

Judges 2:1-18 – An Inheritance of Regret

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: **In Eastern cultures people work hard** their entire lives to provide property, money, jewelry, and education for their children. Those parents are proud of the inheritance they leave for their children. **In the West, it is pretty much the same tune** with different words. Here we often leave creature comforts: money, the cottage, the boat, technology, and entertainment for our children.

How does God view these types of inheritances? These types of inheritances can be inheritances of regret. Now you may ask: How can these be inheritances of regret? Answer: If you leave an earthly inheritance without it being founded on a spiritual inheritance, that earthly inheritance becomes idolatrous- a god.

Our goals are: You will understand **why some leave an inheritance of regret for their children**, and you will be encouraged to **instruct the young ones in faithful covenant living** – and so leave a true inheritance for your children.

Our headings are: **Covenant (盟约) Unfaithfulness, Covenant Punishment, and Covenant Mercy.**

Covenant Unfaithfulness V10-13

1 Then **the Angel of the LORD** came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said: "I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers; and I said, 'I will never break My covenant with you. 2 'And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.' But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this? 3 "Therefore I also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be thorns in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you.'" 4 So it was, when the Angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voices and wept. 5 Then they called the name of that place Bochim; and they sacrificed there to the LORD. 6 And when Joshua had dismissed the people, the children of Israel went each to his own inheritance to possess the land. 7 So **the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua**, who had seen all the great works of the LORD which He had done for Israel. 8 Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died when he was one hundred and ten years old. 9 And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Heres, in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash.

1. Verses 1-9 in this chapter, spoke by the Lord Jesus, is a review of Joshua's final sermon at the end of his life. This means that Joshua was following the words of the true General of Israel and proclaiming them...like any good preacher would do. A good preacher will divest himself of his own opinions and proclaim what God's Word says. Lear to identify good preachers this way!

2. So why was there need for a review? This review showed how bad the corruption that followed was. You see, Israel heard of God's works and promises directly from the Lord himself...they

confessed their sins...they worshipped God...they vowed to follow him! Now look what happened after...soon after.

10 When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, **another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD** nor the work which He had done for Israel.

3. Israel abandoned (放弃) serving God—within 27 years of entering Canaan. They did not love, fear, or worship the Lord anymore. They did not own him as the one true God. “They did not know the Lord” meant that they did not know him intimately (亲密地) ... or in an experiential way. They simply served God alongside their other gods. They never completed the conquests of Canaan (征服迦南地), choosing other vocations (呼召, 职业).

4. Because they abandoned God, they abandoned their duty to God’s covenant children.

Deuteronomy 6: 5 "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. **6** "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. **7** "**You shall teach them diligently to your children,** and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. **20** "**When your son asks you in time to come, saying, ‘What is the meaning of the testimonies 见证, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God has commanded you?’** **21** "then you shall say to your son: 'We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand; **24** '**And the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is this day.** (24 耶和华又吩咐我们遵行这一切律例, 要敬畏耶和华我们的神, 使我们常得好处, 蒙他保全我们的生命, 象今日一样。)

How **could the covenant children know the law of God and the fear of God without being taught?** Israel forgot that religion was never a private thing. It was a covenant thing. The Israelites were not to say: “I will let **my child decide for himself.**” They were not to let their children **learn from their other ignorant friends**...as Rehoboam! Sadly, many **turn their children over to their enemies** to instruct them. If you do any of these things, you should not be surprised if they abandon God’s covenant or the Christian faith altogether. Most university students who have not been grounded in the covenant truth at home **either abandon the covenant or abandon the faith altogether.**

11 Then the children of Israel did evil in the **sight of the LORD**, and served the Baals; **12** and they **forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt;** and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger. (11 以色列人行耶和华眼中看为恶的事, 去侍奉诸巴力, 12 离弃了领他们出埃及地的耶和华、他们列祖的神, 去叩拜别神, 就是四围列国的神, 惹耶和华发怒。) **13** They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. (13 并离弃耶和华, 去侍奉巴力和亚斯他录。)

5. What made Israel sin (of not teaching their covenant children) worse is that it was evidence of their ungratefulness (忘恩负义. They forgot God who brought them out of wretched misery (悲惨的境遇) and bondage (奴役)). They forgot God led them through the wilderness, provided for them, and brought them to a land flowing with milk and honey.

It is true that children forget to do their homework, or number of pores hand, or the elements of the periodic table (元素周期表), or the date Columbus discovered the America’s, or to take a shower... Parents forget too: to change the oil in the car, to turn off the stove and so burn the

food, etc. These have minor consequences. There can be more serious consequences for forgetting your anniversary. Even then, the consequences are relatively small. If you forget your children's salvation, however, how grave are those consequences! Their heavenly Father will be on your case!

6. Because Israel did not teach the next generation, that 2nd generation left God and ran into the arms of other gods. There is no neutral territory (中立区). Israel embraced other gods - bowing to them. These Gods included the Canaanite goddesses - Ashtoreths. The plurality 复数 of gods is emphasized. Some of these gods were represented by idols of sheep...showing the Israelites' lust for wealth (贪财). They served Baalpeor, Baalzebub, Baalberith, some of the dirtiest gods, but popular gods of the time. They were openly and publicly, boldly and daringly, in the face of God. They broke the matrimonial contract (婚约) with God. But they did not totally reject Jehovah. They wanted to worship him alongside these idols. (V11) We can prove this from the life of Gideon. Judges 8

7. When you close your eyes at nights, what do you see or think about? Does your mind go to God and think about covenant faithfulness? Or do you think about how much more money you can make if you can only get a better job? When you wake up in the morning, what first crosses your mind? Is the only thing that crosses your mind that movie you will watch or that restaurant for which you have plans? Whatever is foremost in your mind is your god! This is what your children see...and this is what they will follow...and this will lead to covenant unfaithfulness. This is an inheritance of regret. But when God is your foundation, everything will then be in its proper place!

