

JUDGES 2:1-6
HAS GOD FORSAKEN ISRAEL?

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Judges chapter 2, as we continue our study through this tragic book of the people of God, the Jews.

And yes, there are many tragic situations that the Jewish people put themselves in, but in that I think we can see many lessons that the Lord has for us so we can learn from these stories.

Remember what Paul wrote in Romans 15:4, **“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”**

What Paul is saying to us is that as we read the Scriptures, as we see the stories that have taken place, the Holy Spirit will open them up to us and encourage us as we apply these lessons to our lives and in the end, it gives us hope.

Now that may sound strange, but it is so true. You see, as we see what God has done in the past, as we look at these lessons, we have hope that God will work in our life for good as we take what we have learned and apply them to our lives. It is a hope that is based in the faithfulness of God!

And that truly is what we will be looking at this morning, the faithfulness of God. I have called this study, ***HAS GOD FORSAKEN ISRAEL?***

And, believe it or not, it is a hot topic today as many Christians, many Christian leaders, many Christian schools have come to the conclusion that God is done with Israel, He is done with the Jews because they turned their back on Jesus and thus, the church has now replaced Israel!

We call this movement Replacement Theology, and just in case you are not familiar with it, listen to what this is all about. We are told,

What is Replacement Theology?

Replacement theology (also known as supersessionism) essentially teaches that the Christian Church has replaced Israel in God's plan. Thus, adherents of Replacement theology believe the Jews are no longer God's chosen people, and that God's covenants with them have been cancelled. In other words, according to Replacement theology, the Jewish people today no longer have any unique part to play in God's plans – they are just like any other nation on the earth (English, Spanish, Chinese, etc.). All the stuff God wanted to do with the Jews in the Old Testament, He is now doing instead with Christians.

Here, in point form, are the main tenets of Replacement Theology:

1. Israel (the Jewish people and the land) has been replaced by the Christian Church in the purposes of God, or, more precisely, the Church is the historic continuation of Israel to the exclusion of the former.
2. The Jewish people are now no longer a "chosen people." In fact, they are no different from any other group, such as the English, Spanish, Chinese or Egyptians.
3. Since Pentecost of Acts 2, the term "Israel," as found in the Bible, now refers to the Church.

4. The promises, covenants and blessings ascribed to Israel in the Bible have been taken away from the Jews and given to the Church, which has superseded them. However, the Jews are subject to the curses found in the Bible, as a result of their rejection of Christ.

As a result of these beliefs, Replacement theology is forced to interpret the many prophecies in Scripture about Israel in allegorical and ‘spiritualized’ ways; they have to find ways of reading the Christian Church into all of those prophecies about the future instead of the literal nation of Israel and the Jewish people, since the Church has replaced the Jews in God’s plan for the world.

- <http://bit.ly/2pnRC3y>

And it goes much farther than that and I think this idea that God is done with the Jews promotes anti-Semitism.

We also see that those in this movement feel that the land of Israel is not for the Jews. In fact, they feel it is the land of the Palestinians and not just the Jews. Which is interesting to me because there are no such people as the Palestinians! In fact, the Jews were called Palestinians at one time because of the land in which they were in, it was a derogatory name!

But the idea of this land of Israel not being for the Jews, is it Biblical? It is not and yet, listen to what we are told.

Christian anti-Zionism is gaining strength both in America and abroad. Its teaching turns the world against Israel as God’s Chosen People, casts Israel as the aggressor rather than the victim, and denies God’s promise to give the Jewish people the land of Israel as an “everlasting possession” (Gen. 17:8; 48:4). Here are some of Christian anti-Zionism’s most outspoken, influential proponents and what they say:

- Stephen Sizer - vicar of Christ Church, Surrey, United Kingdom: ***“There is no evidence that . . . the Jewish people had a divine right to the Land in Perpetuity, or that Jewish possession of the Land would be an important, let alone central, aspect of God’s purposes for the world.”***
- Gary Burge - professor of New Testament at Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois: ***“Ownership of the land is not a Christian question.” Burge has written extensively on what he calls the obsolescence of “territorial theologies.”***
- Tony Campolo - speaker, author, sociologist, and professor emeritus of sociology at Eastern University in Pennsylvania: ***“The most serious threats to the well-being of the Palestinians in general, and to the Christian Palestinians in particular, come not from the Jews, but from Christian Zionists here in the United States.”***
- Lynne Hybels - author; activist; and wife of Bill Hybels, senior pastor of Willow Creek Community Church, South Barrington, Illinois: ***“I have become convinced that if Jesus were here today he would stand with those who non-violently protest the occupation of the Palestinian Territories, the extreme military violence used against the Palestinians, and the economic decline and psychological pain caused by the occupation.”***
- John Piper - former pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and founder of desiringGod.org: ***“The secular state of Israel today may not claim a present divine right to the Land.”***

Some well-known, vocal, Christian anti-Zionist institutions include Knox Theological Seminary in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, founded in 1989 by D. James Kennedy . . .

Here are three more statements:

- Knox Theological Seminary: ***“The entitlement of any one ethnic or religious group to territory in the Middle East called the ‘Holy Land’ cannot be supported by Scripture.”*** This statement was contained in an open letter posted on the Knox Theological Seminary website in 2002 and signed by more than 150 educators, pastors, church leaders, and public figures, including R. C. Sproul.
- Bethlehem Bible College: ***“Any exclusive claim to land of the Bible in the name of God is not in line with the teaching of Scripture.”***
- Palestinian Christians: ***“We Palestinian Christians declare that the military occupation [by Israel] of our land is a sin against God and humanity and that any theology that legitimizes the occupation is far from Christian teachings.”*** The statement was contained in the 2009 Kairos Palestine document, written by Palestinian Christians.

Contrary to what these men and institutions teach, more than 130 verses in the Bible reiterate the truth that the land of Israel has been divinely given to the Jewish people. Not a single verse in all of Scripture declares that God has revoked the promise He gave to Abraham in Genesis 17:8. (As a sampling, see Deuteronomy 4:40; Psalm 105:8–11; Jeremiah 23:7–8; Ezekiel 28:25–26; 34:13; 36:24; 37:1–14, 21; 39:28; 47:21; Amos 9:15; Acts 7:5.)

Like I have said, this is a big deal today and this movement, of Replacement Theology and the Jews not having a right to the land of Israel is growing. We have Christian colleges, Christian churches that are pulling their investments from Israel because they are “Occupying” this land that they believe does not belong to them.

Now please hear me out on this. I am not trying to be harsh or critical about those that are saying God is done with Israel and this is not their land, but I frankly don’t care what they have to say. I don’t really care what others have to say about Israel being in the land or that God is not done with them.

What am I saying then?

I don’t care what anyone has to say, but I do care about what God has to say about this matter. And the truth of the matter is that God has a built-in blessing for those who bless His people, not the church, but Israel, the Jews! (Genesis 12:3)

I think you will clearly see this morning where God stands, and, like it or not, we need to be on His side and not let our feelings, our emotions get in the way, or even church tradition. I think He is very clear on this matter, as you will see.

I have broken these verses here in Judges chapter 2 down into five points and they are as follows.

GOD’S PROMISE TO ISRAEL – JUDGES 2:1

GOD’S WARNING TO ISRAEL – JUDGES 2:2

GOD’S CHASTENING OF ISRAEL – JUDGES 2:3

THE RESPONSE OF ISRAEL – JUDGES 2:4-5

CONCLUSION OF ISRAEL – JUDGES 2:6

With that said, let's begin reading in Judges chapter 2 beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word and we look at this topic – ***HAS GOD FORSAKEN ISRAEL?***

JUDGES 2

VERSE 1

First of all, we see here this “**Angel of the LORD**” and the big question is this. Is this an Old Testament appearance of Jesus Christ?

