

JUDGES 2:7-13
A GODLY GENERATION DIES!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Judges chapter 2 as we continue our study through this very sad and tragic book.

I know, that does not sound too good, and it isn't!

The children of Israel will turn from God and follow the gods of the nations that were around them, those people that they were supposed to wipe out and yet, they let them live. And it is these people that influenced the children of Israel to move away from the true and living God!

This morning, in a message I have called, "***A Godly Generation Dies!***" we will see the results of what happens when a Godly generation dies! And I think this is a very timely message for us in America today!

I realize that for many, things are going well, and God is important, but there are so many other things that are competing for our time with God. And, in the end, what we are teaching our children, or grandchildren, even our friends and other family members, is that God may be important but there are other things that are much more important than God.

Let me show you what I mean about the importance of passing the things of God down to the next generation or it will be lost. Ken Ham wrote,

If we don't transmit our knowledge of God to the next generation, it will be lost.

When I was growing up, a group of people intentionally removed themselves from the modern world and disappeared into the jungles of the Northern Tropics of Australia. Seeking a liberated and simple existence, free from the pressures and constraints of the world, they left behind their past identity and heritage, shedding their inhibitions (and most of their clothes!).

They were known as the “hippies,” and their offspring were not familiar with modern medicines or technology. They had little or no respect for society’s laws, and many of their children received no formal education. Concepts like “god” and “truth” were not considered important enough to teach.

Consequentially, and tragically, they basically degenerated into a non-God-fearing and a non-technological culture in one generation. In less than two decades, they produced a new generation, by and large ignorant of their former heritage and culture—in a sense, we could say it was a “primitive culture.”

The lesson is clear: If we don’t transmit our knowledge of God to the next generation, it will be lost. Those that follow may not have any means of regaining it, and they probably won’t even be aware of the need to do so.

This has happened in the past to the New Guinea natives, the American Indians, the North Africans, and many others. All are descendants of Adam, yet somewhere in their past, fathers did not pass on the knowledge they had regarding God and their origins. Thus, when discovered by the Europeans, they were regarded as “primitive.”

When the Europeans first discovered the Australian Aborigines, they too were an anti-God spiritist culture. Do you realize that in reality it could have taken only one generation to produce such a culture? Like us, the Australian Aborigines had an ancestor who knew all about the true God . . . and he could even build ships! His name was Noah. At some point in history, the ancestors of today’s Aborigines did not transmit the true knowledge of God or the technology they once had to their offspring, and their godly legacy was lost.

It's fascinating to note that the Australian Aborigines had legends which sound like parts of Genesis 1–11. They had legends about a flood that is quite similar to the account of Noah's flood in Genesis 6 through 9. They also had creation legends that exhibited many similarities with the biblical account of Adam and Eve and the entrance of sin and death after Adam took the fruit. (This is strong circumstantial evidence that the Australian Aborigines are descendants of Noah.)

After the Tower of Babel, as people groups split up and spread throughout the earth, many transmitted the history of their ancestors to coming generations. The account of the Flood was handed down, but the details changed over the years as it was passed on verbally, rather than in written form, as were the Scriptures.

In the Aborigine legends, just as in the "Flood legends" of many other cultures, there are many elements similar to the Bible's account, which is the original and accurately recorded written account that has not been changed.

Sadly, however, the Australian Aborigines (as well as many other cultures) lost almost all of the knowledge they once had. I'll never forget visiting an Aboriginal mission station in North Queensland and hearing the story of an Aboriginal elder. The elder said he remembered wandering with his father as nomads across the Australian deserts. He asked his father, "What is God like?" His father replied, "I don't know, son. We've forgotten."

What a tragedy. The knowledge of God was not transmitted to the next generation - and now it was all but gone. . . .

- <http://bit.ly/2pCaP1S>

I think as we read something like that it truly does drive home the point of passing the things of God down to the next generation or it will be lost!

In our study this morning we will be looking at four main points, and they are as follows:

SERVING THE LORD – JUDGES 2:7

A GODLY MAN DIES – JUDGES 2:8-9

A GODLY GENERATION DIES – JUDGES 2:10

THE CONSEQUENCES – JUDGES 2:11-13

And, again, I think this is so important for us to understand because, if we don't pass the things of God on to the next generation, it will be lost and so will that generation as we will see in our study this morning.

