

Title: 'As We See Fit': A study of the book of Judges- Part 3- 'Weeping wretches'

Key text: Judges 2:1-5

Suppl. texts: James 4:4, Heb. 12:5b-7

Introduction: Last time, we saw the nation of Israel offer a prayer to the Lord & receive a promise about their upcoming battle. God told them Judah should go & fight for Israel & that they would be victorious. It was a great start, but their obedience wasn't full. Next, we saw that compromise always leads to less than God's best & is filled with unintended consequences. Judah's compromise was to add the tribe of Simeon to their fighting force. Even though they didn't fully obey, the Lord was still gracious & gave them the victory. This initial success shielded them from the severity of their sins. However, their compromises predicted future failures. We closed by discussing scriptural ignorance versus scriptural indifference. Tonight, we see that God sent a special visitor to the nation of Israel to deliver some horrifying news.

Outline: *read Judges 2:1-5.*

1. A divine dispatch

- **Vs. 1;** *"The angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bokim and said, 'I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land that I swore to give to your forefathers, I said, 'I will never break my covenant with you.'"*
- On several occasions in the book of Judges, the Angel of the LORD will visit God's people, a person directly. **God the Father dispatches God the Son.**
- **Three occurrences:** Here in chapter 2 to the nation of Israel, in chapter 6 to Gideon, & in chapter 13 to Manoah & his wife, the parents of Samson.
- The Angel of the LORD is none other than the preincarnate Christ, Jesus!
- We call these appearances in the O.T. either a theophany or a Christophany.
- A theophany is a general manifestation of God, like when God came down in the Garden to Adam & Eve, the burning bush, or when He came down at Mt. Sinai.
- A Christophany is a physical manifestation of Jesus before His earthly incarnation.
- Some believe a theophany & Christophany are always the same. Others say no.
- When we read the term, "**the Angel of the LORD**", it is always referring to Jesus.
- **How do we know it was a Christophany & not just an angelic message?**
- The Angel of the LORD always speaks as God, in the first person; *"I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the lands that I swore to give to your fathers..."*

2. A divine decree

- **Vs. 2;** *"and you shall not make a covenant with the people of this land, but you shall break down their altars. 'Yet you have disobeyed Me. Why have you done this?'"*

- As mentioned last time, the nation of Israel was meant to be a holy, separate nation, not becoming like the nations around them.
- Instead, Israel became **intrigued** by & eventually **entangled** in the sinful ways of those who worshipped a plurality of gods.
- **James 4:4**; *“You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.”*
- Since Jesus Himself came to deliver the message, we know things had become very **rough** in Israel.
- **Vs. 3**; *“Now therefore I tell you that I will not drive them out before you; they will be thorns in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you.”*
- Again, God showed grace & mercy as He didn’t destroy them or kick them out of the Promised Land. Instead, He **removed** His **ability** behind their action.
- Since they chose disobedience over obedience, God kept His Word to discipline them, as He had disciplined the pagan nations for their sinfulness.
- **Heb. 12:5b-7**; *“My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when He rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those He loves, and He punishes everyone He accepts as a son.” Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?”*

3. A divine **despair**

- **What was the result?**
- **Vs. 4**; *“When the angel of the LORD had spoken these things to all the Israelites, the people wept aloud.”*
- In today’s text, we were told the Angel of the LORD moved from Gilgal to Bokim.
- This might seem insignificant, but there’s more than a **geography** lesson here.
- **Gilgal is a significant place**. It is where the Israelites first **camped** before crossing the Jordan River on dry ground towards Jericho, repeating the Exodus Red Sea miracle.
- According to Joshua 4, after all the people had crossed, twelve men from the twelve tribes were chosen to take a stone from the riverbed & pile them up as a memorial.
- So, Gilgal is a place of **memorial**.
- Next, God’s commands that all those who were male & about to enter the Promised Land be circumcised, which was the sign of the covenant, & a sign of atonement.
- Those who had been with Moses & Joshua had been circumcised, but all died in the desert wandering. Now their kids & grandkids need circumcision. Joshua obeyed.
- **Joshua 5:8-9**; *“And after the whole nation had been circumcised, they remained where they were in camp until they were healed. Then the LORD said to Joshua, ‘Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.’ So the place has been called Gilgal to this day.”* Gilgal is Hebrew for **roll**. God consecrated His people there.