We need to remember that not every time we see this phrase it is speaking of Jesus Christ. G. Campbell Morgan makes that point as he wrote, “This messenger, referred to as ‘the angel of the Lord,’ may have been a prophet, for the word rendered ‘angel’ may with equal accuracy be rendered messenger. On the other hand, it may have been a special divine and angelic personality.”

Then how do we know if this is speaking of Jesus or someone else?

That is a great question and I will tell you that it is all based on ***CONTEXT, CONTEXT,*** and ***CONTEXT!***

As I read this, I see this “**Angel of the LORD**” as not some angelic being but I believe it is an Old Testament appearance of Jesus Christ.

How can I be so sure?

Because no angelic being was leading the children of Israel to the Promise Land, ***YAHWEH*** did!

And as we have seen, this title was used of the Lord, of Jesus before in the Old Testament!

Again, *CONTEXT, CONTEXT, and CONTEXT!*

Spurgeon put it like this, “Not in such a body as God had prepared for him when he took upon himself the form of a servant, but in such a form and fashion as seemed most congruous to his divine majesty, and to the circumstances of those he visited, this angel of the divine covenant whom we delight in came and spoke unto this people.”

Now keep in mind that our focus here is ***GOD’S PROMISE TO ISRAEL!***

And what is that promise that He made to them?

This Angel of the Lord, this pre-incarnate Christ tells the children of Israel that He made a covenant with them that He will ***NEVER*** break!

And I know, some of you may not be happy with what I am saying here, so let me put it another way. This is what the Lord has said, not what I have said, “**I will never break My covenant with you.**”

Now if you still have a problem with that, don’t call me, don’t send me e-mails, don’t post nasty things on Facebook, talk with God about it!

And I am not really sure why anyone would be mad about that. What is wrong with God choosing the Jewish people and not only choosing them but making an everlasting covenant with them?

But they killed the Messiah, they killed Jesus!

I hate to tell you, but you and your sins put Jesus on the cross and the Jews did not kill Jesus, the Romans did not kill Jesus! Then who did?

Jesus said that He freely gave His life so that we may live! You doubt that, then listen carefully to what He said in John 10:17-18, **“Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.”**

Make no mistake about it, it was not the nails that held Him to the cross, it was His love for us. And if you think about it, Jesus could have come down off that cross.

He could have called twelve legions of angels to come to His side, (Matthew 26:53).

But He freely gave His life to give us life! He had the power to lay down His life, and He had the power to take it up again.

Now, what was this covenant that God made with the children of Israel? It is the covenant that was made in Genesis chapter 15 with Abraham, and, as you will see, this covenant that God made with Abraham was not based upon the faithfulness of Abraham or his descendants, but upon the faithfulness of God.

In Genesis 15:7-21 we are told, **“Then He said to him, ‘I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it.’ And he said, ‘Lord God, how shall I know that I will inherit it?’ So He said to him, ‘Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.’ Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him. Then He said to Abram: ‘Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a**

land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.’ And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. On the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying: ‘To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates - the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.’”

These covenants that were made are kind of equivalent to our modern-day contracts that are signed.

And to ratify these covenants they would cut these animals in two and then each party that was involved would walk through the middle of them, sealing the deal.

And as Abram obeyed the Lord, he waited for God to appear and walk with him between these animals.

As he waited the vultures came and, in the Scriptures, birds are often symbolic of evil. Thus, as he waited for the Lord Satan and his demonic forces tried to discourage him with doubt and unbelief.

And as Abram waits for the Lord, he falls asleep.

And as he is asleep this fear comes upon Abram, and in that fear, we see that the Lord speaks to him. The Lord is there and even in the darkest times and especially in those times, may we not forget that!

Notice what the Lord says to him here. The Lord does not start out with very comforting words. His descendants would be slaves in Egypt for 400 years, they were going to face this affliction!

But, after those 400 years the Lord tells Abram that He will bring them back to this land of Canaan; the land of promise after the iniquity of the Amorites has been completed.

And, not only will they come out of Egypt but also, they will come out with great possessions, more than what they entered the land with!