Let me give you a little background information of what is preceding the events here in these verses of Judges chapter 2 and then we will get to our study.

We have seen the warning that God gave to the children of Israel. He told them that they broke His covenant that they made with them and yet, He would never break His covenant with them!

But judgment would come upon them for their sin and when they heard this we are told in Judges 2:4-5, **“So it was, when the Angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice and wept. Then they called the name of that place Bochim; [weeping] and they sacrificed to the LORD.”**

And that sounds great, but I don't think they were completely sincere for, as we will see, they will turn very quickly away from the Lord. Now I don't think this generation that heard these things turned away from the Lord, but the next generation will, as we will see this morning.

With that as our background, let's begin reading in Judges chapter 2 beginning in verse 7 and let's see what the Lord has for us this morning as we look at this subject, "***A Godly Generation Dies!***"

JUDGES 2

VERSE 7

As we have seen in our study of Joshua, he was a godly man and his love for the Lord, his obedience to the Lord was witnessed by those around him. And that witness drew the people to the Lord, so much so that we are told that "**. . . the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua . . .**"

Remember what Joshua said to the nation of Israel in his farewell speech back in Joshua 24:14-15, "**Now therefore, fear the Lord , serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord! And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.**"

Joshua wanted the people of God to remember all that God had done for them. How He brought them out of Egypt, set them free from the bondage they were in.

He brought them through the wilderness those forty years and into the Promise Land, the land of Canaan!

He gave them victory after victory over their enemies until the land was conquered.

And yet, in spite of all that, they were still holding onto the gods that they worshiped in Egypt.

So Joshua calls for them to put away these false gods and “**Serve the LORD!**” But they would have to choose what they were going to do. Joshua could not do that for them.

They could not serve the Lord and serve these other gods at the same time. You can’t serve the Lord half-heartedly and God desires our full worship of Him and not a divided worship of Him!

And no matter what, no matter what the people were going to do, who they were going to serve, Joshua told them, “**But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.**” Amen to that!

As a leader you can’t let people influence you, but you must allow God to guide your life, direct your life.

Too often the danger is that we want to be friends with everyone and thus, we accept anything and everything.

Joshua did not do that. He stood strong and no matter what, he was not going to let people influence his life from serving the Lord!

We too must be steadfast; we must be immovable from the course that God has for our lives.

And, in the days we are living in, with compromise, false teaching flooding into the church, it gets harder and harder.

Why is that?

Because we have friends, people we have known for years that we don’t want to lose!

Maybe it is a church that we have been going to for years and yet, even though they are not teaching as much from the Bible as they have done in the past, even though they have brought worldly things into the church, we are not going to leave it even though we have talked with the pastor and he is fine with where the church is going!

And here's the thing. You might not think of yourself as a leader, but if you have a family, you are a leader. And thus, where are you leading them?

You see, the things you do will affect them. And if you are compromising here and compromising there, a little false teaching here and a little false teaching there, what are you instilling in them?

Let me share this with you to show you what a leader looks like. We are told,

On February 12, 1959, the one-hundred-fiftieth anniversary of the birthday of Abraham Lincoln, the distinguished poet and historian Carl Sandburg was invited to Washington, D. C. to speak. Before a joint session of congress and assembled diplomatic corps, the astute, eloquent student of Lincoln held the attention of everyone as he portrayed a very great leader with very human characteristics.

Calling his speech, appropriately, "Man of Steel and Velvet," Sandburg helped everyone see that a respected leader can be both capable and vulnerable. The mixture may be rare, but when it is there it is truly effective.

Not often in the story of mankind does a man arrive on earth who is both steel and velvet, who is as hard as a rock and soft as drifting fog, who holds in his heart and mind the paradox of terrible storm and peace unspeakable and perfect. . . .

While the war winds howled, he insisted that the Mississippi was one river meant to belong to one country. . . .

While the luck of war wavered and broke and came again, as generals failed and campaigns were lost, he held enough forces . . . together to raise new armies and supply them, until generals were found who made war as victorious war has always been made, with terror, frightfulness, destruction . . . valor and sacrifice past words of man to tell.

In the mixed shame and blame of the immense wrongs of two crashing civilizations, often with noting to say, he said nothing, slept not at all, and on occasions he was seen to weep in a way that made weeping appropriate, decent, majestic.