- Gilgal is the place of **consecration, worship, & obedience.**
- **Joshua 5:10-12;** *“On the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, while camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, the Israelites celebrated the Passover. The day after the Passover, that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain. The manna stopped the day after they ate this food from the land; there was no longer any manna for the Israelites, but that year they ate of the produce of Canaan.”*
- Gilgal is the place where God **appeared.**
- **Joshua 5:13-15;** *“Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in His hand. Joshua went up to Him and asked, ‘Are you for us or for our enemies?’ ‘Neither,’ he replied, “but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.” Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked Him, ‘What message does my Lord have for his servant?’ The commander of the LORD's army replied, ‘Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.’ And Joshua did so.”*
- Samuel would eventually coronate Saul there. Samuel would regularly judge Israel there. It was a place of **heritage**, remembrance, **kings**, & prophets.
- Gilgal was where the people of God were at their **best.**
- Bokim was the place of **regret**, the people at their **worst.**
- **Vs. 5;** *“And they called that place Bokim. There, they offered sacrifices to the LORD.”*
- The name ‘Bokim’ means **weepers.** They offered **sad sacrifices** to Yahweh, but it was too little too late to worship Him, & they went right back to their sinful ways.

As We See Fit

A Study of the Book of Judges- Part 3

Last time, we saw the nation of Israel offer a prayer to the Lord & receive a promise about their upcoming battle. God told them Judah should go & fight for Israel & that they would be victorious. It was a great start, but their obedience wasn't full. Next, we saw that compromise always leads to less than God's best & is filled with unintended consequences. Judah's compromise was to add the tribe of Simeon to their fighting force. Even though they didn't fully obey, the Lord was still gracious & gave them the victory. This initial success shielded them from the severity of their sins. However, their compromises predicted future failures. We closed by discussing scriptural ignorance versus scriptural indifference. Tonight, we see that God sent a special visitor to the nation of Israel to deliver some horrifying news.

1. A divine _____

- **Three _____**: Here in chapter 2 to the _____ of Israel, in chapter 6 to _____, & in chapter 13 to _____ & his _____, the _____ of _____.
- A theophany is a _____ manifestation of _____, like when God came down in the Garden to Adam & Eve, the burning bush, or when He came down at Mt. Sinai.
- A Christophany is a _____ manifestation of _____ before His earthly _____.
- ***How do we know it was a Christophany & not just an angelic message?***
- The Angel of the LORD always speaks as God, in the _____.

2. A divine _____

- Instead, Israel became _____ by & eventually _____ in the sinful ways of those who worshipped a plurality of gods.
- Since Jesus Himself came to deliver the message, we know things had become very _____ in Israel.
- Again, God showed grace & mercy as He didn't destroy them or kick them out of the Promised Land. Instead, He _____ His _____ behind their action.

3. A divine _____

- ***What was the result?***
- This might seem insignificant, but there's more than a _____ lesson here.

- **Gilgal is a _____ place.** It is where the Israelites first _____ before crossing the Jordan River on dry ground towards Jericho, repeating the Exodus Red Sea miracle.
- So, Gilgal is a place of _____.
- Gilgal is Hebrew for _____. God consecrated His people there.
- Gilgal is the place of _____, _____, & _____.
- Gilgal is the place where God _____.
- Gilgal was a place of _____, remembrance, _____, & prophets.
- Gilgal was where the people of God were at their _____.
- Bokim was the place of _____, the people at their _____.
- The name '*Bokim*' means _____. They offered _____ to Yahweh, but it was too little too late to worship Him, & they went right back to their sinful ways.

Small Group Questions:

1. We have all prayed & asked God for an answer to prayer. We usually pray that this answer is easy to see & understand. The Angel of the LORD will likely not appear to us in person. How then do we receive divine decrees & answers to prayer today?
2. Read James 4:1-12 in your group. What 'adulterous' ways are mentioned in this text that hinder your prayers & your submission to God's will & plan?
3. One of the toughest things for Christians to discern is the difference between persecution & the Lord's discipline. How do you define both? After defining, how can we tell the difference between the two?
4. Read 1 Cor. 11:31. Israel failed to judge itself & correct its sins. God punished them by sending other peoples to oppress them. Can you recall a time in your walk with God where God used outside circumstances to correct your ways?

Additional prayer needs:
