

**Judges -Ruth**  
**Listen to God's Judges**  
**Lesson Text: Judges 2:11–19**

**Aim for Change**

By the end of the lesson, we will: **EVALUATE** why we need to listen to and obey God's commands; **COMPARE** the impact of our obedience and disobedience in our relationship with God; and **ASK** God to help us to obey Him.

**In Focus**

Today's lesson tells us why we need to listen to and obey God's commands. We need to be the witnesses He is calling for us to be to a lost and dying world.

**Keep In Mind**

*"And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them. They turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the Lord; but they did not so." Judges 2:17 (NKJV)*

**Lesson Text**  
**Judges 2:11–19 (NKJV)**

**11** And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served the Baalim.

**12** And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, the gods of the people who were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger.

**13** And they forsook the Lord and served Baal and Ashtaroth.

**14** And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel; and He delivered them into the hands of despoilers who despoiled them, and He sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.

**15** Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil, as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn unto them; and they were greatly distressed.

**16** Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges, who delivered them out of the hand of those who despoiled them.

**17** And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them. They turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the Lord; but they did not so.

**18** And when the Lord raised them up judges, then the Lord was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the Lord was moved to repent because of their groanings by reason of those who oppressed them and vexed them.

**19** And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned and corrupted themselves more than their fathers in following other gods, to serve them and to bow down unto them. They ceased not from their own doings nor from their stubborn way.

## The Lesson

### The People, Places and Times

**Bochim;** The name (which means “weeping”) of the place where the angel rebuked the Israelites for breaking their covenant with God (Judges 2:5, NLT).

**Israelites:** The name ascribed to the descendants of Jacob, the people of the Old Testament who were the people of God.

**Baal:** The deity of fertility, rain, and thunder, which the Israelites chose to worship instead of God.

**Ashtoreth:** The name of the goddess the Israelites chose to worship instead of God.

**Judges:** Leaders selected by God to deliver and guide the Israelites to remain obedient to the Word of God.

## Background

The book of Judges begins with the success and failures of Israel’s military campaigns in Canaan (the Promised Land). The new generation of Israelites were in the land of Canaan after the death of Joshua, received a sudden appearance from the angel of the Lord, who pronounced judgment on the new generation of chosen people for their disobedience and unfaithfulness.

The Israelites’ disobedience included not completely removing the Canaanites from the land. God noted their unfaithfulness to the Living God and their increasing propensity to worship other gods, their increasing propensity to be disobedient.

Evidence of God’s anger is seen when God hands over the Israelites to their enemies. Yet God still shows His mercy and compassion toward His chosen people. He raises up judges to help win the battles against Israel’s enemies and bring His chosen people back to a loving, covenant-keeping God.

## **In Depth**

**1. The Israelites' Unfaithfulness to God (Judges 2:11–14)** The Israelites continued a pattern of abandoning their faith in the one true God, the one who led them out of Egypt. The one who drowned Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea, the one who fought for their ancestors (Exodus 14:13–31), the one who made bitter waters sweet when they were thirsty (Exodus 15:22–25), the one who fed their ancestors bread from heaven (manna) when they were hungry (Exodus 16:4–14). They violated the first two of the Ten Commandments: "I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:2–3). Instead, they chased after other gods; they worshiped the Canaanite gods, Baal and Ashtoreth. God deemed the Israelites' behavior as evil, and He deemed what they had done as abandonment of the one true God. Their disobedience of God's commandments stirred His anger against the people He had chosen to represent Him to the rest of the world.

To those who worshiped him, Baal was the god of storms and rains and thought to control vegetation and agriculture. On the other hand, Ashtoreth was believed to be the mother goddess of love, war, and fertility. She was also known as Astarte or Ishtar (1 Kings 11:5–8; Life Application Study Bible, 354). Not only did God's chosen people worship these idol gods, but even temple prostitution and child sacrifice were part of the worship of these Canaanite idols. God would not and did not tolerate the Israelites adding idols to their worship of Him. They could not possibly bow to an idol and still truly believe He was the one true God. Therefore, His anger with the Israelites results in judgment on them. God gives the Israelites over to the "marauders" (their enemies, Judges 2:14). He delivers them into the power and hands of their enemies and removes His divine defense from around them.

