

Judges Chapter 2 Part 3

As a review, let us read the “homework” from last week, Galatians 4:21-31. The Galatian passage comments on the situation between the son of Hagar and the son of Sarah. The story is said to be told allegorically. However, we normally think of an allegory as a fictional story used to illustrate a point. Here, the basic story is fact taken from the book of Genesis. Perhaps the NIV translation as “figuratively” is to be preferred over the NASB literal translation “speaking allegorically.” In this passage Hagar is called a *paidiske* or maid servant but not *doulos*, the normal word for slave. Remember that in Genesis chapters 16 & 21, Hagar is not called an ‘abed (slave) there either. Note that this passage starts with a father, Abraham and becomes a contest between two women. We looked at the story of Hagar because that is where the Angel of the Lord first shows up in Scripture. But the lesson of Galatians chapter 4 applies to Judges: there is always a choice in the believer’s life between God’s free gift based on faith and man’s attempt to operate on human self-centered effort. Before moving on, back to the book of Judges, let me quote from the NIV study Bible. I am not that big a fan of the NIV translation, but it does contain some good comments and nice maps.

“Galatians stands as an eloquent and vigorous apologetic for the essential NT truth that people are justified by faith in Jesus Christ—by nothing less and nothing more—and that they are sanctified not by legalistic works but by the obedience that comes from faith [or as Herman says, the “obedience that is faith”] in God’s work for them, in them and through them by the grace and power of Christ and the Holy Spirit. It was the rediscovery of the basic message of Galatians (and Romans) that brought about the Protestant Reformation. Galatians is often referred to as “Luther’s book,” because Martin Luther relied so strongly on this letter

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in all his preaching, teaching and writing against the prevailing theology of his day. It is also referred to as the “Magna Carta of Christian Liberty.””

Judges 2:1 Now the angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim. And he said, “I brought you up out of Egypt and (I) led you into the land which I have sworn to your fathers; and I said, ‘I will never break My covenant with you,

Now. Literally, “and.” But remember, the Hebrew word “and” can mean many things depending upon the context. Some translations, like the NIV, don’t translate it. Others like the Young’s Literal Translation translate it as “and.” In any case, it is both a continuation from chapter 1 and a break in the narrative of the occupation of the land to an analysis of what happened in chapter 1 and a prelude to further problems yet to be encountered.

But, there is no statement saying exactly when this took place or how it took place. Based upon the placement of the text after chapter one and the use of the “and,” would lead us to believe this occurred after the completion of the occupation of the land.

Assuming that is so, did the Angel of the Lord somehow gather the leaders of the tribes at Bochim? Or was this now the command center for the sons of Israel at which there were representatives of the tribes. We are not told. We are told in verse four that the Angel of the Lord spoke to the Sons of Israel.

Angel of the Lord. This is the Pre-Existent Christ, the second person of the Trinity, the manifest person of God. We already dealt in detail with this term. At a later time we will expand on the points concerning the Angel of the Lord.

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Gilgal

1. Gilgal was located about halfway between the Jordan river and Jericho.
2. “Gilgal was especially important because its heap of twelve stones was a symbolic reminder of the nation’s unity and God’s miraculous power and ability to fulfil his promises to his people (Josh 4:20-24).” (Chisholm p 138)
3. “At Gilgal a new generation of Israelites renewed the nation’s covenantal commitment to the Lord through circumcision, observed the Passover, and tasted the fruit of the promised land for the first time (Josh. 5:2-12) (Chisholm p138)
4. It was where the army of the people camped when they crossed the Jordan, Joshua 4:19; 10:15, 43 (Robbie Dean/Chisholm p138)
5. Gilgal became Joshua's command and control center. It is to Gilgal that the army always returned in the book of Joshua. (Robbie Dean)
6. “The commander-in-chief that was set up over the armies of Israel was the angel of Yahweh, and He directed all the actions of the army of Israel from Gilgal.” (Robbie Dean)
7. “So the movement from Gilgal to Bochim in Judges 1:1 indicates the cessation of holy war. The commander-in-chief of the armies of Yahweh had left the command and control center. There will not be holy war again in human history until Jesus Christ returns at the second advent at the battle of Armageddon.” (Robbie Dean)

Points based upon notes from Robbie Dean and Chisholm.