- Charles R. Swindoll, Leadership

That truly was Joshua. He was a man who fought battles, prayed, was on his knees weeping over situations that they faced, he was fearful and yet, through it all, he looked to the Lord to be the strength of his life.

And that was a tremendous witness to the Jewish people as they watched Joshua live out his faith. It encouraged them and it pointed them to the true and living God!

I have called this verse, ***SERVING THE LORD!***

And what I mean by that is that as we serve the Lord our family, our friends, people we may not even know, are watching and we can be a light to them.

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 5:16, **“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”**

As we shine for the Lord, as we live out our faith, people will see it. And we should let them see all the good works that God is doing in our lives.

That is what Joshua did. They **“ . . . had seen all the great works of the LORD which He had done for Israel.”**

I think it is important that people see our faith is real.

I can show people how God is active in my life. I can point to how God brought me from Chicago to Wisconsin, not by some random chance occurrence, but that He told me what He was going to do some ten or eleven years before it took place.

I can show them that God is faithful and when you look at how everything fell into place, all the details that are beyond our control came into play, you see the hand of God.

When I speak of my children and their rebellion against God and then how the Lord has drawn them back and they are faithfully serving the Lord, not by luck, but the grace of God!

I look at how God allowed me to come on full time in the ministry during a period of time in our nation when the bottom fell out of the stock market, people were losing their jobs, not a great time to quit my job, and yet, that is exactly what the Lord told me to do and here I am, some nine years later!

I think we miss out all that God is doing in our lives because we focus on what we don't have, what we want. But God is always working, we just need to be watching and then we need to share what God is doing with us so that they can see the hand of God.

Think about children and grandchildren, are they seeing God working in your life? If not, that is a problem because you may read to them the Bible, but how is that played out in your life? Do they see you praying? Do they hear of what God is doing? They need to, it is so important for them.

And as people watch, as they see your faith lived out, they too will learn to walk by faith, to trust more and more in the Lord and you have passed your faith on to the next generation!

Let me share this with you to show you the importance of passing down the things of God to others so that they may shine brightly for Jesus. We are told,

On the coast of Norway is a lighthouse where a keeper lived with his two children. One day he went to the distant shore for provisions. A storm arose, and he was unable to return.

The time for lighting the lamp came, and Mary, the elder child, said to her little brother, "We must light the lamp, Willie."

"How can we?" asked Willie. "We ain't big enough."

But the two children climbed the long, narrow stairs to the tower where the lamp was kept. Mary pulled up a chair and tried to reach the lamp in the great reflector; it was too high.

Groping down the stairs, she ascended again with a small oil lamp in her hand.

"I can hold this up," she said to her little brother.

She climbed on the chair again, but still the reflector was just beyond her reach.

"Get down," said Willie; "I know what we can do."

She jumped down, and he stretched his little body across the chair.

"Stand on me," he said.

And she stood on the little fellow as he lay across the chair. She raised the lamp high, and its light shone far out across the water.

Holding it first with one hand, then with the other, to rest her little arms, she called down to her brother, "Does it hurt you, Willie?"

"Of course it hurts," he called back, "but keep the light burning."

Are we keeping the light of God's love burning in the world even though it hurts?

Are we holding it up so that all nations may see its beams afar?

- The S. S. Banner

What they saw in their father, what they watched him do, when he was not there, they did it, they let their light shine and so must we!

And here is the bottom line. Christianity is not transmitted through our genes. It is not transmitted biologically. It is caught by the next generation because they have their own personal relationship with Jesus as they see the works of God working in people's lives. May we let them see that our God is real; our faith is strong, not perfect because none of us are, and that we believe God at His Word because compromise is a dangerous road to travel on!

SERVING THE LORD – what a witness that should be to the next generation! May we shine brightly!

VERSES 8-9

Here, in these verses we see our next point – ***A GODLY MAN DIES!***

And we did cover this in our first study of the book of Judges as we looked at ***THE DEATH OF A LEADER*** and we looked at what Joshua did for the nation as he let them see the Lord in his life!

So I am not going to spend a lot of time on this because we covered this ground.

But let me say this. Another point of a godly leader is that they don't get people to follow them, they get people to follow the Lord!

You see, if you are drawing people to yourself, or, if you are following a person, when that person dies, what are you going to do?