In Exodus 12:35-36 that is what we see take place as we are told, **“Now the children of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, and they had asked from the Egyptians articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing. And the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they granted them what they requested. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.”**

Keep in mind that they were slaves in Egypt, and they were being let go and yet, they plundered the Egyptians just as God said, not by might, the Egyptians gave it to them!

Then, in Genesis 15:17 we see this smoking oven and burning torch, what is that all about?

I believe this is speaking of the Shekinah glory or the presence of God as represented by a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

We see that spoken of in Exodus 13:21-22.

In knowing that, who walked through the midst of these animals?

It was the ***LORD, YAHWEH!***

Where was Abram?

He was still sleeping or at best groggy at this time.

That tells me that this covenant that God gave to Abram and his descendants is a unilateral covenant or a one-party covenant that is not based upon the faithfulness of Abram or his descendants but upon the faithfulness of God.

Thus, I don't care what this group or that group says regarding the Jews forfeiting their land.

I don't care what the Pope says or the Lutheran Church or whoever, God gave it to them not because they deserved it, but God made a covenant with them and He will keep it and He has and He will do so even in the Millennial Kingdom!

Now, what did the Lord tell the children of Israel here in Judges 2:1? We are told, "**I will never break My covenant with you.**"

Again, if you are struggling with this, then let me ask you this question. If God was not faithful with His covenant that He made with Israel, what about the covenant that He made with us? Can we trust it?

If God was not faithful with this covenant to Israel, then we can't trust that He will be faithful with us regarding this covenant of eternal life with Him through the forgiveness of our sins that is only found in Jesus.

Do you see that if you negate the one you open up a whole can of worms!

Listen to what we are told in Jeremiah 31:35-37, **“Thus says the Lord, Who gives the sun for a light by day, The ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, Who disturbs the sea, And its waves roar (The Lord of hosts is His name): ‘If those ordinances depart From before Me, says the Lord, Then the seed of Israel shall also cease From being a nation before Me forever.’ Thus says the Lord: ‘If heaven above can be measured, And the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel For all that they have done, says the Lord.’”**

Is God done with the Jewish people?

Absolutely not!

Look at what the Lord is saying here in these verses.

God is saying that if you ever see the sun stop shining, the stars fade away, if you can measure the universe, then Israel will be cast off by God. Now some say we have measured the universe. That is not true.

This blew me away because we hear of the universe being some 15 billion light years in diameter, but we are now being told, “Recent measurements reveal that the Universe is at least 150 billion light-years in diameter.” (<http://www.universetoday.com/37409/how-big-is-the-universe/>) And yet we still don’t know, so we have not been able to measure the universe!

And the reality is that you will not see that happen because God has not and will not forsake Israel.

The reason is simple. Remember what we read back in chapter 15 of Genesis. God made an unconditional covenant with Abraham. This covenant was unilateral and not based upon the faithfulness of man, but of God.

And you can take that to the bank, Israel will not be forsaken by God! This is an everlasting covenant that He made with them and as you can see here, God will not have them cease from being a nation and He will not forsake them!

Paul spends three chapters in Romans speaking of the fact that God is not done with Israel.

Let me share just a few verses with you.

In Romans 11:25-27 we are told, **“For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.’”**

Notice how Paul starts out. He does not want us to be ignorant of this mystery of the Jewish people. He does not want us to be wise in our own opinion.

Yes, the Jews turned from God and a blindness has come upon them but there is an end point to that blindness. It is when the fullness of the Gentiles comes in.

And what that means is that when that last Gentile is saved prior to the Rapture of the church, it is then that the Lord is coming back for His bride and then what happens?

We are told that **“all Israel shall be saved.”**

Now some argue that this is speaking of the church, but that does not make sense. How can all the church be saved, it is foolishness. Within the church there are those who are saved and those who are not. And that is just the way it is. But there is coming a day when all Israel will be saved, and they are saved when Jesus takes away their sins. That means they receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior!