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Location of Gilgal relative to Jericho

(From Biblos.com/FreeBibleImages.or)

To Bochim. The exact location is unknown. Based upon the text of the Septuagint (LXX), it was located either at Bethel or near there. I'll expand on "Bochim" later in verse 5.



The Angel of the Lord went up from Gilgal to Bochim

(Based upon image from Biblos.com/FreeBibleImages.or)

I have sworn to your fathers. Sworn is the same word we came across in Genesis 21 when Abraham made an oath with Abimelech. It means to make/give seven. In the case of Abraham, he provided seven ewe lambs. Here God is "making seven" as it were. He is swearing an oath. In

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American trials today, people “take the fifth.” This is a reference to the fifth amendment to the constitution which prevents us from testifying against ourselves. In the Old Testament, people and in this case God “takes the seven,” meaning he took an oath.

One of the times God swore to their fathers was to Abraham at the sacrifice of Isaac. And look, the Angel of the Lord shows up again there.

Genesis 22:15 Then the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven,

Genesis 22:16 and said, “By Myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son,

Genesis 22:17 indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies.

Genesis 22:18 In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”

I will never break my covenant. God will fulfill all he promised, both the blessing and the cursing. Oh yes, embedded in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy are the five cycles of discipline. This is part of the Mosaic covenant. As part of the covenant God is required to discipline Israel in times of apostasy.

The closest text similar to this in the Pentateuch is:

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Leviticus 26:44 Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God.

Leviticus 26:45 But I will remember for them the covenant with their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God. I am the Lord.”

This is in the negative. But if you approach the concept of not breaking the covenant from the positive, we would look for words like the previously mentioned “swore,” “remember,” and “keep.” And if you look at this from the perspective of God’s character, we would look for the “faithfulness” of God.

Deuteronomy 8:18 But you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.

Exodus 2:24 So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Deuteronomy 7:9 Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to

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a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments;

Joshua recounted the actions of God on their behalf and asked them who they will serve? The Israelites heard this and pledged their faithfulness to God in Joshua 24. Let us review an excerpt:

Joshua 24:16 The people answered and said, “Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods;

Joshua 24:17 for the Lord our God is He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and who did these great signs in our sight and preserved us through all the way in which we went and among all the peoples through whose midst we passed.

Joshua 24:18 The Lord drove out from before us all the peoples, even the Amorites who lived in the land. We also will serve the Lord, for He is our God.” (Note the similarity to Judges 2:1)

They were full of emotion and light on understanding. Joshua knew this and warned them:

Joshua 24:19 Then Joshua said to the people, “You will not be able to serve the Lord, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgression or your sins.

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Joshua 24:20 If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you after He has done good to you.”

God is faithful and will never break His covenants. But as we will see, God is taking them to task for not doing exactly what they said they would do. Note how the Angel of the Lord echoes in Judges 2:1 what the people said in Joshua 24:17-18.

You can review Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 if you want. God included that in the covenant. He had to include discipline from his Justice. Discipline is designed to bring the people (and us) back to fellowship with God. That is so we can be benefited from His Love resulting in His glorification. Grace: everything that God is able to do for man on the basis of the cross.

Before we continue, just a note about the covenant. There are several covenants. The ones we are concerned with start with Abraham. The covenant was reiterated to both Isaac and Jacob. One commentator (Block as referenced by Chisholm) suggests that the promise to the patriarchs “is fully integrated into the Sinai covenant.” I don’t want to spend hours on the covenants at the point. The point is that God is faithful and will not break His covenants.

One last note. In the English NASB translation there are four (five) “I.” God is emphasizing what He did for the Israelites. In chapter one I emphasized the use of “natan” give. When God gives, it is grace. Here in this chapter, when God says “I did such and such,” it is grace—another way of emphasizing grace in the Hebrew mentality. Here God had to be very blunt about it. They turned away from God after they pledged they were not going to forsake Him. Yet, they did just that!

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Judges 2:2 and as for you, you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.’ But you have not obeyed Me; what is this you have done?

As for you. Verse 1 is what God did in grace. Verse 2 starts out with what the Israelites were supposed to have done. This was said sometime in the past. Check out Exodus 34:12-13:

Exodus 34:12 Watch yourself that you make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, or it will become a snare in your midst.

Exodus 34:13 But rather, you are to tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and cut down their Asherim

Shall make no covenant. OOOpps! They essentially already did this with one inhabitant when they conquered Bethel (Luz) in Judges 1:24-26. The idea of a covenant is that they will not attack the inhabitants unless they break the covenant and treat them with *chesed* lovingkindness. But God has a covenant with the Israelites with some strict requirements which the inhabitants will never agree to. Hence, to make a covenant with the inhabitants will implicitly violate the covenant with God.