**2. God's Punishment of the Israelites and His Mercy (Judges 2:15–16)** Every time the Israelites went out to battle their enemies, they lost. God's arms of protection were no longer around them. In fact, before God's judgment against them when they went out to battle, it was the Lord Himself who fought against their enemies. Thus, the Israelites and their enemies were no match for an angry God. They were no match for the omnipotent (all-powerful) God. But the Israelites' disobedience demanded judgment and God (the Righteous Judge) judged His chosen people. They had to suffer the consequences of their chosen actions. They had to pay their own sin penalty.

**3. The Israelites' Cycle of Sin and God's Continued Mercy (Judges 2:17–19)** Even though the Israelites break their covenantal relationship with God, He remains faithful to them. Despite their disobedience to God's commands, He still loved them and showed them mercy and compassion. Because of this love, mercy, and compassion, the Word tells us that He raised up judges who delivered the Israelites from their enemies. For a time, the judges

returned Israel to worshipping God. But over the long haul, God's chosen people do not listen to the judges and returned to worshipping other gods. The Children of Israel continue in a cycle of sin: (1) rebelling against the one true God; (2) experiencing God's punishment which involves their enemies overrunning them; (3) crying out to God for deliverance after which He raises up a God-fearing judge to deliver the Israelites from their enemies; (4) remaining loyal to God until the appointed judge's death; they were loyal as long as they were near the appointed judge; (5) forgetting about their covenant with God after the judge's death; (6) again suffering punishment because God allows their enemies to overtake them; and (7) crying out yet again to God for deliverance. In essence, the Israelites allowed what appealed to their sensual nature and more short-range benefits to steal their affection for the one true God. They were drawn to worshipping gods who did not insist that the people be morally accountable for their behavior. In fact, not only were male and female prostitution allowed in idol worship, this was encouraged as a form of worship (Life Application Study Bible, 354). Often, we want what we want and want nothing to stand in our way of getting it. This kind of thinking and action can cause death (eternal separation from a holy God). Following the one true God demands discipline and accountability. Following the one true God demands that we live holy lives and be holy as He is holy. Still, however, God feels compassion for the Israelites, hears their cries while they are oppressed, and provides judges who guide the Israelites back to worshipping the one true God. God's actions show indeed He is a promise-keeping God. He is true to His Word.

### **Liberating Lesson**

As with the Israelites, God has given us the opportunity to live responsibly before Him in a covenantal relationship. He allowed Adam and Eve to choose to obey Him, He did the same for the Israelites, and He does the same for us today. As we look around at the suffering in our world, much of it is since too many have not chosen Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Too many have not chosen to follow and obey Him and have instead chosen to go their own way. We must always remember that our way has led us down the path of sin and destruction.

### **Application for Activation**

Pray for guidance to boldly proclaim the Good News of salvation to a world that often has deaf ears. We should tell people the God we serve is the same God of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. We should proclaim to our world that despite the hardships we are facing, God is still sovereign (He's in control of His universe and is never out of control of it). We should pledge to encourage people with God's unconditional love, a love was there for us even when we did not return God's love.

#### **Take Aways**

#### **Closing Prayer**



**Week of 15 Oct 2023**  
**Daily Bible Readings**

**Monday** ~ Numbers: 3-4

**Tuesday** ~ Numbers: 5-6

**Wednesday** Numbers: 7

**Thursday** ~ Numbers: 8-10

**Friday** ~ Numbers: 11-13

**Saturday** ~ Numbers: 14-15

**Sunday** ~ Numbers: 16-17