So this covenant made by God and given to Abraham is spoken of here in Judges 2:1 and it is God's promise to Israel that He has given them this land to dwell in as an everlasting covenant!

But, as we read on, we will see ***GOD'S WARNING TO ISRAEL***. Look at what we are told next.

VERSE 2

God was faithful to bring them into the land of Canaan, the Promise Land. That was not the problem. The problem was that the children of Israel were not faithful to the Lord.

And, as I have said, this verse deals with ***GOD'S WARNING TO ISRAEL!***

What did He warn them about?

He warned them that if they don't drive out the enemy, the enemy will be a thorn in their side, the enemy will bring them down!

Listen to what God warned them of in Numbers 33:55, **"But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall be that those whom you let remain shall be irritants in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall harass you in the land where you dwell."**

That is pretty straight forward. Obedience to what the Lord has said is not just a suggestion, it is a warning and God knows what He is talking about.

I find it interesting that we think we know what we are talking about, that, at times, we know better than God.

If you really think that way, then you don't understand who God is.

He is all-knowing and thus, what He tells us is what is best for our lives. ***HE KNOWS!***

For the children of Israel, they did not listen to the Lord. We saw that in Judges chapter 1. For instance, in Judges 1:30 we are told, “**Nor did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron or the inhabitants of Nahalol; so the Canaanites dwelt among them, and were put under tribute.**”

And this is repeated over and over again, and what God warned them about, they were going to experience the consequences of their disobedience.

Make no mistake about it, our obedience to the Lord and what He has told us is important. And yes, there may be times, many times that we may not fully understand it. But we still must obey because Father God knows what He is talking about; Jesus, God the Son knows what He is talking about; and the Holy Spirit knows what He is talking about; as well as the Word of God, it shows us what we need to do!

Let me share this with you and you will see what I mean. We are told,

In the Belgian Congo, the weather was hot and dank. No breath of air stirred; leaves hung from the trees as though they were weighted. In the garden not far from the missionary home a small boy played under a tree.

Suddenly, the father called to him: “Philip, obey me instantly – get down on your stomach.”

The boy reacted at once, and his father continued, “Now crawl toward me fast.” The boy again obeyed.

After he had come about halfway, the father said, “Now stand up and run to me.”

The boy reached his father and turned to look back – hanging from the branch under which he had been playing was a fifteen-foot serpent.

Are we always as ready to obey? Or do we say: “Tell me why?” “Explain to me”? “I will after awhile”? Let it be, “Speak, Lord, Thy servant hears.”

- Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Timeless Illustrations for Preaching and teaching*, p. 170

We need to listen and obey now, not when we feel like it or think it is the right time. We must not think we know better than God. We must obey what He is telling us, as difficult as it may be, because it is what is best for our lives!

And for the children of Israel, this bondage that they were going to find themselves in, this captivity that they were going to find themselves in, wasn't the result of their military weakness. No, they were spiritually empty!

One writer put it like this, “The deplorable spiritual condition of the Israelites, not their lack of chariots, lay behind their failure to dispossess the Canaanites.” (Wolf)

And please understand that this is not the voice of an out-of-control God, some dictator, but the voice of God who is broken over the sin of His people!

Listen again to the question that God asks them in regard to their failure to obey Him.

He said, “**Why have you done this?**”

You see, because of your failure to obey, these enemies will be a thorn in your side, their god's will take you captive, there are consequences to your disobedience.

What about us? You see, I believe this question can be spoken to us at times. “**Why have you done this?**”

You see, our failure to drive out the enemy, our flesh, will be a thorn in our side. Our disobedience to the Lord will not turn out for good! It is far better to obey the Lord than to go down that path that leads to destruction!

And let me show you how God feels about this. What God sees is happening in the lives of His people, the children of Israel!

Back in Judges 2:1 we are told that “**. . . the Angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim . . .**”

I know, that does not sound like such a big deal, but it is. Let me show you what I mean.

Gilgal is the place where they first camped after they crossed the Jordan River. It was the place of blessing.