The inhabitants of this land. The Israelites were supposed to annihilate the inhabitants of the land. They didn’t. Now they have to deal with them, but not with treaties/covenants.

But you have not obeyed Me. Literally you have not listened to me. It does mean “not obeyed.”

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What is this you have done? This exact phrase is used by God to Eve after she ate of the forbidden fruit. Robert Chisholm observes that when this phrase is used in the Old Testament it "...comes in response to an action that is viewed as foolhardy or even malicious and deceitful." He provides the following references: Genesis 12:18; 26:10; 29:25; 42:28; Exodus 14:11; Judges 15:11; Jonah 1:10.

Judges 2:3 Therefore I also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; but they will become as thorns in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you.'"

Therefore I also said. This is not the word "and." This word means, also, in addition to, moreover.

The NIV translates "Now therefore I tell you," with therefore and the present tense. The NASB translates it "Therefore I also..." Chisholm translates it "at that time I also warned you." In my opinion, Chisholm has it right.

Numbers 33:55 But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall come about that those whom you let remain of them will become as pricks in your eyes and as thorns in your sides, and they will trouble you in the land in which you live.

Numbers 33:56 And as I plan to do to them, so I will do to you.'"

Judges 2:4 When the angel of the Lord spoke these words to all the sons of Israel, the people lifted up their voices and wept.

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Spoke these words. God communicates to the human race in words we can understand. God speaks. Man is supposed to listen. From God's mouth to Man's ear. But as we see in history, man rarely listens. But to those who do listen (obedience being implicit in the word listen), is blessing. You can benefit from God's Love by listening to doctrine taught constantly in faith dependence on the Holy Spirit.

The speaking of God is emphasized in these first five verses of chapter two:

Verse 1: He said (third person) – This is God addressing the people after the occupation during which they sinned.

Verse 1: I said (first person) – appears to refer back to the book of Exodus 34:12-13

Verse 3: I said (first person) – appears to refer back to the book of Numbers 33:55-56.

Verse 4: The Lord spoke (third person) This is the same time as verse 1.

We do not have God directly speaking to anyone today. There are people who claim to hear God speaking to them. Give those people a wide berth. Now that is not to say that the Holy Spirit communicates to us the will of God through various means. And we may say the Holy Spirit revealed His will to us. But we are not hearing the voice of God. We have to walk by faith and not by sight. Remember what Jesus said to Thomas who insisted on touching the risen Christ?

John 20: 29 Jesus *said to him, “Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.”

Lifted up their voices and wept. This is not a quiet crying. This is out loud wailing. The sound of no hope; the sound of no faith. The sound of sinful weeping.

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Weeping by itself is not sinful. Jesus wept when he saw Lazarus laying dead (John 11:35). But the uncontrolled weeping that comes from no hope that comes from no faith is sinful.

Wept. It is interesting to note that this word is not used once in the book of Joshua where victory as a result of faith is dominant. But in Judges where defeat as the result of lack of faith is dominant, it is used eight times.

Points on Crying [Notes from R.B. Thieme 1969 Basics as transcribed & edited by “kukis.org” and again edited by me]

There is bona-fide crying and sinful crying.

1. Jesus Christ cried three times on record. He never sinned. His crying was bona fide.
 - a. John 11:35 Jesus cried at the tomb of Lazarus, His friend whom He loved personally.
 - b. Luke 19:41 Jesus cried over the city of Jerusalem, knowing that in 70 A.D. it would be destroyed with great suffering involved.
 - c. Hebrews 5:7, Psalm 22, [Matthew 27:46 (screaming); Mark 15:34 (shouting/screaming)]. Jesus suffered great agony on the cross, an agony which no other human every felt.
2. Believer weeping or crying can be bona fide.
 - a. Sorrow & Compassion: Death of a loved one as Jesus cried for Lazarus. 1 Thessalonians 4:13; John 11:35 (Jesus)
 - b. Patriotic Sorrow: Destruction of our country as Jesus did and other Old Testament saints. Luke 19:41, Jeramiah 9:1; Lamemations 1:16.
 - c. Pain. Revelation 21:4
 - d. Faith Rest? Psalm 30:5
3. Believer weeping can be sinful

