

Judges 3:1-11 – Compromise: Christian Death

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: The account of the judges is not just to give a list of examples of Israel's falling away from serving their Redeemer. It is an account of the progressively 逐步worsening conditions in Israel. This was not simply a cycle of sin. This was Israel in a definite downward spiral 恶性循环. But when you see how God continued to show mercy, even in this progressively worsening situation, you understand the goodness of the Lord even more. God had more and more reason to leave Israel on account of her sins, but he didn't.

Today you will start to see the top ring of that downward spiral, specifically, how Israel started to compromise 妥协 in 3 ways.

Our headings are:

The Pollution

The Punishment

The Prayer

The Protector

Our goals are: That you will see the depth of God's covenant love for you in Jesus Christ and you will therefore not treat him with contempt 蔑视 and compromise with sin.

The Pollution

1 Now these are the nations which the LORD left, that He might test Israel by them, that is, all who had not known any of the wars in Canaan 2 (this was only so that the generations of the children of Israel might be taught to know war, at least those who had not formerly known it), 3 namely, five lords of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites who dwelt in Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal Hermon to the entrance of Hamath. 4 And they were left, that He might test Israel by them, to know whether they would obey the commandments of the LORD, which He had commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.

1. Israel's compromise started when they did not drive out all the nations from Canaan as they were commanded to do.

They became preoccupied with their pursuit of their jobs, their wealth, and their comforts and ignored the hard slog that was necessary to complete the job – a job that was about 2/3rd completed, by some estimates. Sadly, some of those pagan nations were still there 400 years later.

1 Samuel 6:17 These *are* the golden tumors 金痔疮 which the Philistines returned as a trespass offering to the LORD: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, one for Ekron; Now 3 of these 5 cities were captured but were lost. Israel did not consolidate 巩固 their positions in these cities. They forgot that one does not achieve dominion by simply destroying. On a cosmic level, dominion means to destroy wickedness and develop worship. On a personal level, dominion means that you must conquer those areas of weakness in your life and then create a place where Christ's lordship is established.

But noticed 2 sovereign purposes God accomplished, even through Israel's compromise.

a. God left those pagan nations there so Israel would be forced to continually train their youths to fight.

Luxuries and wealth can make men effeminate 柔弱. Enemies would cause them to be toughened.

Jeremiah 12:5 "If you have run with the footmen, and they have wearied you, Then how can you contend with horses? And *if* in the land of peace, *In which* you trusted, *they wearied you*, Then how will you do in the floodplain of the Jordan?

b. God hoped that Israel would come to their senses and destroy these nations who were thorns in Israel's side.

Israel needed to learn that they would not always have milk and honey. Sometimes there would be briars 荆棘 and blood. Of course God knew that they would not come to their senses, but he wanted them to know that they would not come to their senses and so show them their need for a proper Covenant Keeper.

Isn't this what you are called to do today? You are part of the church militant, waiting to become the church triumphant! This means you have to train and be trained for this holy spiritual war. Keep in mind that good training is always hard! And you are to put on the whole armor of God to fight against the wiles of the Devil.

2 Timothy 2:3 You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

May the Lord not reduce you to nothing. May you be properly equipped to fight the sin, your flesh, and the Devil.

5 Thus the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the

Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 6 And **they took their daughters to be their wives**, and gave their daughters to their sons; and they served their gods. 7 So the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. They forgot the LORD their God, **and served the Baals and Asherahs**.

2. After living among the Canaanites for some time, Israel's compromised further. They allowed these tumorous people from their cities to into their homes and bedrooms and entered into their homes and bedrooms. Israel **joined the Canaanites in marriage**. Israel was strictly told not to marry those out of the faith – those who hated God and loved idols. But they were literally “drawn to idolatry 偶像崇拜” (Bad company always leads to bad actions.) Surely God was not concerned about the color of the Canaanites' skin. He was not concerned about national origin (as Caleb's, for instance). **God was concerned about sinful idolatrous hearts**. Listen to what he said before:

Deuteronomy 7:3 "Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. 4 "For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly.

Would you put a rotten apple with your good apples and say: I will take care of it later? Would the bad apple add anything good to the good apples? Isn't it necessary to remove and destroy that bad apple quickly? Are the rotten apples positively influenced by the good ones?

Let me illustrate this in another way: Fences 篱笆 are not to keep people in, but rather, fences are to keep the bad out. But Israel chose to open their doors to those who did not love the Lord.

3. After allowing these tumorous people into their to homes and bedrooms, Israel compromised further and went into the idolatrous temples of the pagan Canaanites. Israel not only embraced false gods, they embraced a female goddess...one that pictured sexual lusts. This goddess was related to Diana, goddess of fertility 生育. **Nothing makes God angrier than to see his children turn to other gods**. That is the 1st command – and the most severe punishment he reserves for those who violate this law. Maybe Israel thought they should be inclusionary 包容... and looked upon positively...as mayoral candidate John Tory said we must be in Toronto. But that is not how God deals with us. God is an exclusive God. He doesn't share his position with any other.

4. Consider some valuable lessons about compromise in general. The Devil knew that if he started with calling Israel to worship idols, Israel would have balked 犹豫 So he chose to start **with friendship** first, **then pleasure**, and **then full scale idolatry**. This method combated those who thought they were smart enough and determined enough to resist sin. Today, Satan also uses this method to lure people away from **covenant instruction**, to **abandoning the covenant**, to **ignoring faithful catechizing** of their children, to **making them believe that God's law doesn't apply** to society today, to **weaker views of what our Covenant Keeper** did...and so rob him of his honor. Reformed distinctives 特色 have been replaced so we might seem to be all-inclusive 包容一切. But you are to be exclusive!

The Punishment

8 Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and He sold them into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia; and the children of Israel served Cushan-Rishathaim eight years.

1. God hates murder and adultery, but those sins pale in comparison to idol worship. (Notice how patient God was with Abraham and David in their adultery.) God hates thieves and liars, but those who look upon idols are reserved for special punishment – the worse kind.

2. So God sold Israel to a foreign power – into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim. Cushan reigned between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. The 2 main cities (they were not kingdoms yet) were Babylon and Nineveh – the later capitals of Babylon and Assyria. Cushan-Rishathaim meant “king of two-wickedness.” (What a harbinger of things to come from these 2 coming kingdoms!) Israel, the great nation that made so many kingdoms crumble, could not stop a small king from Mesopotamia. He subjugated 征服 them for 8 years. **Every year they would bring a set tribute to the foreign king**. How they loved their employments and their wealth...even more than their God and his kingdom, so their God forced them to take their wealth to a foreign king!

3. Isn't this the same thing that will happen to those who put their convenience and pleasures above God and his kingdom? It is like the man who says: Lord, give me that great job and I will serve you, but when he gets the great job, he works so much at it that he abandons his church work...and family work...

The Prayer

9 When the children of Israel cried out to the LORD,

1. It took a long time for Israel to cry out to the Lord, but when they did, God heard their cry for help. He always hears the cry of his people.

2. But Israel could not simply cry out to the Lord. They had to make their prayer through sacrifice. **They had to make animal sacrifices for their sins** and then **view the coming sacrifice of Jesus through those animal sacrifices.** There is no prayer without sacrifice. And because those prayers are made through Jesus Christ, it doesn't matter how serious your sin might be. God your Father bound himself to hear and forgive – even your worst sins – through Christ!

3. God's promise of hearing confession and forgiving sins is found throughout Scripture and applies to each one today.
Deuteronomy 32:36 "For the LORD will judge His people **And have compassion on His servants,** When He sees that *their* power is gone, And *there is* no one *remaining*, bond or free.
Psalm 91:15 **He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble;** I will deliver him and honor him.

God's love is deep, rich, and strong for his covenant people. He will track you down and bring you back. So remember to pray for those who are straying from the faith and have sold themselves to sin. There is yet hope.

The Protector

the LORD raised up a deliverer for the children of Israel, who delivered them: Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. 10 The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, **and the LORD delivered** Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed over Cushan-Rishathaim. 11 So the land had rest for forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

1. God then provided, Othniel, as protector of his people. He rescued them from the pits of slavery to which they had sold themselves. Othniel crushed Cushan-Rishathaim. He delivered and kept God's people safe for 40 years.

2. Othniel was specifically called by God to this job. God empowered him, through his Holy Spirit, for the task. The Holy Spirit made him effective. The Holy Spirit gave him skill and courage to fight. The Holy Spirit gave him wisdom to rule. He surely was a teacher as well. Othniel's work kept Israel from slipping further into sin for a time. And then he died. And yet, all of Othniel's work was properly called the "Lord's deliverance."

3. Your Redeemer, Jesus Christ, willingly came to rescue you from the pits of hell, to which you and your parents sold themselves. He willingly came. He was baptized by the Holy Spirit to do the job. But there was a difference. Othniel rescued the people temporarily, but those whom Jesus rescues will enter into permanent rest 永久的安息.
Hebrews 4:8 For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of **another day.**⁹ There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.

You may wander from the faith, but your Redeemer will always bring you back. He never leaves you. He never dies. Consider the gloriousness of his rest!

4. Sadly, after 40 years, Israel memory lapsed. They forgot the conditions in which they were, serving the king of Mesopotamia. They took another step down that spiral. But let's conclude for today!

Conclusion:

Israel became polluted when they let the people live among them, when they took them into their homes and bedrooms, and when they joined them in their temples. God's punishment was swift 迅速 and severe. This was the only way he could save them. After they understood their punishment, they prayed, confessing their sins, and God heard them. He sent them a spiritual and military protector and they were restored.

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Pollution comes upon the church when people start to live for themselves and they ignore the kingdom and the King. The act like families don't matter, churches don't matter...only they matter. Time to change that. Live like you understand your position in Jesus Christ. He is your Redeemer. You belong to him, body and soul.

2. Learn to watch out for things that lure you away from faithfulness: It may be intermarriage with non-believers, but it may also be careers, obsession 困扰 with children, accumulation of stuff, and the pursuit of pleasure.

3. Learn to embrace the King or you will never embrace the kingdom. Remind yourself of his sacrifice for you so you can be moved to sacrifice for him and his church.

Finally, if you are not a Christian, know that God has no sympathies for those who live for their own glory. Man was made for the glory of God. So realize the danger in which you are and ask God to save you, for Christ took the punishment for sinners.