And the Lord traveled from Gilgal, the place of blessing, to Bochim or a place of weeping. That is what the word “***Bochim***” means, weeping!

And the significance is this. They moved from the place of blessing to the place of weeping because of their disobedience and this is now where God leads them, it is where He sees they are at!

Yes, ***GOD’S PROMISE TO ISRAEL*** was fulfilled by God, they were in the Promise Land, the land of Canaan. And we looked at ***GOD’S WARNING TO ISRAEL***, to drive out the enemy completely and they did not do that.

And now we will see ***GOD’S CHASTENING OF ISRAEL*** for their disobedience.

VERSE 3

Now, as you read this, does this seem fair?

God promised them the land of Canaan, and brought them into this land, He fought for them in a miraculous way many times, like with Jericho, and now the Lord says that “**I will not drive them out before you, but they shall be thorns in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you.**” Judges 2:3.

What is going on here?

The problem is simple. They did not listen to the Lord. They did not drive the enemy out completely. And thus, God is giving to them what they desired, not what He desired for them.

And let me say this, that is never a good thing!

And what we see here is that God reminded them that He would not do all the work of conquering Canaan by himself. Yes, like I have said, in the early years, in the big campaigns in Canaan, God did fight for Israel in a supernatural way.

But that is not how He was going to do it for these other battles. He wanted them to work with Him in conquering the enemy, but they only went part way and God is chastening them for their disobedience.

And, if you think about it, that is how God works with us. God does His part, but He also tells us that we need to walk by faith, our part!

Now, what God warned them about, that these enemies that they did not drive out would be a thorn in their flesh, irritants in their eyes and harass them where they are dwelling, came to pass just like God said. (Numbers 33:55)

And in this is the chastening of God.

This is hard for us because we see the chastening of God upon our lives as punishment. It is not punishment, it is God's love for us to get us back on track, to keep us from danger.

Think about it like this. A young child is fascinated with the fire on the stove and he keeps trying to put his hand in the flame. As a parent, what are you going to do?

You are going to discipline your son or daughter and it may even take a little swat on the butt to get their attention that what they are doing is wrong, it is dangerous!

Now, if you did not love your child, what would you do?

Nothing!

You would let them put their hand in the fire.

But our God warns us and warns us and eventually, He will chasten us to get our attention because He loves us so much!

Listen to what Paul wrote in Hebrews 12:5-11, **“And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: ‘My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.’ If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”**

In these verses Paul is speaking of **“chastening”** or discipline.

It is the Greek word PAIDEIA, (pahee-di’-ah) and it speaks of the training of a child so that they may grow and mature.

Now let me say this again so you don’t misunderstand what God is doing here. God’s chastening is not punitive or retaliatory, but it is corrective to His children, to believers.

Yes, outside of Christ there is judgment, it is punitive, but not in Christ!

Paul said in Romans 8:1, **“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”**

Thus, Paul, in quoting out of Proverbs 3:11-12 is showing us that God’s chastening is not a sign of rejection but of love towards us, and folks, none of us are above this kind training!

I like the way Arthur Pink comments on this. He said, “Remind yourself of how much dross there is yet among the gold and view the corruption of your own heart and marvel that God has not smitten you more severely. Form the habit of heeding His taps, and you will be less likely to receive His raps.”

I like that, and it is true. May we be sensitive to what He is showing us as we are going through situations, learn those lessons so we can move on!

And, we see here that God chastens us for correction because we are His children. You don’t discipline your neighbor’s children, even though you may want to, but you do discipline your own children because they are yours! That is the idea here.

Now let’s face it, how many of us like to be corrected? How many of us like to be chastened?

None of us do, I think I can safely say that.

And I can look back at my childhood and I didn’t always agree with the discipline my father gave me when I was growing up, but I did respect him.

And when I became a father, I saw the wisdom in what he was doing, that his desire was not to hurt me but to help me to grow and mature.