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- a. David wept because he failed in 2Samuel 14: 18:33 19:1–4 failing to forgive Absalom. David stood at his tomb and had regrets.
 - b. Weeping during a catastrophe 1Samuel 30:4. They did not know what to do, and then they cried. David cried and then knew what to do, after asking God. Weeping isn't solving anything here. Weeping switches from thinking in the soul. You are just feeling sorry for yourself.
 - c. Weeping of the old timers who did not like the new Temple Ezra 3 weeping for the past. The new temple was smaller.
 - d. Joel 1:5 weeping of the drunkard during a catastrophe.
 - e. Matthew 8:12 25:30 the unbeliever in judgment
 - f. Numbers 14:1 because of the giants in the land, and a lack of faith rest; an expression of unbelief. Numbers 14:23
4. There will be no weeping in eternity; none. No sorrow, no tears, no tears, no death. Rev. 21:4 Isa. 30:19
5. Crying which stems from the emotion of the soul; a weeping of happiness. Weeping can express great happiness from a great upsurge of emotion; the weeping of love. The weeping of weddings. It is a privacy weeping.

John 20: 29 Jesus *said to him, “Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.”

As we will see, the Israelites wanted to see a sign to believe. That was true then. It was true during the life of Jesus on earth. Even today people look for signs. All you need is faith.

To all the sons of Israel. Here we have the audience of the Angel of the Lord. The text does not specifically say if just the leadership of Israel was present or if all the tribes were assembled in one place.

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Wept. A weeping based upon the perception of no hope. Hagar wept (this word) when she had no hope for Ishmael and wept while she waited for him to die. They have no hope because they have not listened to (obeyed) God.

**Judges 2:5 So they named that place Bochim;
and there they sacrificed to the Lord.**

Bochim. This means “weepers.” Chisholm has an interesting observation on this. “This is the second reference in the book to Israel naming a city or place. The contrast with 1:17, where the conquering armies of Judah and Simeon annihilate the Canaanite city of Zephath and rename it Hormah, is striking. The name Hormah symbolized Israel’s God-given success as a result of their willingness to obey God’s orders concerning the native population. Bokim, on the other hand, was a reminder of the sorrow that results when God’s commands are compromised and neglected. Perhaps the naming of Bokim also signals that a period of failure and sorrow has replaced an era of conquest and glory.” Note that depending on the translator the place name can be spelled either Bochim (NASB) or Bokim (Chisholm).

They sacrificed to the Lord. There is no mention of a change of heart or affirmation of their faith toward God. The sacrifice may have been an acknowledgement of their sin, but as we see in the rest of the book of Judges, their hearts are focused on themselves and not on God.

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There is now a break in the narrative. This is a flashback

Judges 2:6 When Joshua had dismissed the people, the sons of Israel went each to his inheritance to possess the land.

Judges 2:7 The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of the Lord which He had done for Israel.

Judges 2:8 Then Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of one hundred and ten.

Judges 2:9 And they buried him in the territory of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.

Judges 2:10 All that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel.

Judges 2:11 Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals,

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Judges 2:12 and they forsook the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed themselves down to them; thus they provoked the Lord to anger.

Judges 2:13 So they forsook the Lord and served Baal and the Ashtaroath.

Judges 2:14 The anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and He gave them into the hands of plunderers who plundered them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies around them, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies.

Judges 2:15 Wherever they went, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil, as the Lord had spoken and as the Lord had sworn to them, so that they were severely distressed.

Judges 2:16 Then the Lord raised up judges who delivered them from the hands of those who plundered them.

Judges 2:17 Yet they did not listen to their judges, for they played the harlot after other

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gods and bowed themselves down to them. They turned aside quickly from the way in which their fathers had walked in obeying the commandments of the Lord; they did not do as their fathers.

Judges 2:18 When the Lord raised up judges for them, the Lord was with the judge and delivered 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 oppressed and afflicted them.

Judges 2:19 But it came about when the judge died, that they would turn back and act more corruptly than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them and bow down to them; they did not abandon their practices or their stubborn ways.

Judges 2:20 So the anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and He said, "Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers and has not listened to My voice,

Judges 2:21 I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died,

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Judges 2:22 in order to test Israel by them, whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk in it as their fathers did, or not.”

Judges 2:23 So the Lord allowed those nations to remain, not driving them out quickly; and He did not give them into the hand of Joshua.