

Episode: Promised Land Series No. 15

Narrator: King Solomon

Primary Scriptures: Judges 2

Story Summary: Joshua and the Israelites conquer most of Canaan

Location: Canaan

Time: c. 1406 BC The Israelites enter Canaan

c. 1209-1169 BC The rule of Deborah

c. 1075-1055 BC The rule of Samson

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Judges 2:3-4, 10, 15, 19, 22

God promised the Israelites he would lead them to conquer all of the land he'd given to Abraham and Moses. He promised to give them unbelievable prosperity in the land forever and ever. God made many promises to the Israelites, but almost all of them were conditional.

In order to fulfill the conditions of God, the Israelites had to do such things as conquer the land completely, drive out or kill all of the land's inhabitants, and follow the laws of Moses. And they had to do these things consistently, completely, and wholeheartedly. But no sooner had they conquered Jericho than they started breaking God's conditions.

Judges 2 begins with a stark call to reality. The angel of the Lord spoke to all of the Israelites and pointed out their failings, and told them that the Canaanites remaining in the land will be deadly traps to the Israelites, because the Israelites would eventually worship their false gods. The Israelites wept and worshipped, but did not deny their fate.

Joshua died at the age of one hundred and ten. He led the Israelites for about half a century while in the Promised Land. While he was alive, the people served the Lord. But not much later, the next generation fell away. They did not know the Lord and did not adequately acknowledge what the Lord had done for Israel. They started worshiping Baal, the Ashtoreths, and the local gods of the people around them. The Lord used the Canaanites still living in the land as a test to see if the Israelites would be faithful. The Israelites failed these tests miserably.

The Lord sent enemies to subjugate the Israelites, then Lord raised up a judge to deliver the people. When the judge died, the people returned to their evil ways. Repeat the cycle, over and over. This is the summary of the book of *Judges* provided in Judges 2. It is close to the pattern that will occur for the rest of the Old Testament.

Why did God give the Israelites chance after chance after chance to obey him? Answers will be found in the remaining pages of the Old Testament. It might be that 2 Peter 3:9 gives the best answer. God is patient, not wanting anyone to perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Discussion Questions:

1. Judges 2:1 speaks of the “angel of the Lord.” Who is that?
2. Judges 2:4 says the people wept. Why did they do so?
3. According to Judges 2:3, why was the Lord intent that the people of Canaan be driven out by the Israelites?
4. According to Joshua 2:7, what is one reason the people stayed faithful during Joshua’s lifetime? According to Joshua 2:10-11, what happened after Joshua and the elders died?

1. Some think this is an angel representing the Lord, while some think it is a euphemism for the Lord himself. 2. They finally realized that God’s promises were conditional, and they had not fulfilled the conditions. Therefore, they would not get some blessings and would suffer some consequences. 3. Otherwise they would become traps and snares. 4. They had seen the great things the Lord did during the conquest of Canaan. 5. The people had no regard for the Lord and started worshiping false idols and false gods.

Applications Questions:

1. In Judges 2:4 the people wept because they finally understood that many of God’s promises were conditional, and they had not fulfilled the conditions. When you rely on God’s promises, do you tend to have the idea that God will always fulfill his side even if you don’t fulfill yours?
2. Name some promises of God to you. Which ones of those are conditional and which are unconditional?
3. The Israelites became unfaithful after Joshua and the elders died. What did God do when they became unfaithful? How do you think God reacts when you act unfaithfully?
4. According to Judges 2:22, God left the enemies in Israel to test their faithfulness to God. Why did he test them when he knew they were going to fail?

Application Questions for Teens:

1. Have you ever heard someone say that they rely on God’s promises, but they can’t really show in the Bible where those promises are made or what the conditions of the promises are? Do people tend to rely on promises that support what they want while neglecting those they don’t want? Do you think Christians are promised that they will suffer for the cause of Christ?
2. According to Judges 2:14-15, God severely punished and disciplined the Israelites when they became unfaithful. Do you think God still does that sort of thing today when Christians are unfaithful? If so, does he do it every time or sometimes?
3. According to Judges 2:16, God sent judges (or leaders) to help the Israelites get out of trouble. Does God send leaders to people today to help them get out of spiritual trouble? If so, what do those leaders look like?