

Seeking Deliverance

Key Verse: “The LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them.”
—Judges 2:16

Selected Scripture:
Judges 2:16-23

commands.—Judg. 2:17

Israel followed God when a new judge reigned but, after the deaths of each judge, the people corrupted themselves to an even greater degree than did their forebears. (vss. 18,19) In studying the experiences and history of the Israelites, we are informed in the New Testament that these things were allegorical.—I Cor. 10:11

Thus, believers should eradicate their earthly hopes, passions, perversions, and weaknesses which correspond to the idolatrous people who resided in Canaan. Failure to do this with consistency results in Christians being overcome, and a need to call upon the Lord for deliverance from their enemies. As with the Israelites of old, God's mercy in forgiving both the ancient people of Israel and their Christian counterparts today, is well expressed in the following sentiments. “I will heal their

IN THE KEY VERSE OF THIS
lesson, God's infinite mercy is manifested towards Israel, by raising up judges from among themselves, to reform the nation which had practiced idolatry, as well as to deliver them from enemies who oppressed them because of their waywardness. However, the nation repeatedly gave allegiance to false gods, contrary to God's com-

backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.”—Hos. 14:4

Since Israel continually practiced disobedience, God permitted the heathen nations to remain in their land to finally determine whether or not they would ultimately walk in the way of the LORD. (Judg. 2:20-23) A casual consideration of the foregoing narrative may cause the reader to be severely critical of Israel for its tendency to wander from God again and again, and engage in the practices of idolatry demonstrated by its heathen neighbors. Spiritual idolatry, however, is a matter that can afflict the followers of Christ today. Here is the final exhortation given by the Apostle John, “Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.”—I John 5:21

The Apostle warns against accepting teachings which contradict the realities he expressed earlier. (vss. 18-20) An idol is a substitute that takes the place of the worship of the only true God. It is even possible that we might idolize our families. For example, the institution of marriage that God ordained speaks with regard to the great love which a husband and wife should have for each other and, by extension, for the members of their family unit. (Eph. 5:25-31) Nevertheless, the Master indicated the following requirement for Christian discipleship. “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.”—Luke 14:26

We should love our families very much. Nevertheless, our service to God and to Christ demands that we must put them first in our lives. We are to heed scriptural principles which require us to seek first the kingdom of heaven and all its righteousness. (Luke 12:31) Let us always manifest reverence and obedience to the Heavenly Father, which the Israelites of old failed to do by their idolatrous practices. ■