I have given you the land to possess it.

### Joshua 23:11-13

<sup>11</sup> Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God.

<sup>12</sup> Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, *even* these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you:

<sup>13</sup> Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out *any of* these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you.

### Defeat

The Children of Israel forsook their fathers' God who had done so much for them. They disobeyed by failing to destroy false gods, so they were tempted to serve those same idols that they had spared. Such failure forfeited their privilege of having God's favor and power. In place of overcoming their enemies, the Children of Israel were overcome by their enemies. No longer could they drive out the Canaanites. They were powerless in battle and were delivered into the hands of their enemies. Thus the Children of Israel suffered because of their disobedience. They were first lured by sin to spare the Canaanites; then they were tormented by that sin — delivered "into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them." The Israelites were greatly distressed as a result of their sins.

### Judges

God, in His great mercy, raised up judges among the Children of Israel. The judges were the leaders by whom God delivered them from the spoilers. When Israel was no longer oppressed, they disobeyed again. They worshiped other gods, and then they were again oppressed by the enemy. Time and again, when the Children of Israel called upon Him, God gave them a judge who delivered them, yet Israel ceased not to be stubborn. They **corrupted** themselves even more than their fathers.

Finally, God in wrath pronounced judgment on the Children of Israel because they transgressed His Covenant. To prove whether Israel would walk in the way of their fathers and keep God's law, the Lord did not hastily drive out the Canaanitish nations. God permitted some of them to remain in Canaan in order to test Israel to prove their obedience.

We shall study more about these judges who were chosen by God to deliver the Children of Israel. As we study, may we bear in mind that the Israelites were in trouble because they were friendly to the enemies of God. In James 4:4 we read, "Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." **He** must suffer the consequences as did the Children of Israel.

### QUESTIONS

- 1 Why did the angel of the Lord talk to the Children of Israel?
- 2 What was the message of the angel?
- 3 How did it affect the Children of Israel?
- 4 What happened to the Israelites when they served other gods?
- 5 Why did they serve other gods?
- 6 Whom did God choose to deliver the Children of Israel from their enemies?
- 7 What happens when a person today is disobedient?