

The Old-Time Evangelistic News

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What Will Happen to the Next Generation? (Part 1) Judges 2:8-15

We turn our attention to Judges 2:8-15. These verses describe the early history of Israel as a nation. Notice what is recorded in these verses: *“And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash. And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth. And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed.”* How sad and tragic these verses are. They describe Israel, but I also see in them a picture of the United States. I also see our fundamentalist churches and our homes. There have been generations that knew God and followed Him, but now a generation has arisen that has rejected the God of their fathers and that generation is following their own way and their own god.

Before we get into the message, let me give you a few Introductory Thoughts. I call it a Survey of Judges. Notice first, **The**

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Cycle of Judges. This pattern is followed throughout the book. It begins with Compromise, and is followed by a Conquest, a Crying, a Campaign, and then a Conquering. You would think that Israel would have learned after a while, but they never do. It begins with the verses that we have read in chapter 2. A generation forgets God and compromises with the world. God then sends a nation to defeat Israel. When the oppression gets so bad, they begin crying out to God for help. He sends a man to lead them in a campaign against the enemy. They conquer the enemy and serve God for a little while until that generation dies off. Sometimes it does not even take that long. Over and over again throughout Judges the people forsake God. How terrible it is that this cycle is repeated!

The second part of the survey of Judges is **The Characters in Judges**. As the name of the book would imply, Judges is an account of the people who served as judges. They can be divided into two categories. The first is those with Comprehensive Accounts—Ehud, Deborah & Barak, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson. The other judges are described in Compact Accounts—Othniel, Shamgar, Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon.

Now let us focus on the verses in Judges 2:8-15. The first thing that catches my attention is **The Failure of the Parents**. As we look at these verses, there is much blame to go around. The parents and the children both failed in some regard, but right now, we are going to focus on the parents. We will get to the children and their duty later. In our churches of today, family after family have children that seemingly turn their back on God. They are reared up in what appears to be good homes and are brought to Fundamental, Bible-believing, Bible-preaching churches. But when they reach their adult years, they leave those churches and, if they attend church at all, usually go to some liberal or contemporary church. How can this be? How can children that are supposedly brought up right and taught right leave the truth and follow error? It is because the parents fail to really teach and train their children. Some will get upset with this notion that they failed. They will argue to no end and say, “We did

everything that we could.” But did they really? If children turn out bad, whose fault is it? Part of the blame must rest upon the parents. We must reject this mentality that the blame lies only with the children. We like to say, “Well, they have a will.” They do have a will, but did you teach them to let God control their will? Did you pray with them every day, or did you let the Sunday School teacher pray with them once a week, and hope that would suffice? Perhaps you went a step further and sent them to a Christian school? Did you depend upon that teacher and principal to pray with them?

Now we have raised a generation of home schoolers that have no more desire for God than children that go to a public school. We thought that the wicked influence of the public school would damage them, so we kept them at home. But when they finish home school, they still reject the right way of following the Lord. Did we really instruct them in the right way? Did we pray with them like we should have? In home schooling, we did not pass them off to a teacher or principal. But now we have no one else to blame. Our children still do not turn out right. It is our fault as parents!

But think about some other things. Did you read to them out of the Bible every day? I think most parents would be ashamed if others knew how little they read the Bible. Probably less than half of our families in our Fundamental, Independent Baptist churches have family devotions. If we were to really investigate it and receive honest answers, the percentage may be far below 50%. How many church members have a private time where they read their Bible and spend time in prayer? Very few do this. And then we wonder why our children turn out like they do.

Not only should we pray with them and read the Bible with them, but we should also pray for them. Did you, and do you, pray for your children every day? This should be an easy answer, but I wonder how many parents spend time earnestly praying for their children. If parents spent time in prayer, then I believe with my whole heart that their children would turn out right. Perhaps the reason we have so

many rebellious, unthankful children who want nothing to do with their parents’ church is because we have so many parents who do not take time to pray.

There are many other things that I could mention, but notice how the parents in Judges 2 failed. They failed To Pass On the Wonder of God. Judges 2:10 says, “There arose another generation after them, **which knew not the LORD**” (emphasis added). How could this be? How could a generation come along that did not know the LORD? They did not know the LORD because they were not instructed about Him. The word knew is “used in a variety of senses. It is used figuratively, literally, euphemistically, and as inferences—including observation, care and recognition. It is also used causatively—including instruction, designation, and punishment. It has the idea of acknowledgment, acquaintance, advise, answer, appoint, and to be aware of” (Strong’s Concordance).

Please pay close attention to that word knew, especially as it is used causatively. It talks about instruction. How did a generation arise that “knew not the LORD”? It came about because they were never instructed by their parents! At this juncture in the message the blame resides on the parents. Now hold on, the children will be held responsible in a little bit. But right now, we are focusing on the parents. They failed to help the children to know—they failed to instruct the children about—the LORD. How awful and terrible! Children did not know the LORD because the parents did not teach them. We look at Israel and see all the problems in the book of Judges, and it happened because the parents did not care or because they were too busy with something else. We can make all of the excuses that we want to make, but if our children do not know God, it is because we have not instructed them. Parents, the blame lies with us! Wake up! Our children will not naturally learn about God and follow Him. Naturally, they will follow the way of the world. We must take the time to instruct them about the LORD. How do we teach them? The only resource we have, and the only one we need, is the Word of God.

What is sad is that parents will not take the time to teach their children about the LORD. They will make sure that they have some knowledge of a trade, or will make sure that they have enough money to send them to college, but they neglect the most important thing—instructing them about the LORD. It is not wrong to teach them a trade or help them through college, but it is more important to teach them about the LORD. I want my children to do well in life, but I had rather them know God and have nothing, than to have all that this world has to offer and know not the LORD. Our Fundamental, Independent Baptist churches are losing a generation. They are losing them because the parents have been so worldly minded that they have neglected to teach their children about the LORD. They have been so caught up with possessions that they failed to pass on the wonder of God. They depended upon preachers and teachers to do it, but neglected their own responsibility. They should have them in church, but they need to teach them about the LORD at home as well. They taught them some things, but failed to teach about the LORD. We will continue next month!