I saw this several years back when Pastor Chuck Smith went home to be with the Lord. Some of the talk, not by everyone, but some people were concerned what was going to happen, what were we going to do, who was going to be leading Calvary Chapel?

Here's the thing, Pastor Chuck never pointed people to himself, but to the Lord. But when you lead for all that time, some people miss the point!

Do you know what happens when a godly leader goes home to be with the Lord?

You continue in the work that God has called you to because God is not dead! He is living and He is guiding, and He uses people to do a great work, but that work is only accomplished through the Lord and not the person. The person is just the instrument that God is using to accomplish His work!

Remember when Moses died and the Lord said to Joshua, "**Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them – the children of Israel.**" Joshua 1:2.

What I want you to notice is what the Lord did not say. He did not say, "*Oh no! Moses is dead! What am I going to do?*"

Now we laugh at that but isn't that what we do when we put all our faith in a person and when they die, there is nothing left? Of course it is and that is exactly what we are not to do!

And of Joshua, after he died, we are told, "**Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass that the children of Israel asked the LORD saying, 'Who shall be first to go up for us against the Canaanites to fight against them?'**" Judges 1:1.

In other words, after the death of Joshua the children of Israel sought the Lord in regard to what they were going to do next, who was going to lead them into battle against the Canaanites.

You see, Joshua instilled the love of God into these people and now that Joshua is gone, the people themselves are seeking direction from the Lord! How important that is. Direction from God and not from man!

And for Joshua, he was one hundred and ten years old when he died, and he was buried in the land that God had promised him and the children of Israel!

And what a great leader Joshua was. In fact, that phrase, “**the servant of the LORD**” is only applied to a few men, like Moses in Deuteronomy 34:5. And we see it mentioned of David in Psalm 18. (found in the title of this Psalm) And the courageous prophets in II Kings 9:7.

One writer summed it up like this for us in regard to the death of Joshua. He wrote,

But Joshua’s long life was coming to an end, and it was handover time, time for Joshua to commission the next generation as Moses had commissioned him.

He told them to revere the Lord and serve him alone, and they promised to do so (Joshua 24:14-22). But it would be hard to do this when he was no longer there to inspire them by his example and strong leadership.

And Joshua knew it. That’s why he had renewed the covenant in a solemn assembly at Shechem and bound Israel by a solemn oath never to forsake the Lord (Joshua 24:14-25).

He knew that the time after his death would be a testing time for Israel. Without his firm, guiding hand they would become vulnerable to the huge temptations to unfaithfulness that life in the land of Canaan would present.

It’s like a father anxious about how his children will fare when they leave home and have to make their way in a world that is alluring but often hostile to Christian faith.

Or like an aging pastor pondering his retirement and concerned for those he has invested his life in and must now leave to the care of others.

Subsequent events will show that Joshua’s concerns were not unfounded. The loss of Joshua would be a great loss to Israel.

How true that is and yet, it did not have to be that way. The children of Israel could have served the Lord all the days of their life, but they chose not to!

So we see here that *A GODLY MAN DIES* and as we read on we are going to see that *A GODLY GENERATION DIES!*

VERSE 10

Remember that the Lord told the children of Israel to destroy the enemy that was in the land of Canaan, don't let them live.

And we see that they did not listen to the Lord, they did not obey the Lord, but they let the enemy, small pockets of resistance, remain in the land.

And these pockets of resistance are like cancer. It only takes one cancer cell to multiply and spread and before you know it, it has infected your entire body!

That is what sin will do! That is what compromise will do! That is what not listening and obeying what the Lord tells us to do will happen in our lives!

And what we see here in the book of Judges is the result of that compromise and it is just as the Lord told them, warned them and I guess as time went by, they just didn't believe it, or they didn't care.

And as you listen to what is said here in verse 10, you see the tragedy of what happens many times to future generations - they did not know the Lord!

Listen again to what we are told here, it is so important. We read, "**When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel.**" Judges 2:10.

Now that can be the result of 2 things.

First of all, their parents never instructed them of the Lord, His words were not passed on to them. It was something that the Lord commanded the children of Israel to do - teach their children the ways of the Lord.

We are told of this back before they even entered the land, back in Deuteronomy 6:4-7, where we are told, **“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart; you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.”**

You see, the Lord was to be the focus of their life, and they were to not only instruct their children of the Lord, but their life should reflect that relationship. They were to show their children the power and faithfulness of God.

