

generation. They had been told to teach their children (Deut. 6:4-9; Josh. 4:19-24). In any case, the sad story is told of their rebellion against the Lord.

b. Detailed vv. 11, 12.

In a general way, what happened is given in two statements: Israel did 1) evil and 2) served Baalim. This is explicated in four major verbs. They 1) forsook the Lord, 2) followed other gods, 3) bowed themselves to these gods, and 4) provoked the Lord to anger. Each one of these items is an indictment against the nation. If only they had hearkened unto the Lord.

c. Summarized v. 13.

In one brief statement the word is given: Israel forsook the Lord and served Baal and Ashtaroth. This is the acme of rebellion against the true and only God.

NOTE: Much of the information we have about the Phoenician deities was preserved by Philo through Eusebius. This has all been confirmed as accurate with the discovery of the Ras Shamra tablets on the north Syrian coast (1929-1937). The entire Canaanite pantheon has come to view. El is the name of the supreme deity. Baal was the son of El. He dominated the pantheon and was the god of rain and storm. Anath is a sort of combination of sister and spouse of Baal. She was given the epithet of virgin and holy one in her usual role of sacred prostitute. She was the patroness of war and is pictured as involved in bloody orgies of destruction. Astarte (Ash-taroth) is the goddess of the evening star but concerned with war and sex as Anath. Asherac was the wife of El. In the O.T. she appears as a goddess by the side of Baal.

Conclusion Gilgal was the place where God rolled away the shame of Israel and her Egyptian bondage (Josh. 4). Through failure they were moved to Bochim. It is a place of tears. But that revival was short-lived. One cannot compromise with this world's gods without being tainted by their influence. God calls His own to clear separation. May we respond where Israel failed (1 Cor. 10: 1-11).

THE BOOK OF JUDGES

"Gilgal to Bochim"

Judges 2:1-13

Introduction

1. Judges is a book of failure. There are, indeed, spots of spirituality, but the thrust of the book is failure. Israel failed to enter into her possessions and this book tells the tale. Disobedience is the key word.

2. The land of Canaan had been given to Israel by divine covenant (Gen. 12:1-3). This Abrahamic covenant is basic and essential to understand Israel's right to the land--then and now.

3. Moses led Israel to the borders of Jordan. He looked yonder into the promised land but was not allowed to enter it (Deut. 34:1-8). He arranged for the allotment of land for 2½ tribes (Reuben, Gad, ½ Manasseh). This was done on the east of Jordan (Num. 32:1-42; Deut. 3:13-17). It was left for Joshua to lead Israel across the Jordan to conquer Canaan and this he did (Josh. 11:16-23). The remaining allotments of the land were made by Joshua (Josh. 15-19).

4. Through disobedience, Israel did not occupy their possessions in the land (Judges 1). Segments of resisters remained in the land. This fact was: 1) in direct disobedience to the command of God (Deut. 7:1-5); 2) an opportunity for the Canaanites to infiltrate the life-style of the Israelites (Note: the activity was not Israel infiltrating Canaanites! How foolish for us to think we can influence modern society by cooperation with them.). What resulted from this situation? The facts are recorded in divine words:

1. DIVINE REBUKE vv. 1-5.

a. Sourced v. 1.

It is the "angel of the Lord" from whom the rebuke comes to the nation. A study of the appearances of the "angel of the Lord" in the O.T. reveals that He is frequently identified as the Lord Himself (Gen. 16:7-13; 22:11-18; 31:11-13; 48:15,16; Ex. 13:21; 14:19; Judges 6: 11-12; 13:9-20). Other passages, however, declare that

He is distinct from the Lord (Num. 20:16; Ex. 23:20; 32:34; 1 Chron. 21:15-18; Dan. 3:25-28; Zech. 1:12,13). The identification of the "angel of the Lord" as Christ (therefore a "Christophany", i.e. an appearance of Christ pre-incarnately) comes as the result of four considerations:

1) Christ is the visible person of the Godhead in the N.T. It would be expected the same to be true in the O.T.

2) The angel of the Lord disappears after the incarnation of Christ. The inference is natural that He is Christ.

3) Within the divine economy of the trinity, it is the Father Who sends the Son in the N.T. So it is with the angel of the Lord in the O.T.

4) It is a matter of elimination that brings us to affirm that the only person within the trinity Who qualifies to be identified is the Lord Jesus Christ.

The message, therefore, of rebuke to Israel came from our Lord prior to His incarnation. The divine concern about disobedience was mediated through the angel of the Lord and not mediated from the Father.

b. Stated v. 1.

The rebuke had a sound ground upon which to build. It related to strong affirmations by the Lord. Four times the pronoun "I" is employed. Three truths are confirmed:

- 1) I made you go up.
- 2) I brought you into the land.
- 3) I will never break my covenant.

All of these statements are unilateral actions by God for Israel.

c. Supported v. 2.

Israel did not heed God's injunctions about the inhabitants of the land. The pronoun "Ye" confirms this:

- 1) Ye shall make no league.
- 2) Ye shall throw down.
- 3) Ye have not obeyed.

d. Served vv. 3-5.

1) To explain presence of Canaanites. v. 3.
Disobedience to God's intentions made it necessary for Him to leave the Canaanites in the land. They became a thorn in Israel's side and their gods a snare to the nation.

2) To extract repentance from Israel. vv. 4,5.
Being rebuked by the angel of the Lord, Israel expressed broken emotions (v. 4) and brought sacrifices to God (v. 5). They had come to Bochim which means weeping from a Hebrew verb conveying lament and mourning for the dead (cf. v. 4).

2. HISTORICAL REVIEW vv. 6-10a.

a. About Joshua vv. 6, 8, 9.

These verses tell the story. Joshua served the Lord, led the people, and then died. He had allotted the people their land and let them go to occupy it. When 110 years old, he died. His burial is recorded here (v. 9).

b. About Israel vv. 7, 10a.

The people served the Lord, too. They did this throughout the days of Joshua and the time of the elders who followed him. This was the generation which had seen what God had done for the people (v. 7c, cf. v. 1). But this generation died. With them died the enthusiasm for doing God's will. It's as if God affirms that knowledge of His work should lead to pursuit of His will. This was not always the case, but in contrast with the following generation, it was.

3. NATIONAL REJECTION vv. 10b-13.

a. Identified v. 10bc.

This is a new generation above that which had been during the days of Joshua. This crowd, according to the text, was ignorant of two items:

- 1) The Lord.
- 2) The works of the Lord.

This may indicate a failure on the part of the previous