

The Endless
Story

Judges 2:6-23

When Joshua dismissed the people, the people of Israel went each to his inheritance to take possession of the land. 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. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of 110 years. 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. 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. And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals.

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. They abandoned the LORD and served the Baals and the Ashtaroth. 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. 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. Then the LORD raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them.

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. 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 by their groaning

because of those who afflicted and oppressed them. 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 or their stubborn ways. 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,

I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations that Joshua left when he died, 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.” So the LORD left those nations, not driving them out quickly, and he did not give them into the hand of Joshua.

Judges 2:6

When **Joshua** dismissed the people, the people of Israel went each to his inheritance to take possession of the land.

Judges 2:7

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.

Judges 2:10

And there arose another generation after them who **did not know the LORD** or the work that he had done for Israel.

Judges 2:11

And the people of Israel **did what was evil** in the sight of the LORD and **served the Baals**

This is a perennial peril. One generation can rejoice in a living faith, enjoy intimate communion with God, revel in the kingship of Jesus over daily life, even delight to teach their faith to those closest them; yet the next generation may come along and care nothing for all that. Not that they will formally repudiate everything. It's just that they will know about the Lord rather than know the Lord.

Dale Ralph Davis

Judges 2:12

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

Deuteronomy 6:14

You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you—

Deuteronomy 29:18

Beware lest there be among you a man or woman or clan or tribe whose heart is turning away today from the LORD our God to go and serve the gods of those nations. Beware lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit,

Judges 2:13

They abandoned the LORD and
served the **Baals** and the **Ashtaroath**.

This God of Israel is strange. Yahweh has no wife, no consort. Biblical religion holds that you will find Yahweh acting history, not pulsating in nature. He sits on a throne, high and lifted up, from which he rules, creates, preserves, and redeems; he does not lunge in some celestial bedroom, copulating with his feminine divine counterpart. It has become so difficult for us to grasp how different, how holy, the God of the Bible is!

- Dale Ralph Davis

Judges 2:14

So the **anger of the LORD** was **kindled** against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers, who plundered them.

Isaiah 48:11

For my own sake, for my own sake, I do
it, for how should my name be
profaned? **My glory I will not give to
another.**

John 2:17

His disciples remembered that it was written, **“Zeal for your house will consume me.”**

Judges 2:14

So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers, who plundered them.

Romans 1:22-23

Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and **exchanged the glory** of the immortal God for **images** resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

Romans 1:24

Therefore God **gave them up in the lusts of their hearts** to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves

Don't miss the irony here: these enemies are the very people whose gods Israel has chosen to serve. If there were ever a historical picture of the truth that idolatry leads to slavery, this is it.

- Tim Keller

Judges 2:15

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.**

Judges 2:16

Then the **LORD** raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them.

Judges 2:18

For the **LORD** was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who afflicted and oppressed them.

Psalm 106:44-45

Nevertheless, he looked upon their **distress**, when he heard their **cry**. For their sake he remembered his covenant, and relented according to the abundance of his **steadfast love**.

Judges 2:17

Yet they did not listen to their judges, for they
whored after other gods and bowed

Psalms 73:27

behold, those who are far from you shall perish; you
put an end to everyone who is unfaithful to you.

Psalms 106:39

Thus they became unclean by their acts, and
played the whore in their deeds.

His anger is that of the innocent, jilted lover; his love is that of the wonderfully forgiving husband. The relationship God wants us to enjoy with him—and the only relationship which will avoid idolatry—is a passionate, personal relationship of love.

- Tim Keller

Judges 2:19

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.