And let's face it, their lives were busy, very busy!

There was football, not with pigskins of course, that would not be Kosher!

And work was busy, they worked hard in the fields and they needed to make enough money so they could buy that four-wheel drive camel, those two-wheel drive ones really did not work!

And we can make a list of things that got in their way of serving God, of gathering together to worship the Lord.

But in that their faith waxed and waned and it was not passed on to their children, their children did not see the importance of this faith. Especially when these non-Jews were showing them other ways to have fun, to worship the gods, to have some gratification of the flesh and they bought into it, so much so that this next generation did not know the Lord!

Now the other reason for their disobedience to the Lord could just be unbelief. And I tend to think that was also a big factor here.

And please understand that this is more than just ignorance of God, it was unbelief. They refused to see the power of God and the faithfulness of God in their lives.

They wake-up in the morning, it is another day and you do this, you do that, and it is evening, and you head to bed. The next day you wake-up, you do the same thing again, and you come home, and you go to bed.

And there is no time for God at all. And when you don't spend time with God your faith is going to be in trouble. You will not look to Him like you need to and, in the end, what you have will not be passed on to your children or that next generation!

And we see that today, people who refuse to believe in God no matter how much they see of His power and faithfulness. Thus, with their failure to serve the Lord, they serve the gods of the other nations.

And, as we will see, God brings judgment upon them.

Why?

Because they had the truth of God and they chose to reject it, to change it to fit what they wanted to believe.

That is what we see happening many times today folks.

It is not that people don't have the truths of God.

We have more Bibles, more commentaries, more CD's about God than ever before but people refuse to believe it and then end up changing it to fit their lifestyle, what they want to do, and future generations will be infected with this poison.

And, even if they did not have any of these things to help them, they are without excuse!

I know, “How can that be?”

Listen carefully to what Paul says in Romans 1:18-25, **“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man - and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.”**

Do you see why they are accountable before God?

It is because they suppress the truth.

What does that mean?

Specifically here, God is speaking of creation and how He has created everything and these men know that but they suppress that truth and they believe the lie and they worship the creature or evolution is their god, instead of the creator, the true and living God!

Let me show you what I mean. Stephen Hawking, who was one of the most brilliant minds in the world shows how God is not needed and you have to listen to this scientific argument, it is brilliant. Sorry, little sarcasm there. This is what we are told,

God did not create the universe, the man who is arguably Britain's most famous living scientist says in a forthcoming book.

In the new work, *The Grand Design*, Professor Stephen Hawking argues that the Big Bang, rather than occurring following the intervention of a divine being, was inevitable due to the law of gravity.

In his 1988 book, *A Brief History of Time*, Hawking had seemed to accept the role of God in the creation of the universe. But in the new text, co-written with American physicist Leonard Mlodinow, he said new theories showed a creator is "not necessary".

The Grand Design, an extract of which appears in the Times today, sets out to contest Sir Isaac Newton's belief that the universe must have been designed by God as it could not have been created out of chaos.

"Because there is a law such as gravity, the universe can and will create itself from nothing," he writes. "Spontaneous creation is the reason there is something rather than nothing, why the universe exists, why we exist. . . . It is not necessary to invoke God to light the blue touch paper and set the universe going."

[So the most brilliant man says, scientifically speaking, because of the law of gravity, "the universe can and will create itself from nothing." Are you kidding me? I don't think they even listen to what they are saying because if you have absolutely nothing, you can't get anything if you don't have anything in the first place. Maybe I should get the Nobel Prize in science on that one!]

In the forthcoming book, published on 9 September, Hawking says that M-theory, a form of string theory, will achieve this goal: “M-theory is the unified theory Einstein was hoping to find,” he theorises.

“The fact that we human beings – who are ourselves mere collections of fundamental particles of nature – have been able to come this close to an understanding of the laws governing us and our universe is a great triumph.”

Hawking says the first blow to Newton’s belief that the universe could not have arisen from chaos was the observation in 1992 of a planet orbiting a star other than our Sun. “That makes the coincidences of our planetary conditions – the single sun, the lucky combination of Earth-sun distance and solar mass – far less remarkable, and far less compelling as evidence that the Earth was carefully designed just to please us human beings,” he writes.

