

An Angel Warns Israel

Key Verse: *“Ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this?”*
—Judges 2:2

Selected Scripture:
Judges 2:1-15

in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee.” (Exod. 23:20-33; 34:12-16) However, the children of Israel disobeyed God and did not “drive out” the enemies from the land.—Judg. 1:21-36

The Lord asked the Israelites why they did not obey him in this matter. He then said that because of their disobedience, the enemies entrenched in the promised land would be “thorns” in the sides of Israel and “their gods shall be a snare” unto them.—Judg. 2:1-3

The Apostle Paul explains that all these things that happened to natural Israel illustrate important lessons to the Christian. He writes, “Their experiences serve as examples for us so that we won’t set our hearts on evil as they did.” He also warns us, “Stop being idolaters, as

After the death of Joshua, the children of Israel asked the Lord, “Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them?” He answered that the tribe of Judah should be the first of the tribes to go.—Judg. 1:1-4,19

Repeatedly the Lord had told the Israelites concerning those who inhabited the land of Canaan, “Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell

some of them were. ... Let's stop putting the Lord to the test, as some of them were doing. ... You must stop complaining, as some of them were doing." Then Paul adds that these things "were written down as a warning for us. ... Therefore, whoever thinks he is standing securely should watch out so he doesn't fall."—I Cor. 10:1-12, *International Standard Version*

The experiences of natural Israel correspond to the experiences of those who make a personal decision to dedicate and consecrate their all to serve our loving Heavenly Father, even unto death. (Rom. 12:1,2) Israel's crossing the Jordan River and entering the promised land correspond to when a Christian makes a consecration to the Lord and enters upon a new life.—II Cor. 5:17

As the Israelites were instructed to completely drive out the idolatrous peoples who were residing in Canaan, so too it is our duty to daily strive in driving out our selfish hopes, ambitions, weaknesses, and oppositions to the Lord and his righteousness. The more thoroughly we carry out this work of sanctification, the greater will be our development of character that will be pleasing to the Lord—full of faith, obedience, joy, and peace.

The children of Israel were also instructed not to worship the false gods of the idolatrous people. (Exod. 20:3,5) The Lord's followers during the present Gospel Age are likewise admonished, "keep yourselves from idols." (I John 5:21) Idolatry is the inordinate or undue respect, homage, reverence, or devotion paid to any person, system, or thing—aside from the Lord. An idol might include things such as our family, occupation, accomplishments, possessions, or self.

Let us keep ourselves from all idols and apply to our heart and mind the words of Moses, "The LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul."—Deut. 13:3 ■