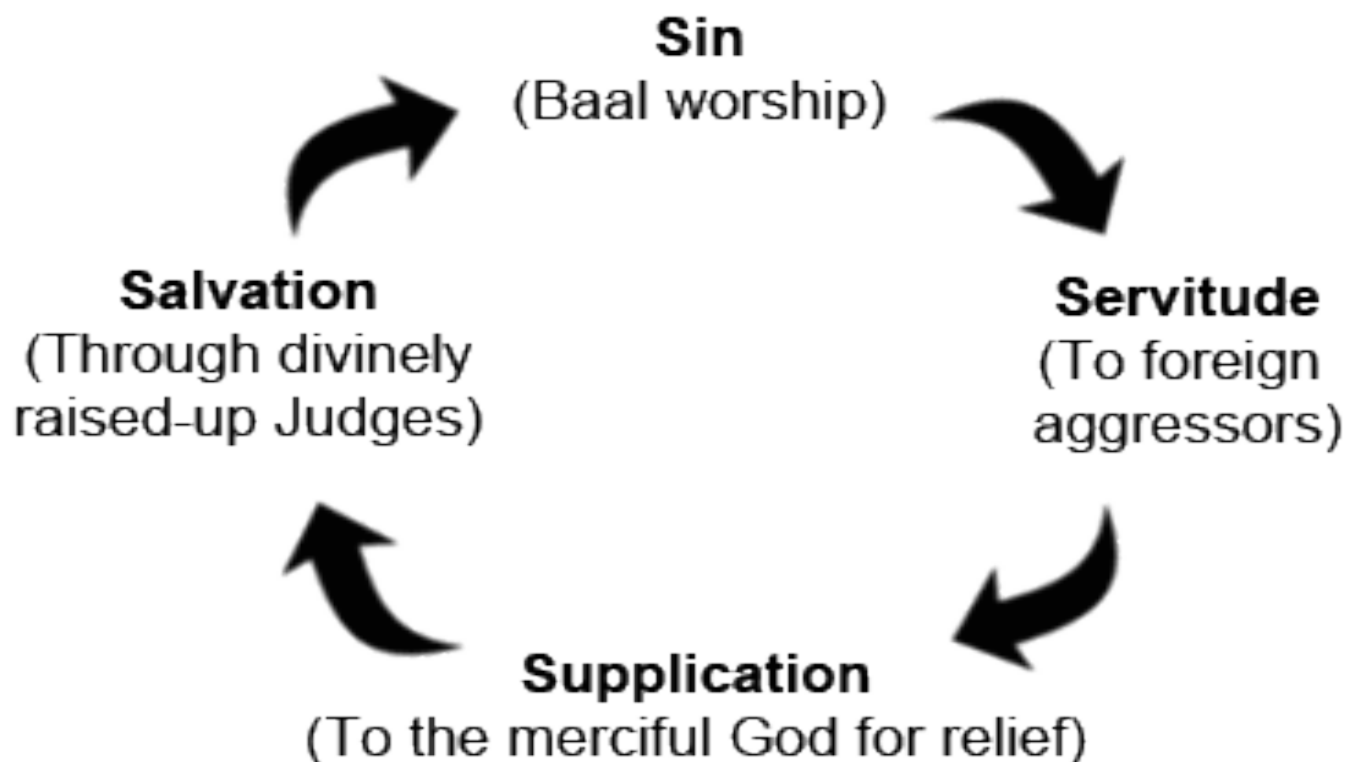
Judges 2:20-21

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 I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations that Joshua left when he died

This description of the ebb and flow of Yahweh's emotions draws our attention (admittedly in an unsubtle manner) to the depth of his personal attachment to Israel and to the reluctance with which he finally makes the decision to punish Israel.

- K. Lawson Younger

The Repeated Cycle



Judges 2:22

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.”

Deuteronomy 8:2

And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, **testing you to know what was in your heart**, whether you would keep his commandments or not.

Judges 2:23

So the LORD left those nations,
not driving them out quickly, and
**he did not give them into the hand
of Joshua.**

If Joshua had not finished the task of driving out the enemy nations, it was because God had not delivered them into his hands. The reason was given in v. 22. Subsequent generations would not simply inherit the blessings, the rewards of a previous generation's faith. They needed to demonstrate their commitment to Yahweh themselves.

- Daniel Block

Psalm 115:4-8

Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see. They have ears, but do not hear; noses, but do not smell. They have hands, but do not feel; feet, but do not walk; and they do not make a sound in their throat. Those who make them become like them; so do all who trust in them.

The old gods are still with us. They have simply changed their clothes so that they merge more easily into the modern crowd. They still claim to provide meaning to life, to explain the universe, and to provide the basis for personal security.

They still demand wholehearted commitment from their worshippers. Christians ought to be free of them; for a truly Christian view of the world provides the basis for such freedom.

- Iain Provan