Hawking had previously appeared to accept the role of God in the creation of the universe. Writing in his bestseller *A Brief History of Time* in 1988, he said: “If we discover a complete theory, it would be the ultimate triumph of human reason – for then we should know the mind of God.”

- <http://bit.ly/2J9PseZ>

Again, if you reject God, He will give you over to these things and they are not the scientific theories of people who are smart, but they are fairy tales spoken by people who are ignorant of God and, as Paul wrote, they are without excuse!

And yes, we see here in Judges that the next generation turned from God and please understand that it does not negate the future generations responsibility.

Listen to what Gary Inrig wrote regarding this issue. He wrote,

Here [2:10] we come to the heart of the second-generation syndrome. It is a lukewarmness, a complacency, an apathy about amazing biblical truths that we have heard from our childhood, or from our teachers. . . . It is a pattern which challenges churches and even nations, and nowhere does it work with more devastating effect than in Bible colleges and theological seminaries where, day after day, we come in contact with God's truth. . . . History tells us that not even the most vivid display of the life transforming power of the Holy Spirit will prevent this problem.

But why? Why did it happen then, and why does it happen to us? . . . We must realize two things about this kind of complacency. The first is something Erich Fromm once pointed out when he said, 'Hate is not the opposite of love. Apathy is.' To be complacent in the face of Calvary is the greatest possible rejection of God. The second is that complacency grows like a cancer. . . . Maybe part of the problem lay with the first [Joshua's] generation. Interestingly, however, the book of Judges puts none of the blame there. The second generation was held responsible for their failure, and God would not allow them to shift the blame.

- Gary Inrig, *Hearts of Iron, Feet of Clay*, pp. 26-27

Again, this is so important in our generation, what we are passing down to future generations. May it be a love for God and a love for His Word that causes us to love people unconditionally! Yes, they have a choice to make as well, but may we give them the truths of God found in the Word of God. May we let them see that God is active in our lives as we live out our faith!

And, in these days we are living in, we are concerned for our children, our grandchildren. We want them growing up loving and serving the Lord. One write tells us,

Generational change is a reality that none of us can avoid. As the Preacher of the book of Ecclesiastes has put it so memorably, “A generation goes, and a generation comes” (Ecclesiastes 1:4a). Only the earth “remains for ever,” and even that will pass away one day and be replaced by a new and different one (Ecclesiastes 1:4b; Revelation 22:1).

Change is inevitable and must be embraced, including the changes that take place from generation to generation. Gen X follows baby boomers, to be followed in turn by Gen Y and Gen Z, and each generation is shaped by the circumstances and experiences of its own time.

Generations overlap, and those of one generation have to live with and try to understand those of another. But eventually the last of each generation passes away. Only the memory and legacy of that generation remains, and with time, even that begins to be marginalized and diminished. The new generation must make its own way in life, engaging with its own world and shaped by its own values.

All this can cause great anxiety, because the values of our own generation, inculcated [taught] in our upbringing, seem so obviously right for us. We fear for our children, who live in such a different world and are influenced by things that pull them in a different direction from the one we feel they should take.

This special anxiety for Christian parents, who believe that most basic values of their lives are not simply passing fashions but eternal truths.

The anxiety can become extreme when parents feel that any departure from these truths by their children must be because of some failure in their raising of them.

The faithfulness or otherwise of their children is read as success or failure on their own part, and parents can carry heavy burdens of guilt all their lives if some of their children do not turn out to be believers.

Losing their children can mean losing self-respect and sometimes the respect of others, including other Christians. All this is extremely painful.

It's a kind of death, just as real in some ways as actual bereavement, but often it doesn't attract the same kind of sympathy. Losing our children is no light thing. Losing a whole generation is incalculably worse.

- Barry G. Webb, *Judges and Ruth – God in Chaos*, pp. 39-40

Please understand I don't want to put some big-time guilt trip on you. All we can do is the best we can do, and it is up to the next generation to decide for themselves to follow the Lord or not.

Our responsibility is to let them see our faith is real. Let them see that we love the Lord. Let them see that we love reading His Word, the Bible. Let them see that we love coming to church to worship the Lord, to hear from the Lord, to fellowship with other believers!

When I look at the life of Charles Spurgeon, who taught some 125 years ago, and the warning he gave regarding the worldliness of the church.

When I look back at the life of J. Vernon McGee, and what he taught some thirty to forty years ago, the concerns he had for the church and how worldly it was getting.

