

## Judges, Sermon #6

Judges 2

Last week we saw the rise of a generation – who no longer knew the Lord  
They did not acknowledge God – understand God, nor become acquainted with God –  
downward spiral

I have entitled tonight's sermon "No Other Gods"

By the way, who said that? Exodus 20:3 – Ten Commandments

First Commandment

Second – "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven/carved images. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them, for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God."

Judges 2:11

Let us stand for the reading of God's Holy Word

Judges 2:11-15

Let us pray

You may be seated

## No Other Gods

The Israelites quickly forgot the LORD their God and turned to idolatry and false worship. (Jud. 2:11-13; Jud. 3:7)

The Israelites quickly began to do what was right in their own eyes, quickly began to do their own thing.

What they wanted became the main focus of their lives, not what God commanded.

They quickly compromised with their worldly neighbors and became ungodly

The people of Israel found themselves enslaved to one pagan nation after another as the Lord kept His word and chastened His people.

For about 300 years, the nation as a whole lived a compromising, inconsistent life.

They lived an inconsistent life right up to the establishment of the reign of the kings of Israel.

We are going to begin to see a pattern develop – same pattern that works in our world today

### **1. Abominable sin was the first mark of Israel's *inconsistent life*.**

Israel forsook the LORD.

God had saved their fathers and delivered the nation from enslavement to Egypt

But the new generation “forsook” the LORD.

The Israelites not only forsook the LORD, they also did the most corruptible evil imaginable.

They engaged in false worship.

They changed their allegiance.

Notice verse thirteen again.

Israel forsook the Lord and served Baal and Ashtaroth. Who were Baal and Ashtaroth?

**Baal:** Baal means “Lord or Master.”

Baalim – plurality – Baal took the form of what each ancient nation decided

Baal was a god of the sun, rain, thunder, fertility, agriculture and the lord of heaven

Probably the best and easiest example of this – Elijah in I Kings 18 – prophets of Baal – Mt. Carmel – five from heaven – “Whose God Was Real” contest

There were many temples of Baal in Canaan and the name was added to that of cities such as Baal-peor – mountain

There were people in the Bible who had Baal as a part of their names

The practice of prostitution accompanied the worship of Baal and Hosea and Jeremiah vehemently denounce this false god and his worship

Baal-zebub – lord of the fly – II Kings 1:1-4

Beelzebub – supreme evil spirit – Jesus was accused of being Beelzebub because He could cast out demons – Luke 11

Jezebel

Baal is said to be the son of Dagon – the god of the Philistines – interrelated

Even though we see different false gods’ names in the Old Testament, most of these false gods were the same with a twist.

Baal was also known as the god of fire.

So, babies and young children were offered in fire as a sacrifice to Baal.

In other countries Baal is known by the name Molech or Chemosh (key-masch) – Moabites or Milcoln – Molech/Milcoln/Malcham – Ammonites

Baal was the substitute of Hadad – Molech – sacred bull – a man with a head of a bull

This idol was made of brass – they heated it from the inward parts – his hands being stretched out – they would put the child between his hands – when the child cried out, the priests beat the drums so that the father might not hear the voice of his child and his heart be moved to compassion.

Deuteronomy 18:10-12

II Kings 21:6, 23:10

Jeremiah 32:35

Baal was the fertility or sex god of the Canaanites.

He was worshiped in Egypt as well and Bel became Marduk – of Babylon – the Greek god Belos, identified as Zeus, chief of the Greek gods

He was also the god of vegetation and it was believed he would bring productivity to the crops, animals, and men.

They also believed he affected the weather and he was depicted as holding a lightning bolt in his hand – as was Zeus

Baal was also represented by the emblem of the sun and also a bull or calf – golden calf

When Baal was worshiped, worshipers would bow before him and kiss his feet.

They would dance and shout before the idol, cut themselves with knives, and engage in immorality.

Baal is a complicated and diversified false god – because different nations worshiped differently or emphasized different aspects

Baal had a partner!

### **Vs. 13**

Ashtaroth (Ashtoreth, plural) – she formed the duo with Baal

– Baal – sun; Ashtoreth – moon

Ashtaroth was a female deity representing Mother Earth, the goddess of fertility, the Mother Goddess or Queen of Heaven.

She, too, has been known by a number of names throughout history in different cultures.

I Kings 11:5, 7, 33

Astaroth –

- In Greece – she is identified by the name Aphrodite or Astarte
- In Rome – she is referred to as Venus
- In Egypt – she is called Isis
- In Ephesus – she was worshiped as Diana. The temple dedicated to her was one of the seven wonders in the world.

**No matter what name she was known by, the Queen of Heaven was worshiped throughout the world.**

Jeremiah preached against the worship of her (Jer. 44:15-23).

First, we see the abominable sin of Israel's inconsistent life.

How do we know how bad our sin is? By studying this Book.

## **2. Chastisement—the LORD's judgment and discipline—was the second mark of Israel's *inconsistent life***

As always, sin provoked God, especially this kind of sin.

His fury and righteous judgment were aroused.

His just anger burned against their terrible sin – 2:14

They had rejected the presence and power of God; consequently, they no longer had the presence and power of God.

When they faced a conflict with some enemy, they stood all alone and the enemy defeated them.

*They forfeited what the Lord had promised*

When they went out to fight their enemies, Israel was defeated, because the Lord wasn't with His people.

This is what Moses had said would happen (Deut. 28:25-26); but that isn't all: *Israel's enemies eventually became their masters!*

God permitted one nation after another to invade the Promised Land and enslave His people, making life so miserable for them that they cried out for help.

Had the Jews obeyed the Lord, their armies would have been victorious; but left to themselves, they were defeated and humiliated.

### **3. Great distress was the third mark of Israel's *inconsistent life* – vs. 15**

Terrible suffering was the result of living among the worldly Canaanites.

The Israelites suffered:

- the plunder of their crops and goods
- the destruction of their homes and property
- the assault and murder of their husbands, wives, and children
- the savagery of constant oppression
- the brutality of enslavement

They were frustrated and “greatly distressed” which means they were *pressed in, narrowed like walls that were caving in upon them*.

God is chastening His people to get them right with Him (Hebrews 12:6-11).

In the history of Israel, God has used Babylonians, Philistines, Midianites, Medes and Persians, Greeks, Romans, and Germans to bring them back to Him.

Let us stand for closing invitation.

The next time, we will see the rise of judges – God raising up deliverers to help His people.