Now, as earthly fathers’ go, our discipline is not always perfect, sometimes we discipline for our own good, our own benefit.

You know, bedtime at 6:00 PM, why? So I can relax. No, it wasn't that bad, but you get the idea.

But our heavenly Father, His discipline is perfect, and it is always for our profit, so that we will be more like Him.

It is as Peter admonishes us in I Peter 1:13-16, **“Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’”**

God is working in us, purging that dross from our lives, the garbage that is in there and in the end, we will look back and see the wisdom of His actions in our lives!

Yes, when we are being chastened, we don't always see it as good, but I do believe as we look back, we will see what God was doing in our lives was for our good!

Praise the Lord He is working in us, even though we might not like it now, in the end, we will see it is worth it.

It is as Paul said, when God is done working in II Corinthians 3:18, **“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”**

And listen to what C. H. Spurgeon had to say. We are told:

I am afraid that all the grace I have got out of my comfortable and easy times and happy hours might almost lie on a penny. But the good that I have received from my sorrows and pains and griefs is altogether incalculable. What do I not owe to the hammer and the anvil, the fire and the file? Affliction is the best bit of furniture in my house.

- C. H. Spurgeon

How true that is!

Now, before we move on let me add this, it is important.

It deals with the desire of our heart. When we are walking with God, in tune with God, our heart is a reflection of His heart. Thus, He will give us the desire of our heart because it is what He desires for us and it is what is best.

But, if we want this and want that, and it is not of God, be careful, because He may give you the desire of your heart and that is not a good thing if it is not in line with His!

So we have seen ***GOD'S PROMISE TO ISRAEL*** to bring them into the land of Canaan, the Promise Land and He has done that!

We also saw ***GOD'S WARNING TO ISRAEL*** to drive out the enemy, and they did not do that!

Now we have looked at ***GOD'S CHASTENING OF ISRAEL*** because of their disobedience.

And, as we read on, we will look at ***THE RESPONSE OF ISRAEL!***

VERSES 4-5

As you read this it does look promising. As the conviction of the Lord came upon the children of Israel, as they heard what the Lord was telling them, they wept, and they offered sacrifice to the Lord!

Now what is this conviction of sin all about? Listen carefully. We are told,

The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit will convict the world of sin (John 16:8). To help us understand what the conviction of sin is, we can look at what it is not. First, it is not simply a guilty conscience or even shame over sin. Such feelings are naturally experienced by almost everyone. But this is not true conviction of sin.

Second, conviction of sin is not a sense of trepidation or a foreboding of divine punishment. These feelings, too, are commonly experienced in the hearts and minds of sinners. But, again, true conviction of sin is something different.

Third, conviction of sin is not merely knowledge of right and wrong; it is not an assent to Scripture's teaching about sin. Many people read the Bible and are fully aware that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). They may know that "no immoral, impure or greedy person . . . has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Ephesians 5:5). They may even agree that "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Psalm 9:17). Yet, for all their knowledge, they continue to live in sin. They understand the consequences, but they're far from being convicted of their sins.

The truth is, if we experience nothing more than a pang of conscience, anxiety at the thought of judgment, or an academic awareness of hell, then we have never truly known the conviction of sin. So, what is real conviction, the kind the Bible speaks of?

The word *convict* is a translation of the Greek word *elencho*, which means “to convince someone of the truth; to reprove; to accuse, refute, or cross-examine a witness.” The Holy Spirit acts as a prosecuting attorney who exposes evil, reproves evildoers, and convinces people that they need a Savior.

To be convicted is to feel the sheer loathsomeness of sin. This happens when we’ve seen God’s beauty, His purity and holiness, and when we recognize that sin cannot dwell with Him (Psalm 5:4). When Isaiah stood in the presence of God, he was immediately overwhelmed by his own sinfulness: “Woe to me! . . . I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips . . . and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty” (Isaiah 6:5).

To be convicted is to experience an utter dreadfulness of sin. Our attitude toward sin becomes that of Joseph who fled temptation, crying out, “How could I do this great evil and sin against God?” (Genesis 39:9).