Covenant Punishment V14-17

14 And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled (抢夺) them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. 15 Wherever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for calamity (灾祸), as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed (困苦).

1. As a result of failing to teach their children, choosing to worship idols and pursue wealth and leaving their children without a real inheritance, God became angry. But one drop of God's anger causes much pain.

Nahum 1:6 Who can stand before His indignation? And who can endure the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire, And the rocks are thrown down by Him. (他发忿恨, 谁能立得住呢? 他发烈怒, 谁能当得起呢? 他的忿怒如火倾倒, 磐石因他崩裂。)

The hand that reached down from heaven and protected Israel is now violently turned against him.

Mark 9:42 "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.

2. God ordered his people plundered and the things they cherished most taken - wealth, security in things, and prestige (声望). God ordered them robbed and enslaved. God ordered them to be humiliated (使他们降卑). Even their attempts at business and other labors were unfruitful.

(Their inheritance would come to nothing!) And they were greatly distressed. Instead of facing their enemies in battle, they turned and ran like little girls.

And God swore. This made their punishment an absolute certainty.

Life became much harder for Israel from that time forward.

Deuteronomy 29:18 "so that there may not be among you man or woman or family or tribe, whose heart turns away today from the LORD our God, to go *and* serve the gods of these nations, and that there may not be among you a root bearing bitterness or wormwood [植]苦艾; 20 "The LORD would not spare him; for then the anger of the LORD and His jealousy would burn against that man, and every curse that is written in this book would settle on him...

The Israelites forgot that obedience to God's law was better than sacrifices for their sins.

3. If you read Psalm 38, you will see how God had to hurt David to get his attention. This hurt finally caused David to repent.

This was covenant mercy. This was punishment from love.

Psalm 38:2 For Your arrows pierce me deeply, And Your hand presses me down. 3 There is no soundness in my flesh Because of Your anger, Nor any health in my bones Because of my sin. 4 For my iniquities have gone over my head; Like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me. 5 My wounds are foul and festering Because of my foolishness. (5 因我的愚昧, 我的伤发臭流脓。) 8 I am feeble and severely broken; I groan because of the turmoil of my heart. (8 我被压伤, 身体疲倦; 因心里不安, 我就唉哼。) 18 For I will declare my iniquity; I will be in anguish over my sin.

A loving father would discipline his child. A father who hates his child will not discipline him. A loving Father would not keep giving his teenager the car to drive if he were getting drunk and driving. God, in his love, must take away the key, the car, and the license. This is our next point. This is covenant mercy.

Covenant Mercy 16-18

16 Nevertheless, the LORD raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them. (16 耶和華興起士師, 士師就拯救他們脫離搶奪他們人的手。) 17 Yet they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot (行了淫邪) with other gods, and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the LORD; they did not do so. 18 And when the LORD raised up judges for them, 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 pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and harassed them.

1. But instead of completing the justified destruction, God showed mercy to covenant Israel. He did not completely wipe them off the face of the earth. When Israel called, God raised men like Samson and Gideon to free them from bondage. God kept his end of the covenant. Jesus came to play Israel's part of the covenant: to obey in life and then to take their judgment on the cross for covenant breaking.

2. This is the remarkable Christian hope: That even though you often fail to give your child the instruction and heed it yourself, God has mercy - loving care. God uses the faithful preaching of

his Word to remind you of his covenant mercy. (This is another reason never to miss worship.) Also, you need to take time to teach the goodness of God to your children so they will remain faithful. (This is what you promised at their baptism.) Faithful teaching is the heritage (遗产) to leave for your children. Teach them to use and enjoy God's gifts, but never to worship the gifts. Let these gifts rest on the foundation of faith in Jesus Christ – a faith that comes through the Word.
Remember:

Deuteronomy 4:19 "And *take heed*, lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and *when* you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which the LORD your God has given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage.

Conclusion:

Israel was unfaithful to the covenant that God graciously made with them. They failed to train their children to trust in the Lord and fulfill their covenant responsibility. So their children ran to other gods. Then Israel incurred God's covenant curses. They suffered greatly. And yet, their destruction was not total. God offered them hope and called them back to his covenant love and protection...and they waited for Messiah, the Israel true Covenant Keeper to come to obey for them and to take their punishment for covenant breaking!

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: 1. Are you doing everything in your power to make sure that you are leaving a true legacy (遗产) for your children...and inheritance of faith (信心的传承)? Will the next generation be more equipped in real spiritual gifts than yours? Will God say about you: "He provided enough education for his children...enough food...enough fun... but he failed to leave a true inheritance?" You see, grace is not hereditary (世袭的). If you leave your children to themselves in order to provide "stuff," know that you are contributing to their death...their eternal and sometimes physical death. "Stuff" becomes their god. 2. You have to be persistent (坚持不懈的) in teaching, for all men and women have a tendency to relapse into idolatry (堕落到偶像崇拜的境地). Guard your hearts and guard your children's hearts. 3. Remember, though, it is the grace that comes through Jesus Christ alone who can break the cycle of idolatry for you and for your children. So the inheritance you leave is really because of what Christ gave to you.

Finally, if you are not a believer: Have you considered the depth of God's mercy-the many layers of mercy? If you reject that mercy and live for your own pleasure and profit, and if you leave only a legacy of pleasure and profit for your children, neither you nor your children will have eternal life. I ask you today to accept Christ's offer of mercy for you. He died for sinners and he wants to give life to all who recognize they are sinners.