As I just look at these two men, there were many more warning the church of what was going on, and I see where the church is at today, it does concern me. I do understand that God always has His faithful remnant, but what a tragic state the church is in today!

And that brings us to our last point, after this ***GODLY GENERATION DIES***, then we see ***THE CONSEQUENCES!***

VERSES 11-13

Now I am not going to dig into these verses this morning, we will cover them more in-depth as we continue on in our study of Judges.

But look at how quickly they turned from the Lord because they never developed a true relationship with Him!

Now I do realize that some might say that parents have no right to prejudice a child regarding what he will accept as true.

It is better to leave all religious options open, and then when he chooses one, it will be his own authentic commitment, not to parental authority.

There are four problems with that objection, and I pray that this helps you to train up a child in the ways of God and not let the world tell you this is wrong.

First of all, ***it goes counter to all the teaching of Scripture that parents are to teach truth about God.*** That should just make sense. Children need to be trained in the things of God and as parents, and grandparents, we are responsible. As leaders in the church, we are responsible for teaching the people of God the things of God!

The second point is that *it is impossible not to teach children about God, because not to teach them is to teach them plenty*. You see, by doing that it is teaching them that Jesus does not matter much, that Mom and Dad don't consider him nearly as important or exciting as new furniture, or weekends at the lake, or Dad's job, or all the other things that fill their conversation. Silence about Christ is dogma. Not to teach the infinite value of Christ is to teach that he is negligible. And the same is true of leaders in the church. The people will take in the passion of your life!

The third point is that *it is not true that teaching children about God has to make them close-minded and irrationally prejudiced*. It might if the parents are insecure and have their own faith built on sand. But if parents see compelling reasons for being a Christian, they will impart these to their children as well. Nobody accuses a parent of prejudicing a child's cosmology because he tells the child the world is round, and the little stars at night are bigger than the earth, and the sun really stands still while the earth turns. Why? Because we know these things are so and can give evidence to a child eventually that will support this truth. And so it is with those who are persuaded for good reasons that the Christian faith is true. And for leaders in the church, if we don't believe that the Word of God is true, then that is exactly what we will give to the people and they too will believe that the Word of God is not true, it is not important!

And the fourth point is this, *it is simply unloving and cruel not to give a child what he needs most*. Since we believe that only by following Christ in the obedience of faith can a child be saved for eternity, escape the torments of hell, and enjoy the delights of heaven, it is unloving and cruel not to teach him the way. And the same is true for leaders in the church. If you are not bringing Jesus to the people and the people to Jesus, if you are bringing them to books, to this and to that, then you are not helping them but hurting them!

Yes, the days we are living in are getting darker and darker, but that should not take us by surprise. That is exactly what the Bible tells us will happen.

And as dark as it may get in this world, there is something that will drive that darkness out and that is the light of God shining in us and through us. Light dispels the darkness! May we never forget that, and may we be men and women who are leaders in our homes, in the workplace, at church, wherever we go.

I am not saying we need some kind of title or position to make us leaders, but by our actions and by our words we are able to lead people in the things of God, in holiness, instead of allowing them to descend farther into the darkness!

And I will close with this. We are told,

What hope is there for rebels and those who care deeply about them? What consolation is there for one generation that sees the next generation turn away from God. What hope is there for a church or nation that abandons the Lord? And what solace is there for godly parents who see a dearly loved child walk away?

No consolation is offered in this passage, which speaks only of apostasy and God's anger. But there is hope – slim perhaps, but real nonetheless – in the place of this passage in the book. It is not the end!

There is more to Israel's story than is told in these verses, and more to God's character than his anger. So those who must bear the pain of seeing others abandon the Lord are not alone. They stand with others who suffer as they do. And they stand with God, who has been abandoned as they have. And they hope in him.

- Barry G. Webb, Judges and Ruth – God in Chaos, pp. 50

And I will leave you with these words from Jeremiah 29:11, where the Lord tells us,
“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord , thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.”

Never give up, just keep looking up and allow the Lord to strengthen you and give you the wisdom you need to shine for Him!

May we not say to our children, our grandchildren, our friends, when they ask us, “What is God like?” and we reply, “I don’t know, son. We’ve forgotten.”

We know the truths of God found in the Word of God, we know these things, and we live these things, and may we speak forth these things to others, to pass the knowledge of God to future generations!