We are convicted when we become mindful of how much our sin dishonors God. When David was convicted by the Holy Spirit, he cried out, “Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight” (Psalm 51:4). David saw his sin primarily as an affront to a holy God.

We are convicted when we become intensely aware of the wrath it exposes to our souls (Romans 1:18; Romans 2:5). When the Philippian jailer fell at the apostles’ feet and cried, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” he was under conviction (Acts 16:30). He was certain that, without a Savior, he would die.

When the Holy Spirit convicts people of their sin, He represents the righteous judgment of God (Hebrews 4:12). There is no appeal of this verdict. The Holy Spirit not only convicts people of sin, but He also brings them to repentance (Acts 17:30; Luke 13:5). The Holy Spirit brings to light our relationship to God. The convicting power of the Holy Spirit opens our eyes to our sin and opens our hearts to receive His grace (Ephesians 2:8).

We praise the Lord for the conviction of sin. Without it, there could be no salvation. No one is saved apart from the Spirit's convicting and regenerating work in the heart. The Bible teaches that all people are by nature rebels against God and hostile to Jesus Christ. They are "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). Jesus said, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him" (John 6:44). Part of that "draw" to Jesus is the conviction of sin.

- <http://bit.ly/2IRCCSI>

And once we come to saving faith, as we start moving away from what God desires for our lives, the Holy Spirit will convict us and then we have a choice to make. To not only feel the conviction of God upon our lives, but then to respond to it.

I think there was a half-hearted response on their part with this conviction and the reason I believe that is what we are told as we read on here in Judges chapter 2 and really, the rest of the book of Judges!

So, we have seen ***GOD'S PROMISE TO ISRAEL***, to bring them in the land of Canaan!

We have seen ***GOD'S WARNING TO ISRAEL***, to obey His words and drive out the enemy!

We have seen ***GOD'S CHASTENING OF ISRAEL*** for their disobedience to the Lord!

And we have seen here in these verses, *THE RESPONSE OF ISRAEL*, that they wept and sacrificed to God, they wanted to get right with God!

We will finish up this study by looking at the *CONCLUSION OF ISRAEL!*

VERSE 6

Now this is interesting to me because we are told that this event transpired during the time of Joshua!

When did it occur?

I believe that it occurred towards the end of his life, and it corresponds to the events that took place in Joshua chapter 24.

Here's the thing. We are not sure where Bochim is located and they may have called Shechem this name because of where they were at spiritually speaking.

And thus, this is a recap of what transpired.

And here God is warning them of what this compromise of allowing the enemy, making a covenant with the enemy will do to them.

Now here is why I think this was not a wholehearted effort on their part to follow the Lord, to walk in the ways of the Lord.

In Judges 2:10-13 we are told of what transpired after the death of Joshua and that generation who were following the Lord died as well. This is what we are told, **“When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, and another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel. Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals; and they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger. They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths.”**

Make no mistake about it, God is not wrong. He warned them, chastened them and they made this half-hearted effort to follow the Lord but, in the end, they did not have that relationship with the Lord and the other nations that were around them, that they did not drive out, and these nations brought them down.

Isn't that amazing! God was right!

Okay, a little sarcasm there.

But if we understand who God is, that He is all-knowing. If we understand that He loves us more than we will ever know. Then when He is telling us something it is not to hurt us but to bless us. May we listen!

I will close with this. Paul tells us in Hebrews 3:7-15, **“Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness, Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, “They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.” So I swore in My wrath, “They shall not enter My rest.”” Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, while it is said: ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.’”**

May we see the ***PROMISES THAT GOD HAS GIVEN TO US!***

May we hear ***GOD’S WARNING TO US!***

May we take to heart ***GOD’S CHASTENING UPON OUR LIVES!***

May we ***RESPOND TO THE CHASTENING OF GOD*** with repentance and turning back to Him!

May we ***WALK WITH THE LORD ALL THE DAYS OF OUR LIFE!***